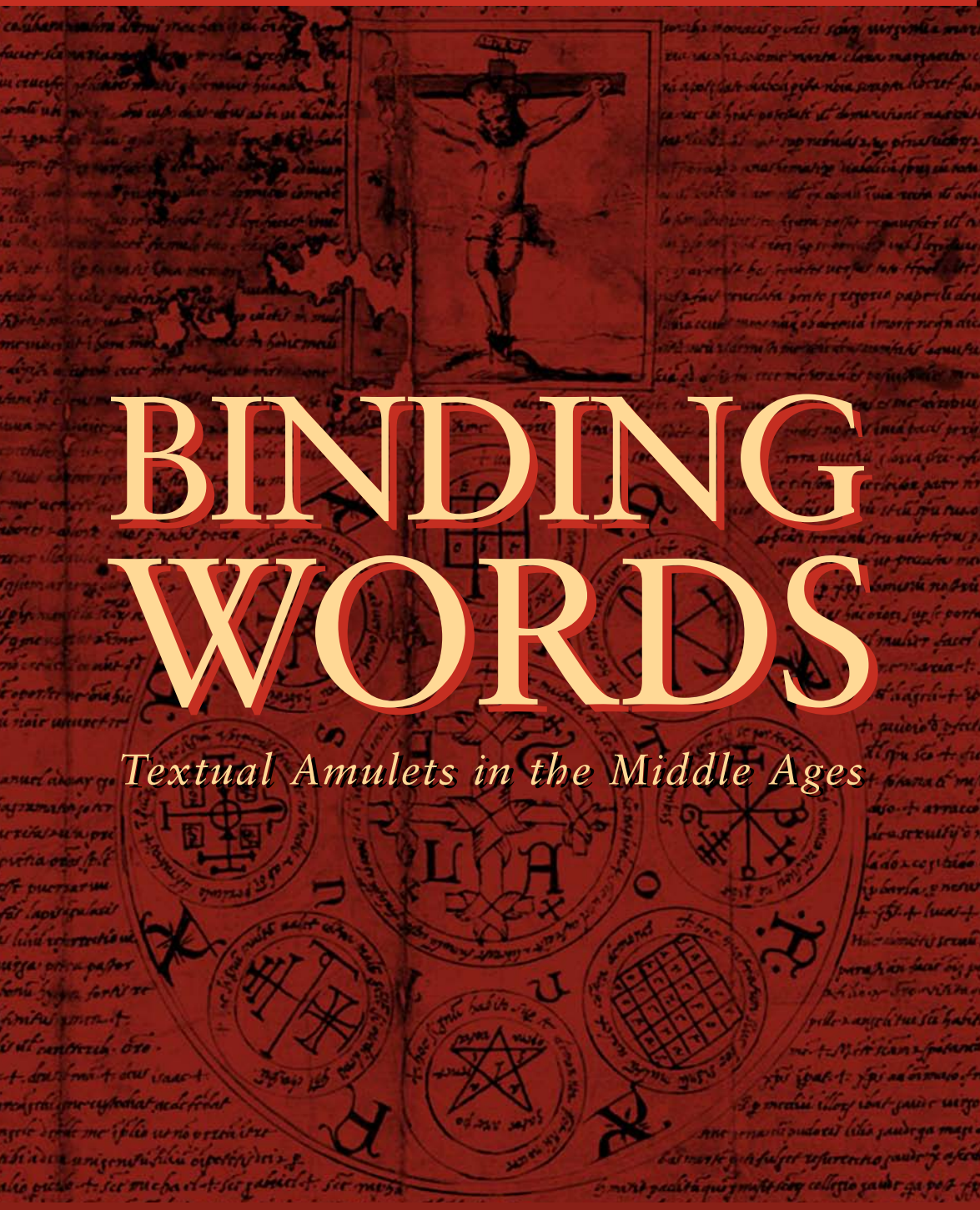
MAGIC IN HISTORY



BINDING WORDS

Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages

DON C. SKEMER

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Don C. Skemer

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Acknowledgments

More than a decade ago, I became interested in textual amulets after stumbling upon a singularly unprepossessing fifteenth-century manuscript, a parchment sheet filled with handwritten quasi-liturgical formulas and misquoted scripture, in the John Hinsdale Scheide Collection of Documents (Princeton University Library). Over time, I came to see that this manuscript had similarities in text, format, and function to magical papyri and *lamellae* used as amulets in the ancient world. The chance survival of a Western medieval amulet in a document collection seemed to offer physical evidence of a largely unexplored medieval phenomenon of writing that had received little scholarly attention. My circuitous research path began with an early focus on ephemeral writing formats, an understanding of which could shed light on the history of the book. But I came to realize that textual amulets had to be understood not only as a little-known dimension of medieval literacy and written culture but also as a ritual practice that most people would label magic. The subject of textual amulets in the Middle Ages seemed worthy of monographic treatment, provided that a sufficient number of amulets survived and could be found in libraries, museums, and private collections, and that these examples could be contextualized through the use of contemporary sources.

Many people, particularly members of the Princeton University community, offered good counsel and encouragement. I am especially grateful to Professors Peter Brown, Anthony T. Grafton, James H. Marrow, and D. Vance Smith for reading my manuscript at different stages and offering valuable comments, criticism, corrections, and bibliographic additions that made *Binding Words* a better book. So, too, did Professor Armando Petrucci (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa), Peter Stallybrass (University of Pennsylvania), and The Pennsylvania State University Press's two meticulous and insightful readers, Claire Fanger and Karin L. Jolly (University of Hawaii). I would like to acknowledge Professor Bryce D. Lyon (my mentor) and Professor William C. Jordan for their encouragement, and the late Professor Karl D. Uitti for help with reading Old French. My Princeton University Library colleagues John L. Logan, Sidney Tibbetts, and James W. Weinberger gave me the benefit of their expertise in various areas, as did Colum P. Hourihane (Index of Christian Art) on questions of iconography. My book also benefited from readers' comments on my articles published in

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Introduction

This book traces the history of textual amulets in the Middle Ages, especially in Western Europe from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. 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 other textual elements that were assembled materially and used physically to exploit and enhance the magical efficacy of words.

In the medieval West, use of textual amulets was predicated upon a popular belief in the magical efficacy of powerful words and symbols to win God's favor while warding off the Devil's menacing legions of evil demons, which were held responsible for every sort of human misery from plague, natural disaster, and sudden death to toothache, labor pains, and everyday misfortune. Unlike religious medals and jewelry with brief inscriptions and devotional images, pieces of parchment or paper were able to accommodate far more extensive, multipurpose texts in formats (chiefly folded sheets and small rolls) that were relatively inexpensive, lightweight, portable, concealable, and even disposable. While the primary focus of this book will be textual amulets, it touches upon the use of verbal charms and talismans and will also deal with the amuletic use of small codices and ritual practices such as writing apotropaic formulas on the human

body, inscribing the equivalent on ingestible substances, and washing sacred text in water in order to produce a liquid word therapy.

Textual amulets in the Middle Ages were the spiritual successors of Christian papyrus amulets in Roman and Byzantine Egypt. Since the late nineteenth century, large numbers of subliterary papyri (including textual amulets) have been excavated in Oxyrhynchus, the Fayum towns, and other archaeological sites in Egypt, where they had survived as a result of unique environmental conditions, conditions favoring the survival of written ephemera that, unfortunately, Western Europe did not enjoy. Medieval amulets on parchment and paper, writing materials that need not have been any more perishable than papyrus, have survived in limited numbers. Though often enclosed in suspension capsules, sacks, and purses for portability and convenience, textual amulets lacked the stout wooden boards that encased and protected Western codices. Families occasionally preserved them, though they were not considered valuable enough to be mentioned in wills and inventories along with books. Bundled with old family papers and forgotten, such textual amulets were never intended for preservation in libraries and museums. Even those amulets that came into the possession of such repositories have sometimes defied proper identification because of their appearance and oddity.

Theological tracts, sermons, works of canon law and literature, medical treatises, and other medieval sources from the patristic era through the end of the Middle Ages often refer to Christians using textual amulets. Yet nearly all of the extant textual amulets discussed in this book date from the thirteenth to early sixteenth centuries, a period when rising lay literacy swelled the ranks of potential producers and users[1] and calamities such as the great famine in 1315–22, recurrent waves of plague beginning with the Black Death in 1347, social unrest and popular rebellions, and marauding armies contributed to the appeal of textual amulets offering supernatural protection. Full textual and codicological study of several dozen extant textual amulets, supplemented and contextualized through contemporary sources, will help shed light on the personal and economic relationship between amulet producers and users; the sources, compilation, physical configuration, and presentation of texts; and the role of script, materials, decoration, layout, folding patterns, and enclosures. Careful study of extant

1. Malcolm B. Parkes has argued that the literate in the late Middle Ages included professional readers such as Latin-literate scholars and university graduates; cultivated lay readers such as the landed nobility and the middle class, whose reading interests were often recreational or devotional, with a focus on moral self-improvement; and pragmatic readers, who had attained a lesser degree of literacy, enabling them to read and write or at least navigate formulaic Latin and the vernacular in day-to-day business dealings. Malcolm B. Parkes, "The Literacy of the Laity," in *The Mediaeval World,* ed. David Daiches and Anthony Thorlby (London: Aldus Books, 1973), pp. 555–77.

textual amulets will also help to show how memory, vocalization, performance, ritual, and visualization facilitated use and contributed to functionality.

Medieval theological opinion and canon law on the subject of textual amulets tended to be negative, though inconsistently so. Just as the Latin fathers reviled textual amulets as pagan survivals showing demonic influence, Protestant reformers could blame continued amulet use on Roman Catholicism. Such negative opinions undoubtedly influenced many scholars in the nineteenth century and discouraged research on textual amulets. Early anthropologists and other scholars came to study (scientifically, they thought) irrational beliefs in fetishes and other magical objects among the non-Western peoples who had fallen under Western sway.[2] Archaeological discoveries opened new doors to research on magic in the ancient Near East and Mediterranean worlds, which to many scholars seemed as "exotic" as the magical practices of "primitive" peoples. Rationalism and Orientalism in the West have encouraged the mistaken view that textual amulets were curious manifestations of the "primitive" folk magic practiced by illiterate peasants in the lower orders of society. Popular ritual practices were seen as inherently inferior to scripture-based religion and not necessarily worthy of scholarly discourse. Spiritualism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did little to encourage academic respect for popular magic.

Modern historiography on textual amulets in the Middle Ages has not been particularly extensive. In the twentieth century, E. A. Wallis Budge, Lynn Thorndike, Liselotte Hansmann and Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck, and Jean Marquès-Rivière have treated textual amulets as a form of magic originating in the ancient Mediterranean world and comparable to non-Western practices. Useful older studies by Waldemar Deonna, Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, Alfons A. Barb, and G.J.M. Bartelink have emphasized continuity from late antiquity.[3] Unintentionally, these

2. Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London: Temple Smith, 1978), pp. 24–28; Gábor Klaniczay, *The Uses of Supernatural Power: The Transformations of Popular Religion in Medieval and Early-Modern Europe,* trans. Susan Singerman and edited by Karen Margolis (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), pp. 22–23; Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 2–3. Concerning European expansion and fetishes of "primitive" peoples, see William Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish, II: The Origin of the Fetish," *Res* 13 (Spring 1987): 23–45. Anthropologists have sometimes interpreted contemporary amulets as primitive fetishes. During World War I, the Italian anthropologist Giuseppe Bellucci documented contemporary Italian use of paper amulets based on standard textual elements, as well as the use of objects designed to confer good luck, success in love, protection against the Evil Eye, or safety in battle. Giuseppe Bellucci, *Il feticismo primitivo in Italia e le sue forme di adattamento,* 2nd edition, Tradizioni Popolari Italiane, no. 2 (Perugia: Unione Tipografica Provinciale, 1919), pp. 65, 75; Bellucci, *Folk-lore di Guerra,* Tradizioni popolari italiane, no. 6 (Perugia: Unione Tipografica Cooperativa, 1920), pp. 70–101; Bellucci, *Amuleti italiani antichi e contemporanei* (Palermo: "Il Vespro," 1980), pp. 54–59.

3. E. A. Wallis Budge, *Amulets and Superstitions: The Original Texts with Translations and Descriptions of a Long Series of Egyptian, Sumerian, Assyrian, Hebrew, Christian, Gnostic and*

views have made the medieval phenomenon appear to be a somewhat static continuation of older traditions. The meagerness of extant physical evidence before the thirteenth century has contributed to a lack of interest in textual amulets during the Middle Ages as a whole. Yet scattered journal articles have focused on late medieval artifacts from England, France, Germany, and Italy. Particularly valuable are articles by Curt F. Bühler and Franco Cardini, placing extant amulets in their historical, textual, and social contexts.[4] In recent decades, cultural historians emphasizing the folkloric element in medieval religion have made passing references to textual amulets as evidence of the survival of pre-Christian *mentalités*. Keith Thomas and Eamon Duffy have noted the persistence of textual amulets in England from the late Middle Ages through the Reformation. Their approach has tended to exaggerate the differences between church-sanctioned religion and peasant folk beliefs.[5] Excellent recent studies on ritual and demonic

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Muslim Amulets and Talismans and Magical Figures (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), republished as *Amulets and Talismans* (New Hyde Park, N.Y.: University Books, 1961); E. A. Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Magic,* Books on Egypt and Chaldea, no. 2 (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1899), esp. pp. 25–64; Liselotte Hansmann and Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Amulett und Talisman: Erscheinungsform und Geschichte* (Munich: Verlag Georg D.W. Callwey, 1966), pp. 119–46; Jean Marquès-Rivière, *Amulettes, talismans et pentacles dans les traditions orientales et occidentales* (Paris: Payot, 1972), especially chap. 6; Waldemar Deonna, "Abra, Abraca: La croix-talisman de Lausanne," *Genava* 22 (1944): 116–37; Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, "Survivance de la magie antique," in *Antike und Orient im Mittelalter: Vorträge der Kölner Mediävistentagungen, 1956–1959,* ed. Paul Wilpert, Miscellanea Mediaevalia, Veröffentlichungen des Thomas-Instituts an der Universität Köln, vol. 1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1962), pp. 154–78; Alfons A. Barb, "The Survival of Magic Arts," in *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century,* ed. Arnaldo Momigliano (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 100–25; G.J.M. Bartelink, "Φυλακτήριου-phylacterium," in *Mélanges Christine Mohrmann: Nouveau recueil offert par ses anciens élèves* (Utrecht, Antwerp: Spectrum Éditeurs, 1973), pp. 25–60.

4. Alphonse Aymar, "Le sachet accoucheur et ses mystères," *Annales du Midi* 38 (1926): 273–347; Louis Carolus-Barré, "Un nouveau parchemin amulette et la légende de Sainte Marguerite patronne des femmes en couches," *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. Comptes Rendus des Séances,* April–June 1979, 256–75; Curt F. Bühler, "Prayers and Charms in Certain Middle English Scrolls," *Speculum* 39 (1964): 270–78; Franco Cardini, "Il 'breve' (secoli XIV–XV): tipologia e funzione," *La ricerca folklorica* 5 (1982): 63–73; Don C. Skemer, "Written Amulets and the Medieval Book," *Scrittura e civiltà* 23 (1999): 253–305, and "Amulet Rolls and Female Devotion in the Late Middle Ages," *Scriptorium* 55, no. 2 (2001): 197–227, plate 51; Joseph-Claude Poulin, "Entre magie et religion: Recherches sur les utilisations marginales de l'écrit dans la culture populaire du haut moyen âge," in *La culture populaire au moyen âge: Études presentées au Quatrième colloque de l'Institut d'études médiévales de l'Université de Montreal, 2–3 avril 1977,* ed. Pierre Boglioni (Montréal: Les Éditions Univers, 1979), pp. 121–43; David Cressy, "Books as Totems in Seventeenth-Century England and New England," *Journal of Library History* 21, no. 1 (Winter 1986): 92–106; Jean Vezin, "Les livres utilisés comme amulettes et comme reliques," in *Das Buch als magisches und als Reprasentätionsobjekt,* ed. Peter Ganz, Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studien, vol. 5 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), pp. 101–15.

5. N.J.G. Pounds summarizes this approach and its shortcomings in *A History of the English Parish: The Culture of Religion from Augustine to Victoria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

magic have dealt only tangentially with textual amulets of the common tradition.[6] Edina Bozóky's *Charmes et prières apotropaïques* provides a useful overview of Western medieval sources for the study of verbal charms and incantations, but only briefly discusses textual amulets as *pièces individuelles* written down for personal protection and medical use.[7] Previous studies of textual amulets have tended to focus on particular time periods, geographical areas, and amuletic genres or functions. None of these studies has been a book-length treatment of the subject.

The goal of *Binding Words* is to study textual amulets over the *longue durée* of the Middle Ages, particularly the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, tracing this phenomenon as chronologically as possible within five thematically organized chapters. It proposes to examine textual amulets as a geographically widespread Western ritual practice at the nexus of religion, magic, science and written culture. The history of this practice can be pieced together from frequent but scattered references in a wide array of medieval sources, together with physical evidence in the form of extant textual amulets. To many scholars in the past, admittedly, Christian textual amulets have perhaps seemed to be commonplace "white magic," too practical and far less engaging than necromancy or natural magic, which were based on learned texts accessible to an intellectual elite and used to harness the power of the cosmos. Historically, it has been too easy to dismiss most textual amulets as a quaint folk practice predicated upon the irrational beliefs of ignorant peasants. When considered without the taint of primitive superstition, textual amulets can be appreciated as a widespread medieval ritual practice with its own intrinsic logic—as physical and cultural artifacts that can shed light on the history of magic and expand our knowledge of popular access to the written word during long centuries when few people could read at any level.

Press, 2000), pp. 326–27. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), especially chaps. 7–9; and Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400–1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), especially chaps. 7–8.

6. Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998); Claire Fanger, ed., *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).

7. Edina Bozóky, *Charmes et prières apotropaïques,* Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental, fasc. 86 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 72–78. Elsewhere she deals with textual amulets along with verbal charms, prayers, gems, relics, and other means of spiritual protection available to individuals in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries: Bozóky, "From Matter of Devotion to Amulets," *Medieval Folklore* 3 (1994): 91–107; Bozóky, "Les moyens de la protection privée," in "La protection spirituelle au Moyen Âge," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales (XIIIe–XVe s.)* 8 (2001): 175–92, and plates 1–8.

A Note on Terminology

Imprecise terminology has been an impediment to the serious study of textual amulets. English words such as *amulet, talisman, charm,* and *spell* can connote a superstitious belief in the magical power of particular objects and formulas, or an irrational invocation of supernatural or preternatural powers to influence natural events in ways transcending the norms of religious devotion and scientific certainty. Recent scholarship has tried to avoid the influence of the older view championed by Sir James G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough* and has tended to treat the concepts of magic and religion as unavoidable cultural constructs rather than mutually exclusive historical phenomena. Thoughtless use of terms may suggest an acceptance of untenable distinctions between magic and religion, which modern scholarship has worked hard to erase. While one cannot resolve all modern semantic disagreements over terminology, it is instructive to examine the descriptors that have been used to designate textual amulets.

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. Pliny the Elder (23–79 C.E.), an enemy of *magicae vanitates,* used the word *amuletum* in his *Historia naturalis* to refer to magical objects worn on the body in the expectation of receiving apotropaic, therapeutic, or exorcistic benefits. The word *amuletum* fell into disuse during the Middle Ages but was revived in the late sixteenth century by Renaissance writers on witchcraft and magic. In influential treatises the English Protestant Reginald Scot (1538?–99) and the learned Jesuit Martin Antoine Del Rio (1551–1608) used *amulet* and another classical term (*periapt*) to signify traditional textual amulets worn on the body.[8] The word *amulet* became more common in the seventeenth century.

8. Reginald Scot, *The Discouerie of Witchcraft, wherein the Lewde Dealings of Witches and Witchmongers is Notablie Detected* . . . ([London: William Brome], 1584), pp. 230–36 (bk. 12, chap. 9). Scot uses the word *amulet* synonymously with other terms in a chapter devoted to "Popish periapts, amulets and charmes, a wastcote of proofe, a charme for the falling euill, a writing brought to S. Leo from heaven by an angell, the virtues of S. Saviors epistle, a charme against theeves, a writing found in Christs wounds, of the cross, etc." It is perhaps significant that Pliny the Elder, who used the word *amuletum*, is listed among Scot's classical authorities. Martin Antoine del Rio, *Disquisitionum magicarum libri sex quibus continetur accurate curiosarum atrium, & vanarum superstitionum confutatio* . . . (Mainz: Apud Johannem Albinum, 1612), pp. 53–57 (lib. 1, cap. 4, qu. 4). Del Rio argues in his treatise, first printed in 1599–1601, that the efficacy of Christian amulets is due to the agency of God and of demonic amulets to that of the Devil, not to any inherent power of the words, formulas, symbols, and figures in the amulets (*amuleta*). For a discussion of Del Rio on amulets and talismans, see D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 180–81. Medieval uses of the word *amulet* are very rare and can be difficult to interpret. For example, the English author Osbern Bokenham (1392–ca. 1447), who was probably an Augustinian canon from the priory of Old Buckenham,

An English book of 1617 used it to mean a "preservative against sickness and death."[9] The lives of the saints in the Société des Bollandistes's *Acta sanctorum* contain many references to sacred *amuleta*. These were most often reliquary capsules, religious medals, wax *Agnus Dei,* and other objects worn around the neck to secure divine intercession and protection against disease or death.[10] Since the Enlightenment, scholars have tended to view amulets as small magical objects (or their carrying cases) carried, worn on the body, or kept in one's home in ancient and non-Western societies to protect people against evil spirits, visible or invisible enemies, personal misfortune, and sudden death and to help ward off the plague, cure specific maladies, or alleviate pain in certain parts of the body.

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),

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South Norfolk, seems to use the word *amulet* in the prolocutory to the *Life of Mary Magdalen* (l. 5230, "They baladys or amalettys lyst to make . . ."). See *Legendys of Hooly Wummen, by Osbern Bokenham, edited from MS. Arundel 327 by Mary S. Serjeantson,* Early English Text Society, Original Series, no. 206 (London: Published for the Early English Text Society by H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 143. Serjeantson has a note defining *amalettys* as "? Fr. *amulette,*" but she adds that the word was "not used regularly in the modern sense until after 1600. The sense as coupled with *baladys* is doubtful." *Legendys of Hooly Wummin,* pp. 292, 295. Sheila Delany has translated the word *amalettys* as "little booklets," which were not amulets. Osbern Bokenham, *A Legend of Holy Women: Translated, with an Introduction and Notes, by Sheila Delany,* Notre Dame Texts in Medieval Culture (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), p. 105: "And especially they like to make ballades and little booklets for their ladies' sake, in which they feign sorrow and weeping as if death constrained their hearts, even though they are far from death."

9. Abraham Man, *An Amulet or Preservative against Sicknes and Death in Two Parts: The First Containing Spirituall Direction for the Sicke at All Times Needfull, but especially in the Conflict of Sicknes and Agonie of Death: The Second, a Method or Order of Comforting the Sicke . . .* (London: Printed by R. F. for Thomas Man and Ionas Man, 1617). In his dedication to Lady Elizabeth Periam of Greenlands, the author Abraham Man, a minister in Henley-upon-Thames, noted, "Against all which fearefull & dangerous affairs of death, of sinne, & of Satan, here in this small Treatise are prouided & selected (out of the rich Armorie of the sacred Scriptures) seuerall and peculiar weapons, and armour of proofe, both defensiue, & offensiue, both for the withstanding and resisting, and also for the repelling and quenching of all the fierie darts of the wicked." *Early English Books Online* from a copy in the Sion College Library (*English Short Title Catalogue,* 2nd edition, 17238.5) at http://eebo.chadwyck.com.

10. *Acta sanctorum* at http://acta.chadwyck.com, passim. An edition of Prudentius's hymn on the passion of St. Lawrence, in *Patrologia cursus completus . . . Series latina* [hereinafter, *Patrologia latina*], ed. J. P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris: J. P. Migne, 1844–64), vol. 60, cols. 331–32, cites Francesco Vettori (1693–1770), *Dissertatio philologica qua nonnulla monimenta sacrae vetustatis ex Museo Victorio deprompta* (Rome: Typographeio Palladis, 1751): "ex plumbo laminam rotundam, quae ab aliquo Christiano, ut credere aequum est, deferebatur collo appensa, veluti sacrum amuletum ad ejusdem apud Deum obtinedam intercessionem, de quibus sacris amuletis multa ibi Victorius." G.J.C. Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist: A Process of Mutual Interaction,* Studies in the History of Christian Thought, vol. 63 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), p. 3: "In the pre- and early medieval period both relics and Eucharist were retained in private dwellings and accompanied a corpse to the grave as a means of protection. Within the same context, relics and the Eucharist were carried in an amulet worn by travellers."

which became the loan word *tilsām* in Arabic. Since the seventeenth century, the word *talisman* has been used in the West most often to signify astrological seals and figures.[11] Talismans of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries were most often inscribed, engraved, or drawn on jewelry, small metal plaques or disks, semi-precious stones (different ones being associated with particular planetary forces), ceramics, and other objects.[12] The magical efficacy of talismans, unlike that of most textual amulets, relied primarily on images of the planets and other heavenly bodies, signs of the zodiac, symbols of the constellations, and other powerful images (for example, Solomonic pentacles). Magicians inscribed or otherwise imprinted these images on particular materials under propitious astrological conditions, though magicians could also invoke the powers of non-Christian angels and spirits.

Talismans did not require text, nor did they have to be worn on the body to be considered effective. They were most often used to confer not general but specific protection; for example, ridding oneself of vermin, protecting a traveler, improving memory or sexual prowess, having good luck, curing a high fever, or binding thieves so that they could not enter one's house.[13] Unlike textual amulets

11. For example, Jean Albert Belin, *Traité des talismans ou figures astrales: dans lequel est monstré que leurs effets, & vertus admirables sont naturelles, & enseigné la manière de les faire, & de s'en seruir auec vn profit & advantage merveilleux* (Paris: P. de Bresche, 1658). There were subsequent editions in 1664, 1671, 1674, 1679, and 1709. See Johann Georg Theodor Grässe, "Von Amuleten, Talismanen und Zaubersiegeln," in *Bibliotheca magica et pneumatica oder wissenschaftlich geordnete Bibliographie* (Leipzig: W. Engelmann, 1843; repr., Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1960), pp. 39–40.

12. Some specialists in learned magic and astrology distinguish between amulets as natural substances (without images) worn on the body and talismans as the product of human action. Inscribing or engraving an artificial figure (often but not exclusively astrological) on a stone, according to this view, turned an amulet into a talisman. David Pingree, "The Diffusion of Arabic Magical Texts in Western Europe," in *La diffusione delle scienze islamische nel medioevo europeo (Roma, 2–4 ottobre 1984): Convegno internationale promosso dall'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Fondazione Leone Caetani e dall'Università di Roma "La Sapienza,"* ed. Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti (Rome: L'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1987), pp. 57–102 (especially p. 58); Brian P. Copenhaver, "Scholastic Philosophy and Renaissance Magic in the *De Vita* of Marsilio Ficino," *Renaissance Quarterly* 37 (1984): 523–54 (especially 530); Nicolas Weill-Parot, *Les "images astrologiques" au moyen âge et à la renaissance: Spéculations intellectuelles et pratiques magiques (XIIe–XVe siècle),* Sciences, Techniques et Civilizations du Moyen Âge à l'Aube des Lumières, vol. 6 (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2002), pp. 102–3, 905.

13. Budge, *Amulets and Talismans,* pp. 12–14; Suzanne Eastman Sheldon, "Middle English and Latin Charms, Amulets, and Talismans from Vernacular Manuscripts" (Ph.D. diss., Tulane University, 1978), pp. 33–44; Hans Biedermann, *Handlexikon der magischen Künste von der Spätantike bis zum 19. Jahrhundert,* 2nd edition (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1973), p. 482: "Talisman . . . der Glücksbringen ist (im Gegensatz zum Amulett, das Unglück abwehren soll)." André Bernard, *Sorciers grecs* ([Paris]: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1991), p. 22; Charles Burnett, "Talismans: Magic as Science? Necromancy Among the Seven Liberal Arts," in *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages: Texts and Techniques in the Islamic and Christian Worlds,* Variorum Collected Studies Series, CS577 (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), pp. 1–13.

of the common tradition of magic, talisman production required knowledge of astrology, lapidary arts, and complex rituals mastered by elite practitioners who were able to read handbooks based on magical learning of ancient or Near Eastern origin.[14] A recent distinction between an amulet and a talisman is that the former protects and the latter brings good luck.[15] This book will make some reference to talismans, but they are not its focus.

Charm is another word sometimes used to mean textual amulet. The word *charm* is derived from the Latin *carmen,* which like the Greek word ἔπος, can mean "poem," "song," or "magic spell." Unlike amulets and talismans, charms are not necessarily objects. In English, the word can refer to a verbal charm, enchantment, or fascination in the form of an incantation, conjuration, adjuration, or exorcism. A charm could be either a "good" *carmen* intended to protect, heal, and produce beneficial effects by supernatural means or an aggressive *malum carmen* or evil designed to bind, control, and injure. Charm texts are generally brief and intended for verbal use (sometimes aided by rhyme and meter, as in the case of a jingle), conferring specific protection against particular problems, especially health-related ones such as difficult childbirth, toothache, or fevers. Healing charms were most often "speech acts." Lea T. Olsan has defined charms as "spoken, chanted and written formulas, derived ultimately from a traditional oral genre and circulated both by word of mouth and through manuscript and amuletic texts."[16] Verbal charms were written down in codices as an aide-mémoire for personal or communal reference and as a means of textual dissemination, and they could also be turned into textual amulets by being written down on a piece of parchment or paper and worn on the body.[17] Conversely, amuletic texts written down in codices could be used as verbal charms.

14. Richard Kieckhefer, "The Common Tradition of Medieval Magic," in *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 56–94; Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits,* p. vii: "As a genre of text, then, ritual magic has certain characteristics: it describes what are normally fairly long and complex rituals for obtaining a variety of different kinds of benefits to the operator through the conjuring of spirits. . . . Ritual magic may thus be distinguished—again on the basis of genre—from medieval spells, charms and folk magic, which generally involve much shorter rituals, need not have been composed or performed by literate people, and in the early period sometimes invoke recognizable local pagan entities in addition to Christian ones."

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

16. Bozóky, *Charmes et prières apotropaïques,* pp. 34–36; Thomas R. Forbes, "Verbal Charms in British Folk Medicine," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 115, no. 4 (1971): 293–316 (especially 313); Lea T. Olsan, "Charms in Medieval Memory," in *Charms and Charming in Europe,* ed. Jonathan Roper (Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 60.

17. Campbell Bonner described textual amulets found among ancient Egyptian magical papyri as "charms and incantations written on small pieces of papyrus, then rolled or folded into compact form and worn upon the person." Campbell Bonner, *Studies in Magic Amulets, chiefly Graeco-Egyptian,*

Today, the English word *charm* (in the sense of "written charm") sometimes indicates a textual amulet, as it did in the past; for example, in a nineteenth-century American broadside with two printed "charms."[18] But one should remember that some textual elements found in amulets had never functioned as verbal charms or "speech acts." The word *charm* can also refer to a motto or brief inscription on a piece of jewelry or other material object, whose possession was thought to confer protection, good fortune, and healing, and even to an apotropaic object without text (for example, a rabbit's foot), which one might think of as a "good-luck charm." So it can be difficult to draw clear distinctions between amulets (with or without text) and charms (oral or written).[19] Even more misleading than the word *charm,* when applied to textual amulets, are the terms "magic spell," often indicating verbal charms or aggressive curses,[20] and "fetish," when the latter indicates a material object endowed with magical powers, rather than an object that has become the focus of a person's sexual obsession.[21]

Modern scholarship has used different terms to signify textual amulets and has applied them inconsistently. Unfortunately, medieval writers did so as well. In the fourth century, the church fathers adopted the terms *ligatura* and *phylacterium* to refer to pagan and Christian amulets written on papyrus. The Latin word *ligatura* had various meanings, from the sewing that bound together the

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University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series, vol. 49 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), p. 2.

18. "A True Narration, An Effectual Charm against Fire and Pestilence," Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. Printed on a piece of paper measuring 14.3 × 18.0 cm, the broadside itself served as a textual amulet. Its second "charm," based on the SATOR AREPO magic square, explains, "This charm is an excellent remedy against convulsions in children. Write the 25 letters on a piece of paper in the order in which they stand in the table, and bind the paper on the back of the child for three times in twenty-four hours."

19. Erwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period,* Bollingen Series, no. 37 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953), vol. 2, p. 208: "Any line drawn between amulets and charms must be an arbitrary one. In the material we are discussing, we are for practical purposes distinguishing between charms as verbal and amulets as objects containing a graphic symbol: charms are ritualistic prescriptions, amulets are things with symbols on them which operate simply by being worn on the person, though objects which are amulets in themselves, the rabbit's foot as such, the opal or obsidian as such, lie outside our special interest. Even the distinction so made often breaks down, for many of the charms written on papyrus or parchment were worn on the person, or affixed to the house. . . . I use the term amulets for objects meant to be worn, while formulae and prescriptions for magical practice have been discussed as charms. The distinction, while it is often of no help, has at least working value in allowing us to make a division of the material."

20. One can appreciate the vagueness of the reference to spells in William Schwenck Gilbert's lyrics to a patter song about the rural trade in magic (Gilbert and Sullivan, *The Sorcerer,* 1877): "My name is John Wellington Wells, I'm a dealer in magic and spells, in blessings and curses and ever-fill'd purses, in prophecies, witches, and knells."

21. Siegfried Seligmann, *Die magischen Heil- und Schutzmittel aus der unbelebten Natur mit besonderer Berücksichting der Mittel gegen den bösen Blick: Eine Geschichte des Amulettwesens* (Stuttgart: Strechek und Schröder, 1927), pp. 56–57.

boards and quires of book in codex format, to an herbal or textual amulet worn around the neck (*colli suspensio*) or bound to another part of the body. Talmudic commentators could use the Hebrew loan word *glturi,* probably taken from the plural *ligaturae,* to refer to textual amulets.[22] Latin church fathers and canon lawyers preferred the word *phylacterium,* derived from the Greek φυλακτήριον, which had originally signified fortification or protection. From the Hellenistic period the Greek word was used to refer to an amulet or similar protective device or preservative, though it could identify an aggressive love amulet designed to induce affection in other people toward the person wielding the φυλακτήριον. In Greek and Coptic magical papyri of the fifth and sixth centuries, the word *phylactery* could refer specifically to a textual amulet.[23]

The Latin word *phylacterium* had variant spellings, such as *filaterium* and *filacteria,* as well as vernacular equivalents such as *filatiere* in Old French and *filateries* in Middle English.[24] References to phylacteries can be difficult to interpret. Depending on context, the word could refer to pagan amulets that included magical incantations. For example, the Roman Correctors' glosses of Gratian define phylacteries as pieces of writing material (*chartae*) on which such incantations have been written.[25] The word could also refer to Jewish phylacteries

22. Daniel Sperber, *Magic and Folklore in Rabbinic Literature,* Bar-Ilan Studies in Near Eastern Languages and Culture (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1994), pp. 74–78.

23. Naomi Janowitz, *Icons of Power: Ritual Practices in Late Antiquity,* Magic in History (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), pp. 60–61; Christopher A. Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 107–8; Robert W. Daniel and Franco Maltomini, eds., *Supplementum magicum,* Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Sonderreihe Papyrologica Coloniensia, vol. 16, no. 1 (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992), vol. 1, pp. 62 (no. 23), 76 (no. 28), 100 (no. 34a). In addition to φυλακτήριον, Byzantine writers used other Greek words to suggest protection, charms, magic prayers, binding, ritual, and other aspects of textual amulets. Among the most common Greek words were αποτροπαιν, περιάμματον, περιάπτον, τέλεσμα, and ενκολπιον. Jacob Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie,* 4th edition (Berlin: Ferdinand Dümmlers Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1876), vol. 2, pp. 982–83; vol. 3, pp. 344–45; Bartelink, "Φυλακτήριον-phylacterium," p. 27; *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium,* s.v. "Amulets"; Anastasia D. Vakaloudi, "Δεισιδαιμονία and the Role of the Apotropaic Magic Amulets in the Early Byzantine Empire," in "Volume offert au Professeur Justin Mossay," special issue, *Byzantion: Revue internationale des études byzantines* 70, no. 1 (2000): 190.

24. Bartelink, "Φυλακτήριον-phylacterium," pp. 25–60. In an Old French version of the *Decretum, phylacteria* was translated as *filatieres.* Leena Löfstedt, ed., *Gratiani Decretum: La traduction en ancien français du Décret de Gratien,* Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum, vol. 105 (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1996), vol. 3, p. 226 (causa 26, qu. 5, cap. 1): "Si quis ariolos. Se aucons garde les devineeurs ou les enchanteurs ou il use de filatieres, il soit escommeniez." Wyclif's 1382 translation of Matthew 22:5 reads, "Thei alargen her filateries," defined in the glosses as small rolls (*smale scrowis*).

25. *Decretum Gratiani emendatum et notationibus illustratum unà cum glossis, Gregorii XIII. Pont. Max. iussu editum* (Rome: In Aedibus Populi Romani, 1584), vol. 2, pt. 2, p. 1370 (causa 27, qu. 5, cap. 1): "Phylacteria dicuntur hic chartae, in quibus continentur incantationes."

(*tefillin*),[26] or to portable Christian reliquaries or pectoral crosses (with or without inscriptions) worn around the neck. Reliquary phylacteries could serve as suspension capsules or containers for holy relics.[27] In his *Rationale divinorum officiorum,* the French theologian and liturgist Johannes Belethus (d. 1182) distinguishes between Christian *phylacteria* (feminine singular) containing holy relics and Jewish *phylacteria* (neuter plural), which he incorrectly believed were small sheets of parchment (*chartula*) containing the Ten Commandments or Decalogue.[28] It is perhaps fortunate that medievalists have tended not to use the word *phylactery,* with its many meanings

26. *Tefillin* are narrow parchment strips filled with extracts from Exodus (13:1–10, 13:11–16) and Deuteronomy (6:4–9, 11:13–21), as well as Hebrew letters spelling out the divine name meaning the Almighty. The strips were configured into flattened rolls (as opposed to cylindrical ones), tied with sinew thread, and housed in leather boxes (*batim*), which were attached to the forehead (hence the word "frontlets") and to the left arm by black-and-white leather straps. *Tefillin* reminded Jews of their obligation to keep God's law. When wound around the left arm, *tefillin* served a memorial function by resting directly on the heart during Morning Prayer. "Therefore shall ye lay up these My words in your heart and in your soul, and ye shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be frontlets between your eyes" (Deuteronomy 11:18). Once the words were known by heart, phylacteries played the role of a memorial *signum* helping to remind one of Jewish law. *Tefillin* were properly worn on days other than the Sabbath, not all day like an amulet. For a modern overview, see Mosheh Chanina Neiman, *Tefillin: An Illustrated Guide to Their Makeup and Use,* trans. Dovid Oratz (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 1995), p. 131: "A Jew wearing tefillin is said to be 'girded in strength' and 'crowned in glory.'"

27. Bartelink, "Φυλακτήριον-phylacterium," pp. 55–60; Giacomo Manganaro, "Documenti magici della Sicilia del III al VI, sec. d.C.," *Studi tardoantichi* 6 (1989): 14, 15, 18; Snoek, *Medieval Piety,* pp. 81–90, 98. Modern scholars have viewed relics as a form of magic because of their apotropaic and prophylactic functions. For example, see Edina Bozóky, "La culte des reliques de l'Antiquité au XIe siècle," in *Reliques et reliquaires du XIIème au XVIème siècle: Trafic et négoce des reliques dans l'Europe médiévale* (Saint-Riquier: Musée Départmental de l'Abbaye de Saint-Riquier; Somme: Conseil Général de la Somme, 2000), p. 11: "Si, au début les restes des saints rappelaient aux fidèles la mémoire d'hommes et des femmes exemplaires, representant des modèles de vie (et de mort) à imiter, rapidement la possession des reliques acquit des functions apotropaïque et prophylactique: les nouvelles croyances transformaient les 'reliques-souvenirs' en 'reliques-talismans.'"

28. Perhaps some Christian writers thought that *tefillin* were not only textual amulets but also contained the divine commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai because the text of the tablets were popularly believed to resist demonic machinations, in a sense like textual amulets. *Rationale divinorum officiorum,* in *Patrologia latina,* vol. 202, col. 120 (chap. 115): "Phylacterium enim chartula est, in qua decem legis praecepta scribebantur; cujusmodi chartas solebant ante suos oculos circumferre Pharisaei in signum religionis. . . . Phylacteria autem, phylacteriae, vasculum est vel argentum, vel aureum, vel crystallinum, in quod sanctorum cineres et reliquae reponuntur." This distinction is drawn in Charles du Fresne, sire du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis* (Niort: Léopold Favre, 1863), vol. 6, p. 307, and in Joseph Schmidt, *Kirchenlateinisches Wörterbuch,* ed. Albert Sleumer (Limburg an der Lahn: Verlag von Gebrüder Steffen, 1926). We read in "De dolo et conspiracione et autela ipsis contraria," chap. 21 of the *Gesta romanorum,* ed. Hermann Österley (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1872), pp. 318–19: "Rex iste dominus noster Ihesus Christus perpendens, quod diabolus, qui est rex super omnes filios superbie, omnes quasi infinitis machinacionibus moliretur destruere, accepit tabulas, de quibus ad litteram dicitur Exod. III, tabulas videlicet Moysi, scripsit que in eis informacionem sufficientem contra demonem et machinacionem ejus. Sicque per nunciam fidelem scilicet Moysen civitati humani generis destinavit."

Medieval terminology often defined textual amulets as brief written texts or the materials upon which they were written. Rubrics and embedded instructions in textual amulets and their exemplars often use Latin terms such as *charta, chartula, cedula, scheda, schedula,* and vernacular equivalents to indicate textual amulets written on parchment or paper.[29] Amuletic texts could also be inscribed on small metal sheets (*lamellae* or *laminae*) for medical use on the body, though these are not the focus of this book. One must carefully evaluate the context in which such terms were used.[30] For example, the word *scheda* could mean a "literary trifle" in the twelfth century but in the late thirteenth century the preliminary draft of a text or document.[31] From the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, we find terms such as *littera, litterula, scriptura,* and *scriptum*. The Latin word *littera* (like the Greek γράμματα) could refer to the letter as a writing form such as an epistle, or in the sense of writing letters of the alphabet by hand to form words. Latin words like *brevis* and *breve* also emphasized the textuality of relatively brief writings on single sheets, which were letter-like in size, appearance, and format.[32] Equivalent vernacular terms (including

29. Byzantine compilations of exorcisms and incantations instruct readers to write out particular amuletic texts on a single sheet of writing material (χάρτης) or an ostrakon. A. Vassiliev, ed., *Anecdota graeco-byzantina: Pars prior* (Moscow: Sumptibus et typis Universitatis Caesareae, 1893), pp. 332–45 (sec. 18, "Exorcismi sive incantationes").

30. Olivier Guyotjeannin, "Le vocabulaire de la diplomatique en latin medieval: Noms de l'acte, mise par écrit, tradition, critique, conservation," in *Vocabulaire du livre et de l'écriture au moyen âge: Actes de la table ronde, Paris 24–26 septembre 1987,* ed. Olga Weijers, Études sur le Vocabulaire Intellectuel du Moyen Âge, vol. 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989), pp. 119–34.

31. Ernst Christian Wilhelm Wattenbach, *Das Schriftwesen im Mittelalter,* 3rd edition (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1896), pp. 68n, 188–89, 198n. The German equivalent is *Zettel.* R. E. Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources* (London: Published for the British Academy by the Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 423 ("scheda"); *Theophilus: The Various Arts,* with a translation by C. R. Dodwell, Nelson's Medieval Texts (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1961), pp. lxxiii, 4. The title of the Theophilus text was sometimes rendered *Schedula diversarum artium,* with the word *schedula* being used in the sense of an essay or writings. See Joseph Bidez et al., *Manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de Paris antérieur au XVIIe siècle,* vol. 1 of *Catalogue des manuscrits alchimiques latins* (Brussels: Union Académique Internationale, 1939), pp. 43–44. Lloyd W. Daly, ed., *Brito Metricus: A Mediaeval Verse Treatise on Greek and Hebrew Words,* Haney Foundation Series, no. 2 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), p. 88, ll. 1782–83: "Nondum correctum necdum libro situatum / Sceda notat scriptum; designat idem protocollum." Johannes Trithemius (1462–1516), in his treatise *De laude scriptorum,* used the word *scheda* to mean a rough draft that needed reworking and final redaction. Johannes Trithemius, *In Praise of Scribes; De laude scriptorum,* edited with an introduction by Klaus Arnold (Lawrence, Kan.: Coronado Press, 1974), pp. 80–81.

32. Du Cange, *Glossarium,* vol. 1, p. 745; Otto Prinz, ed., *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch bis zum Ausgehenden 13. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1967), vol. 1, col. 1575; Albert Blaise, *Lexicon latinitatis medii aevi,* Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975), p. 115; Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List,* p. 56; R. E. Latham, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (London: British Academy, 1975), fascicule I (A-B), p. 216; Johanne W. Fuchs and Olga Weijers, *Lexicon latinitatis nederlandicae medii aevi: Woordenboek van*

diminutives) were common in the late Middle Ages: *breve, brieve,* or *brevucci* in Italian; *brief* or *brevet* in Old French; *breu* in Occitan and Catalan; and *Brief, Brievelin,* and *Brievel* in German.[33] *Brevis* and its vernacular equivalents could refer either to an entire textual amulet or to a separate amuletic text, whether in a textual amulet or a bound collection of exemplars.[34]

Words could also be combined when referring to textual amulets. In the twelfth century, Heinrich von Lorsch defined textual amulets as *brieuili* containing written magical incantations, and Old High German glosses sometimes identified phylacteries as magical writing (*zaubargiscrib* or variant spellings).[35] Germans combined terms as in *Briefzettel* (combining equivalents of *brevis* and *cedula*), a practice leading to compound words such as *Amulettzettel, Konzeptionszettel, Hausbrief, Himmelsbrief, Pestbrief, Sonntagsbrief,* and *Zauberbrief.*[36]

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het Middeleeuws latijn van de noordelijke Nederlanden (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), vol. 1, B164. Jurists also used *brevis* to mean a brief text in booklet format. Alberico da Rosate, *Alberici de Rosate Bergomensis iurisconsulti celeberrimi dictionarium iuris tam ciuilis quam canonici,* ed. Giovanni Francesco Deciani (Venice: Apud Guerreos fratres et socios, 1573), p. 86: "Breuibus, idest scripturis, vel quaternis. . . . Breuis scriptura dicitur vnius quaterni, vel quinterni."

33. *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (Florence: Tipografia Galileiana di M. Cellini, 1866), vol. 2, p. 268; Salvatore Battaglia, *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana* (Turin: Editrice Torinese, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 368; Bellucci, *Il feticismo primitivo,* p. 65; Frédéric Eugène Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et tous ses dialectes du IXe au XVe siècle* (Paris: F. Vieweg, Libraire-Éditeur, 1881), vol. 1, pp. 732; Adolf Tobler, *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch,* ed. Erhard Lommatzsch (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1925), vol. 1, pp. 1146–47; Edmond Huguet, *Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle* (Paris: Didier, 1925), vol. 1, p. 706; Pierre Augustin Boisier de Sauvages, *Dictionnaire languedocien-françois* (Nîmes: Gaude, 1785), 2 vols.; Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirtel, 1860), vol. 2, col. 379; Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, ed., *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* (Berlin, Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1927), vol. 1, cols. 1573–75; Wilhelm Müller, *Mittelhochdeutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel Verlag, 1854–66), vol. 2, pp. 247–48; *Matthias Lexers Mittelhochdeutsches Taschenwörterbuch* (Stuttgart: S. Hirzel Verlag, 1966), p. 26.

34. Literary sources that use the word do so to refer to an entire textual amulet. Early printed amulets in vernacular languages are referred to internally in the same way; for example, the German broadside amulet that calls itself a *Brief,* which is reproduced in Hansmann und Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Amulett und Talisman,* p. 120, fig. 305; p. 127, fig. 334. The word *breve* was used similarly in manuscripts including amuletic texts for use as exemplars. One in a French manuscript (London, British Library, Harley MS 273, fol. 214v) ends with the words "Et te defendat ab omni malo et ab omnibus febribus et per breve amen." A fourteenth-century English manuscript containing prayers, medicinal recipes, and amuletic texts (London, British Library, Royal MS 12.B.xxv) uses the word *breve* to mean a brief magical text written out for use as a textual amulet. Lea T. Olsan, "Latin Charms in British Library, MS Royal 12.B.XXV," *Manuscripta* 33 (July 1989): 122.

35. Reiner Hildebrandt, ed., *Summarium Heinrici,* Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker, Neue Folge, no. 78/202 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1982), vol. 2, pp. 118, 305: "Filacteria brieuili vel turpia cantica." Heinrich Wesche, *Der althochdeutsche Wortschatz im Gebiete des Zaubers und der Weissagung,* Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache, no. 1 (Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1940), pp. 56–58.

36. Hoffmann-Krayer, *Handwörterbuch,* vol. 1, col. 1576; Theodor Heinsius, *Volkthümliches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (Hannover: Hahnsche Hofbuchhandlung, 1818), vol. 1, p. 629;

In the fourteenth century, Jacopo Passavanti identified the *brieve* as a variety of *legatura*. Based on Giovanni Boccaccio's use of the word *breve* for a textual amulet, the humanist Francesco Alunno defined *breve* as *una picciola scrittura*.[37] Later French and Italian writers continued to use vernacular equivalents of *brevis*.[38] In Italy from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, the words *brevia* and *orationes* were sometimes used together to refer to textual amulets containing Christian appeals for protection and healing. Yet zealous ecclesiastical inquisitors were wont to dismiss amuletic *orationes* as "superstitious prayers," and this characterization found its way into scholarship.[39]

English terminology differed somewhat from Continental usage. Anglo-Saxon textual amulets could be called letters or writings; for example, *stafas* (plural of *staef*), *pistol* (adapted from the Latin *epistola*), and *gewrit* or *writ*.[40] After the

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Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: S. Hirtel Verlag, 1913), vol. 15, p. 331; Alfred Lehmann, *Aberglaube und Zauberei von den ältesten Zeiten an bis die Gegenwart,* 3rd edition (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1925), p. 126; Karl Sudhoff, "Zum Amulett für Schwangere," *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 3, nos. 4–5 (December 1909): 352.

37. Jacopo Passavanti, *Lo specchio della vera penitenzia di Fr. Jacopo Passavanti fiorentino dell'ordine de' predicatori dato in luce dagli Accademici della Crusca* (Florence: Nella stamperia di S.A.R. per li Tartini, e Franchi, 1725), pp. 254–55: "Non hanno efficacia veruna qualunque parole dette, o portate addosso scritte, per modo di brieve o d'altra legatura, eziando le parole della Scrittura Santa, o il Vangelio di San Giovanni." Francesco Alunno, *Le ricchezze della lingua volgare sopra il Boccaccio* (Venice: G. M. Bonelli, 1555; repr., Milan: Ugo-Merendi Editore, 1962), unpaginated.

38. Seventeenth-century French writers used words such as *brevet* and *billet,* and in later centuries Italians used the words *brevetto* and *brevino* along with *breve* for small fabric amulets containing devotional images. Jean-Baptiste Thiers, *Traité des superstitions selon l'écriture sainte, les decrets des conciles et les sentiments des saints pères et des theologiens* (Paris: A. Dezalier, 1679), pp. 406–19; Waldemar Deonna, "À l'Escalade de 1602: Les 'billets' du Pêre Alexandre," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde* 40, no. 3–4 (1942–44): 74–105. In recent years, Daniel Fabre has used the French terms *brevet* or *brevet magique* to mean textual amulet. Daniel Fabre, "Le livre et sa magie," in *Pratiques de la lecture,* ed. Roger Chartier, Petite Bibliothèque Payot, no. 167 (Paris: Éditions Payot, 1993), pp. 247, 260 n. 20. Augusto Calderara, *Abraxas: Glossario dei termini di sostanze, formule et oggetti usati in pratiche magiche o terapeutiche citati nei documenti di Abratassa* (Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi Editore, 1989), p. 38 and unnumbered plates reproducing five nineteenth-century examples.

39. The Italian physician Antonio Guaineri (d. ca. 1448) used the formula *brevia sive orationes*. Weill-Parot, *Les "images astrologiques,"* p. 568. Seventeenth-century Venetian inquisitors labeled an Italian broadside amulet as an *orazione superstiziosa* (Venice, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Sant'Uffizio di Venezia, b. 120). Reproduced in Carlos Gilly and Cis van Heertum, eds., *Magia, alchimia, scienza dal '400 al '700: L'influsso di Ermete Trismegisto* (Venice: Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana; Amsterdam: Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, 2000), vol. 1, p. 111. Victor Leroquais discussed *prières superstitieuses,* in French books of hours. These prayers included the Heavenly Letter and other amuletic texts offering divine protection or years of indulgence automatically to those who wore them or said them daily. Rubrics in books of hours labeled these prayers *orationes* or *oraisons* and misattributed them to authors such as St. Augustine. Victor Leroquais, *Les livres d'heures: Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris: n.p., 1927), vol. 1, pp. xxx–xxxi.

40. Felix Grendon, "Anglo-Saxon Charms," *Journal of American Folk-Lore* 22, no. 84 (April–June 1909): 202–3 (D7, D8, D9), 204–5 (D10).

Norman Conquest, Latin terms such as *breve* and equivalents in Anglo-Norman French and Middle English (*brief, breve,* and the diminutive *brevet*) were generally restricted to judicial orders or other relatively brief legal instruments in epistolary form, addressed and dispatched to an individual. The common denominator between amuletic and documentary uses of the English word *writ* was the notion of a brief, authoritative text set down on a small piece of writing material.[41] In fourteenth-century English manuscripts with versions of the apocryphal Heavenly Letter, the Anglo-Norman word *brif* or *brief* refers to the actual letter of protection worn on the body.[42] In the fifteenth century, the word *writ* could indicate a textual amulet or one of the amuletic texts comprising it, as in a Middle English version of the Heavenly Letter ("and ley this wryt on a seke man or womman") and in English instructions for a Latin birthing amulet ("For a womon Þat travels on child: Bind Þis writt to hir theghe").[43] William Caxton used both the Gallicism *breuette* (brevet) and the Middle English word *wrytynges* in *The Doctrinal of Sapience* (1489) to refer to textual amulets.[44] In later centuries, English household miscellanies and recipe books sometimes contain references to writs, in the sense of "magic writs" (that is, textual amulets).[45]

41. Hans Kurath, ed., *Middle English Dictionary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957), pt. B.1, p. 1160; *Black's Law Dictionary,* 6th edition (St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing, 1990), pp. 190–92. In *Forma brevium,* a common-law text found in manuscript miscellany of the early fourteenth century in the Cambridge University Library (MS Mm.1.30), the writ is succinctly described as *breve expressum recti.* J. H. Baker, *A Catalogue of English Legal Manuscripts in Cambridge University Library* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1996), p. 447.

42. Ruth J. Dean, *Anglo-Norman Literature: A Guide to Texts and Manuscripts,* Anglo-Norman Text Society, Occasional Publications Series, no. 3 (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1999), pp. 454–55, nos. 882, 884. The references given are London, British Library, Harley MS 1260, fol. 230a, and Copenhagen, Biblioteca Amamgnaenske, AM 414.12°, pp. 333–40.

43. Nita Scudder Baugh, *A Worcester Miscellany Compiled by John Northwood, c. 1400. Edited from British Museum MS. Add. 37787* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1956), p. 154; Tony Hunt, *Popular Medicine in Thirteenth-Century England: Introduction and Texts* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1990), p. 98, no. 89 (London, British Library, Sloane MS 3160, fol. 169r). K. Helm, "Mittelalterliche Gebetsbenediktionen," *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde* 9 (1910): 208–11; W. Carew Hazlitt, ed., *Brand's Popular Antiquities of Great Britain. Faiths and Folklore: A Dictionary of National Beliefs, Superstitions and Popular Customs, Past and Current, with Their Classical and Foreign Analogues, Described and Illustrated* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1905), vol. 2, p. 379.

44. William Caxton, *The Doctrinal of Sapience,* ed. Joseph Gallagher, Middle English Texts, vol. 26 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1993), p. 55. Caxton's book was a Middle English translation of the fourteenth-century French tract *Lo doctrinal de sapiensa,* which in turn was an elaboration on a short tract by Guy de Roye when he was archbishop of Sens from 1385 to 1390. Parish priests would have been the primary audience for *The Doctrinal of Sapience.* For the customary Middle English uses of *bref* and *brevet,* aside from Caxton's Gallicism, see Kurath, *Middle English Dictionary,* vol. 2 (pt. B1), pp. 1125–26, 1160.

45. For example, the word *writ* is used in this way in a seventeenth-century English household "receipt book," derived in part from recipes kept by a certain "Lady Sandys," possibly the wife of the Jacobean statesman Sir Edwin Sandys (1561–1629). Princeton University Library, Robert

The Latin or Middle English words for *charm* medieval English writers tended to use could refer either to textual amulets or to verbal charms or incantations in prose or rhyming verse, intended to secure supernatural power or marvelous effects. Verbal charms could be transmitted either verbally or in written form. Chaucer sometimes used the word *charm* in the sense of a verbal formula, as in *Troilus and Creisyde* (2:1578–80), but in the *Canterbury Tales* the word is sometime ambiguous, possibly referring to verbal charms or textual amulets.[46] Chaucer's contemporary, the English poet William Langland, drew an interesting terminological distinction in the C-version of *Piers Plowman.* The allegorical figure Spes (that is, Hope or Moses) had a document that was inscribed with two divine commandments (instead of the full Decalogue). One was commanded to love God and one's neighbor ("Dilige deum et proximum"). Langland referred to the document as a "writ," "letter," "patent," "charm," or "maundement." But when a written document could save Christian souls from the Devil and torments of Hell, Langland preferred the word *charm,* in the sense of a textual amulet that required some sort of ritual performance, not just sincere faith in God, to be effective.[47]

In written form, charms might be equated with *characteres,* derived from the Greek word χαρακτήρ; it was also rendered *caracter* in Latin and *carecter* or *carrecte* in Middle English. *Characteres* might be a series of *verba* inscribed in a figure, talismanic sigil, or seal, and functioning as the written form of a verbal

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Taylor Collection, Bound MS 208, fol. 34r–v: "A writ for a madd dogg or any beast bitten with a mad dogg. ✠ quare ✠ uare ✠ brare ✠ arabus ✠ arabris ✠ albus ✠ abbris ✠ rew ✠ few ✠ these words above written must be given the dog bitten, written upon any thinge the dog will eat, or any other beast, in like sort it may be given upon a leafe or any such thinge." A word equivalent to *writ* or *brevet* might be *scrip,* meaning a small scrap of paper with writing. The word *scrip* is a variant of the Middle English word *skript* (from the Latin *scriptum*), influenced by the word *scrap;* it should not to be confused with pilgrims' *scrip* (that is, satchel or knapsack, from an unrelated word of Old French derivation), on which badges purchased at pilgrimage sites could be displayed.

46. Larry D. Benson, ed., *The Riverside Chaucer,* 3rd edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987); Alfred Pollard et al., eds., *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer,* The Globe Edition (London: Macmillan, 1965). In the *Canterbury Tales,* see *Parson's Tale* (l. 606), *Knight's Tale* (ll. 1927, 2712), and *Man of Law's Tale* (l. 755); and in *Troilus and Criseyde,* see 2:1314, 1578–80. Concerning Chaucer's use of the word, see T. M. Smallwood, "The Transmission of Charms in English, Medieval and Modern, in Roper, *Charms and Charming in Europe,* p. 12.

47. Derek Pearsall, ed., *Piers Plowman by William Langland: An Edition of the C-Text,* York Medieval Texts, Second Series (London: Edward Arnold, 1978), p. 307 (Passus 19:16–20): "'Is here al thy lordes lettres?' quod y. '3e, leef me,' he saide, / 'And ho worcheth aftur this writ, y wol vndertaken, / Shal neuere deuel hym ne deth in soule greue. / For thogh y sey hit mysulue, y haue saued with this charme / Of men and of wommen meny score thousend." For a discussion of Spes's writ in different versions of *Piers Plowman,* see Jill Averill Keen, *The Charters of Christ and Piers Plowman: Documenting Salvation,* Studies in the Humanities, Literature, Politics, Society, vol. 42 (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), pp. 76–84.

incantation; or they could be a strange and incomprehensible script, astrological signs, symbols without verbal equivalents, or even long series of ordinary Latin letters used in a magical way, possibly serving as an abbreviation of words and names. *Characteres* have been defined as "charms in the form of inscriptions."[48] To overcome the vagueness of the English word *charm* as used historically, scholars sometimes modify it in compound terms such as "amulet charm," "magic charm," "word charm," and "written charm." But the results can be less than satisfactory. The term "written charm," for example, is not always clear in that many verbal charms were written down in manuscripts for future verbal use, not as exemplars for textual amulets.[49] To avoid confusion, the word *charm* should be restricted to verbal charms, spells, and incantations for spoken use. Similarly, the word *talisman* should be reserved for powerful, sometimes apotropaic objects engraved with astrological images.

In this book, the term "textual amulet" will generally be used to signify writings worn on the body for protection.[50] The word *amulet* alone, unmodified by the adjective *textual,* is vague in that many objects without text can function as amulets. The word *amulet* is perhaps anachronistic in that it was not used during the Middle Ages. But modern readers and specialists in the history of magic should find the term "textual amulet" much clearer in meaning than late medieval English signifiers such as "brevet," "writ," and "charm." When clearly

48. On medieval English use of *characteres,* see Linda Ehrsam Voigts, "The Character of the *Carecter:* Ambiguous Sigils in Scientific and Medical Texts," in *Latin and Vernacular: Studies in Late Medieval Texts and Manuscripts,* ed. A. J. Minnis, York Manuscripts Conferences: Proceedings Series, vol. 1 (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989), pp. 91–103, and Hazlitt, *Brand's Popular Antiquities of Great Britain,* vol. 1, p. 103.

49. *The Oxford English Dictionary,* ed. J. A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, 2nd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). Lord Byron, *Manfred,* i.i.35. "I call upon ye by the written charm Which gives me power upon you." Grendon, "Anglo-Saxon Charms," p. 123 ("amulet charms"); Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1956), vol. 2, p. 158 (D1226, D1266.1), p. 160 (D1273) ("written charm" or "magical charm"); Thomas R. Forbes, *The Midwife and the Witch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 80–93 ("word charm"); and William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 378 ("written magic spell"). Most recently, the writer Desmond Morris, in *Body Guards: Protective Amulets and Charms* (Shaftesbury: Element, 1999), has referred to inscribed charms and other protective amulets worldwide as "body guards."

50. W. F. Ryan has recently used the term "textual amulet" in much this way. He also uses the term "written spell," though spells (like charms) can be used orally rather than worn on the body. W. F. Ryan, "Texts as Amulets," in *The Bathhouse at Midnight: An Historical Survey of Magic and Divination in Russia* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), pp. 293–308; cf. pp. 217–68 ("Talismans and Amulets"). In his overview of uncommon textual formats during the Middle Ages, Bernhard Bischoff made a brief passing reference to the *gefältete Amulette* or "folded amulets" without providing specific examples or documentation. Bernhard Bischoff, *Paläographie des römischen Altertums und des abendländischen Mittelalters,* 2nd revised edition (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1986), p. 54; trans. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín and David Ganz as *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 33.

referring to textual amulets, the word *amulet* may be qualified as Christian or pagan; single- or multipurpose; magico-medical; folded or rolled; papyrus, parchment, or paper; and written or broadside. It is the intent in this book to avoid, as much as possible, value judgments rooted in modern cultural prejudices against beliefs considered superstitious, irrational, or primitive.

1
Christian Doctrine and Practice

Early Christians embraced ancient textual amulets and other ritual practices based on the magical efficacy of written words to protect, exorcise, and cure. The attraction of Christians to some aspects of ancient "pagan" magic engendered expressions of theological concern in the patristic era. St. Augustine and other Latin fathers viewed ritual practices undermining Christian orthodoxy as grave matters. In some cases, they considered the act of binding powerful words to the body in expectation of divine protection nothing short of idolatry, if not outright diabolical magic. While the medieval church would grow to be a far more powerful and far-flung institution than the Latin fathers had ever imagined, the authority of such patristic condemnations against textual amulets weighed heavily on medieval theology and canon law for over a millennium. Centuries of ecclesiastical strictures and penalties against "superstition," coupled with a dearth of physical evidence, might even suggest that a vigilant church was successful in its relentless efforts to suppress the illicit production of textual amulets by people who were often ridiculed as devil-worshipping magicians, wicked idolaters, and village charlatans operating on the edges of society, outside church control. Medieval sources with unflattering portrayals of textual amulets probably contributed to negative assessments of the subject in later centuries.

Were medieval Christian views of textual amulets so static and uncompromising? Did official condemnations really act as a deterrent against textual amulets? A close examination of literary, documentary, and physical evidence during the Middle Ages would suggest a far more complex and variable relationship between the church, Christian doctrine, and ritual practice concerning textual amulets. Most important, there was considerable divergence between official doctrine and everyday practice. Churchmen and canon lawyers often condemned textual amulets, but the character of religious practice and level of

legal enforcement varied widely by place and time. Many clerics were ambivalent about the scope and meaning of official condemnations. Some late medieval clerics became part of what Richard Kieckhefer has aptly described as a "clerical underworld" dabbling in necromancy.[1] An examination of medieval sources will help us understand the extent to which holy men and women, members of religious houses, parish priests, secular clergy, and the Christian laity down to the level of village and household predominated among the producers and consumers of textual amulets.[2] In a church that fervently believed in sacred miracles and mysteries, it is not surprising that many clerics were willing to produce and distribute textual amulets, just as they championed Christian miracles and dispensed sacred power through spoken words and consecrated objects. By such means, clerics believed that they were able to offer a measure of divine protection, essentially benign "white magic," to good Christians in the eternal struggle against the Devil and his host of evil demons.[3]

This chapter surveys the ancient origins of textual amulets, the influence of pagan magic on early Christians, and the central role of the clergy. Tracing church responses provides continuity to a study otherwise bedeviled by the fragmentary nature of the physical evidence. Extant textual amulets of the thirteenth to early sixteenth centuries were not unprecedented and cannot be properly studied profitably without first examining evidence of ancient and early medieval antecedents. We will see how theological opinions concerning textual amulets evolved over the long centuries in which Christianity had to respond to competition from pagan magic, the challenges of imperfect mass conversions of pagans, the rise of learned magic, the expansion of lay literacy, fears of heterodoxy, and the Printing Revolution. We will see how changing theological opinions and other historical factors contributed to the wider use of textual amulets in the late Middle Ages.

1. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages,* chap. 7. For insight into this "clerical underworld" and the authorship of magical texts in connection with the French Benedictine monk John of Morigny and his *Liber visionum* or *Liber florum celestis doctrine,* written between 1304 and 1317, see Claire Fanger and Nicholas Watson, "The Prologue to John Morigny's *Liber visionum:* Text and Translation," *Esoterica* 3 (2001): 108–25 (especially 113–14) at http://www.esoteric.msu.edu.

2. It is helpful to distinguish between the official church of councils and law and the larger church of the faithful. As F. Donald Logan has recently written, "The church, it cannot be too frequently repeated, was not merely a structure; it was that, but it was primarily a community of believers." F. Donald Logan, *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 275.

3. Stephen Wilson has emphasized the magical status of medieval clergy in *The Magical Universe: Everyday Ritual and Magic in Pre-Modern Europe* (London: Hambledon, 2000), p. 461: "Magical powers were ascribed at all times and places to the clergy. They were learned. They administered the sacraments and were the mediators of the religious power of the Church. From the central medieval period in the West, they were celibate. All of this lent them a charisma *ex officio,* which could extend beyond their official role." Concerning clerical attitudes toward sorcery and magic, see Pounds, *History of the English Parish,* pp. 320–23.

Ancient Magic and Amulets

For thousands of years, people have responded to the perils of daily life by turning to amulets in the belief that such material objects, charged with supernatural powers, could protect and heal when bound to the human body or placed in its proximity. After the advent of writing, orally transmitted ritual texts could be written down for use as verbal charms, incantations, and textual amulets. Pharaonic Egypt from the Middle Kingdom (ca. 1900–1800 B.C.E.) provides abundant early evidence of textual amulets, including some on flexible writing supports. The ancient Egyptians had a profound belief in the magical power of sacred words in hieroglyphics (the Greek word meaning "sacred incised letters"), whether chiseled into stone, written in ink on papyrus and writing boards, or incised on good-luck charms. Simple combinations of hieroglyphic signs on scarabs served as amuletic texts to protect the bearer against demons and the Evil Eye. Priestly scribes extracted longer magic spells and incantations from the Book of the Dead and other texts, copying them onto small pieces of papyrus. These were folded or rolled to fit inside amulet cases, some in the form of hollow gold tubes suspended vertically from the neck.[4] While physical evidence is less extensive outside Egypt, with its well-deserved reputation as a land in which the magical arts flourished, textual amulets were used elsewhere in the ancient world.

Before textual amulets came into common use, the Greeks used oral charms together with some form of physical therapy for healing. Homer describes how Autolycus's sons bound the open leg wound of Odysseus while chanting a blood-staunching charm (*Odyssey* 19:457–59). In later centuries, Greeks wore small amulets in pouches around the neck and inscribed brief amuletic texts on iron *lamellae*.[5] Like their contemporaries in the Near East, the Pythagoreans and other early practitioners of Greek magical medicine believed that demonic invasion led to epilepsy, madness, and disease, which could only be cured by charms, spells, incantations, and other forms of word therapy, though in time Greek medical opinion would split on the question of etiology.[6] From the Ptolemaic era,

4. Richard Parkinson, *Cracking Codes: The Rosetta Stone and Decipherment* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 138–39; *Jewellery Through 7000 Years* (London: British Museum, 1976), pp. 211–12, figs. 342a–b.

5. Roy Kotansky, "Incantations and Prayers for Salvation on Inscribed Greek Amulets," in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion,* ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 108; Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World,* trans. Franklin Philip (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 28, 200; John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 5–6, 264.

6. A Hippocratic treatise on epilepsy attacked magicians and charlatans for claiming superior knowledge to deal with the "sacred disease," when they were just employing traditional incantations and other magic arts. According to the internalist argument posited in the Hippocratic Corpus,

the Greeks came to fall increasingly under the spell of Egyptian magic. Graeco-Egyptian syncretistic literature known as Hermetica was attributed to the legendary Hermes Trismegistos (or Mercurius Trismegistus), meaning "thrice greatest Hermes."[7] Egyptian temple priests produced textual amulets for local people in need. Hieroglyphic script outlived the pharaonic era and came to fascinate people who could no longer understand the priestly script. The Greek translation of Horapollo's *Hieroglyphica,* probably dating from Roman Egypt, explained how two human heads (a man's head facing left in profile and a woman facing the viewer) could symbolize a phylactery in hieroglyphic script. This sign could protect against the demons even without an accompanying inscription.[8] When not needed for sacred text and written communication, hieroglyphs became a source and a model for *characteres* or magic symbols that were used in Greek and Coptic Christian textual amulets and formularies of magic.[9]

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epilepsy resulted from an imbalance of the four humors—blood, phlegm, choler, and black bile—not the actions of gods or demons from outside. In the case of epilepsy, the problem was supposedly an excess of phlegm within the body. This view of physiology was in sharp contrast to conventional ideas about bodily invasion. Learned Greeks and Romans rejected traditional beliefs in external penetration of the body and saw the invasion of foreign magic in their midst as a more potent threat. The intellectual elite readily condemned practices outside the mainstream and attributed magic to foreign *magi,* professional magicians and itinerant charlatans who seduced simple folk into superstition and sorcery. Pedro Laín Entralgo, *The Therapy of the Word in Classical Antiquity,* ed. and trans. L. J. Rather and John M. Sharp (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), pp. 76–78; E. D. Phillips, *Greek Medicine* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), pp. 40–41, 49–50; G.E.R. Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience: Studies in the Origins and Development of Greek Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 13.

7. The font of Hermetic wisdom was a late antique composite of the Greek god Hermes (messenger of the gods and interpreter of the divine word) and Thoth (Egyptian god of writing, sacred rituals, and magic). Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 22–44.

8. Horapollo tended to emphasize the pictographic function of the ancient priestly script. Virtually nothing is known about the mysterious author, identified in the text as an Egyptian priest from Nilopolis. Once thought to have lived in the fifth century B.C., Horapollo and his Greek translator Philippos probably lived at some time between the second and fourth centuries of the Christian era. Francesco Sbordone, ed., *Hori Apollinis Hieroglyphica* (Naples: Deposito Presso L. Loffredo, 1940), pp. 67–68 (bk. 1, chap. 24). Concerning this text, see Erik Iversen, *The Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphics in European Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 47–48.

9. Nameless Egyptian priests, magicians, physicians, astrologers, and other local wise men continued to be the producers of textual amulets until the fourth century, when Coptic Christian clerics in shrines and monastic scriptoria became increasingly responsible for the preparation of textual amulets, earning money in the process through their scribal skills. David Frankfurter, "Ritual Expertise in Roman Egypt," in *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium,* ed. Peter Schäfer and Hans G. Kippenberg, Studies in the History of Religions, *Numen* Book Series, vol. 75 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), pp. 126–29; David Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 248–72.

The Roman Empire was a vast cultural zone in which ideas (including exotic sources of magic), people, and commodities could move with ease. Wide circulation of written compilations of magic spells and medical recipes made it easy to attribute particular practices, rightly or wrongly, to outsiders. The Roman physician Quintus Serenus Sammonicus (d. ca. 210) advised treating fevers with textual amulets, often accompanied by various substances and rituals. One could prevent the return of intermittent fevers such as quartan ague (malaria recurring every seventy-two hours) by placing behind a patient's head the fourth book of Homer's *Iliad,* presumably written on a papyrus roll. To dispel a severe fever of the type that Greeks called *hemitritaeum,* this Roman physician advised wearing around the neck a papyrus amulet with ABRACADABRA arranged as an inverted triangle, in which the magic word diminished one letter per line until only an *A* remained. The word itself is most likely of Near Eastern origin, possibly derived from the Hebrew *Ha-Brachah-dabarah* ("Name of the Blessed"), though other etymologies have been posited.[10] The use of this word is not surprising because Jews enjoyed a reputation for the magical arts, even as they themselves decried "foreign magic."[11] While Jewish amulet use extended back into prehistory, two small silver amulet scrolls excavated among grave goods in the tombs of wealthy families at Ketef Hinnom near Jerusalem, dating from the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.E., offer the earliest evidence of Jewish textual amulets.[12] In the

10. R. Pépin, ed., *Quintus Serenus (Serenus Sammonicus): Liber medicinalis (Le livre de médecine)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), p. 47, no. 48, l. 13 (907): "Maeoniae Iliados quartum subpone timenti"; ibid., p. 48, no. 51, l. 4 (935): "chartae quod dicitur abracadabra." Harris, *Ancient Literacy,* pp. 218–19; Biedermann, *Handlexikon,* p. 461; J.H.G. Grattan and Charles Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine: Illustrated specially from the Semi-Pagan Text "Lacnunga,"* Publications of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, new series, no. 3 (London: Published for the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum by Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 31. Concerning the origins of the word ABRACADABRA, see Pépin's note on pp. 89–90 and Anastasia D. Vakaloudi, "The Kinds and Special Function of the *Επωδαι* in Apotropaic Amulets of the First Byzantine Period," *Byzantinoslavica: Revue internationale des études byzantines* 59, no. 2 (1998): 230–35.

11. For example, Judas Maccabeus found heathen amulets concealed on the bodies of his fallen soldiers, beneath their tunics. Using idols of Jamnite gods violated Jewish law and offered no protection, which was reason enough for the soldiers to have died in battle (2 Maccabees 12:39–40). Early Christians claimed that Moses had mastered the magic arts in Egypt, and he acquired such an enduring reputation for the use of magic in words that one of the chief handbooks of Jewish magic is titled *The Sword of Moses*. Pagans who thought Christ was a worker of magic found significance in the fact that the Flight into Egypt had brought the Christ child to a land steeped in magic. Jack Goody, *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 65–67; Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World,* pp. 6–7, 20–21, 29, 34, 36, 64, 88, 91, 96, 169, 239 n. 23; Gager, *Curse Tablets,* p. 218; "How to Cope with a Difficult Life," in Schäfer and Kippenberg, *Envisioning Magic,* pp. 94–95.

12. Measuring 9.7 × 2.7 cm and 3.9 × 1.1 cm, the two amulets were rolled and probably worn suspended from the neck. They were inscribed on the obverse side in paleo-Hebrew script. The apotropaic text is very close to Aaron's Priestly Blessing of the Israelites in the Wilderness (Numbers 6:24–26), which Temple priests recited to bless their congregations: "The Lord bless thee, and keep

Roman Empire, ironically, Jews and Christians sometimes accused each other of being practitioners of magic. Certainly, early Christians familiar with Greek magical papyri would have noticed textual elements (scripture, *voces magicae,* and divine names) that might appear Jewish in origin. There was a common tradition based on Jewish, Christian, and pagan elements.[13]

Textual amulets inscribed on durable materials survive from the early Christian centuries. Many examples have survived in the Mediterranean lands once comprising the Roman Empire and in adjacent areas where papyri and other perishable materials could not. Archaeologists and treasure hunters with metal detectors regularly unearth late antique magic scrolls with brief Greek or Aramaic texts inscribed on small, thin, rolled sheets (*lamellae*) of gold or silver, and sometimes accompanied by suspension capsules made of the same metals.[14] Other excavated late antique evidence includes sixth- and seventh-century Christian amulets from Iran written in Eastern Syriac on parchment sheets, which were then folded and rolled up inside cylindrical leather capsules and worn around the neck.[15] Contemporary incantation bowls excavated at archaeological sites, many of which were

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thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." The Ketef Hinnom amulets are the earliest known use of the Tetragrammaton, the ineffable name of God written as YHWH (vocalized as Yahweh or Jehovah), which was destined to have a long life in Jewish and Christian magical traditions. The written form of the Priestly Blessing could have been derived from oral tradition or a written exemplar, which permitted brief texts to be copied onto separate writing supports for convenient amuletic use. One could even use the human body as a writing support. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols,* vol. 2, p. 208; Gabriel Barkay, "The Priestly Blessing on Silver Plaques from Ketef Hinnom in Jerusalem," *Tel Aviv* 19 (1992): 139–94. The Ketef Hinnom amulet inscriptions have been published in Shmuel Ahituv, *Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions,* Sifriyat ha-Entsiklopedyah ha-Mikrra'it, no. 7 (Jerusalem: Mosad Byalik veha-Hevrah la-hakirat Erets-Yi'sra'el veatikotcha, 1992). Some scholars have argued that Jews in Roman Palestine and the late antique world tattooed themselves with apotropaic seals comprised of words, names, and symbols, thus transforming human bodies into divine bodies magically protected against evil spirits. Catherine Heszer, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine,* Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism, no. 81 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), pp. 210, 217–19, 226; Janowitz, *Icons of Power,* pp. 79–80.

13. Hans Dieter Betz, "Jewish Magic in the Greek Magical Papyri," in Schäfer and Kippenberg, *Envisioning Magic,* pp. 45–63.

14. Kotansky, "Incantations and Prayers," pp. 108–14. Audrey L. Meaney, *Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones,* BAR British Series, vol. 96 (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1981), pp. 220–22; Mary Margaret Fulghum, "Coins Used as Amulets in Late Antiquity," in *Between Magic and Religion: Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Mediterranean Religion and Society,* ed. Sulochana R. Asirvatham, Corinne Ondine Pache, and John Watrous (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), pp. 139–47. Early Byzantine coins were perforated and used as amulets because they included Christograms, imperial portraits, and inscriptions related to victory and protection. Henry Maguire, "Magic and Money in the Early Middle Ages," *Speculum* 72, no. 4 (October 1997): 1037–54.

15. Philippe Gignoux, *Incantations magiques syriaques,* Collection de la Revue des études juives (Louvain: E. Peeters, 1987), pp. 1–58, plates 1–4; Ramsey Fendall and Will Kwiatkowski, with the assistance of Sebastian Brock and others, *Manuscripts of the Silk Road* (London: Sam Fogg Rare

ancient cemeteries in what is now southern Iraq, had amuletic texts in Aramaic and other languages on the inner surface of ceramic bowls, which were inverted (perhaps a visual reference to heavens covering the earth) to protect households by controlling, binding, or expelling evil demons and destructive spirits.[16]

An important specific form of amulet is the curse tablet (*defixio* or *tabella defixionis*), most commonly lead sheets on which magicians inscribed binding spells. This exercise in aggressive magic was intended to control the actions of other people, whose names were often incorporated into the spell. The goal of such spells was to force people to obey one's will, with the intention of inflicting harm and placing the victims at a disadvantage in affairs of the heart, court litigation, or horse races and other competitions. Curse tablets were used at all social levels and often invited counterspells that could take the form of protective amulets that were also inscribed on lead sheets.[17]

For environmental and other reasons, Egypt offers a bounty of textual amulets, chiefly papyri that were folded or rolled, then tied with string before being placed inside leather pouches or inserted into small metal tubes perhaps three centimeters long. These tubes were suspended horizontally from the neck by means of a chain or cord.[18] Though written for short-term use, Greek-language textual amulets based on Christian, Gnostic, and pagan elements survive amid an

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Books, 2004), p. 44, no. 17. These Syriac amulets against demons and illness characteristically include an opening invocation of the Holy Trinity, a litany of angelic names, series of crosses, and other apotropaic elements, as well as owner's names in Persian. The amulets show Jewish and pagan influences. A group of these amulets are preserved in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

16. Incantation bowls survive in larger numbers than parchment amulets and the literature is accordingly more extensive. Jason David BeDuhn, "Magical Bowls and Manichaeans," in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power,* ed. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, vol. 129 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), pp. 419–34; Christa Müller-Kessler, "Interrelations Between Mandaic Lead Rolls and Incantation Bowls," in *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretative Perspectives,* ed. Tzvi Abusch and Karel van der Toorn, Ancient Magic and Divination, no. 1 (Groningen: STYX Publications, 1999), pp. 197–209.

17. Kotansky, "Incantations and Prayers," pp. 114–16; Roy Kotansky, ed., *Greek Magic Amulets: The Inscribed Gold, Silver, Copper, and Bronze Lamellae,* Papyrological Coloniensia, vol. 22, pt. 1 (Opladen: Westdeutsche Verlag, 1993); Bernard, *Sorciers grecs,* pp. 75–76. Gager, *Curse Tablets,* p. 119: "The Greek and Latin *defixiones* demonstrate conclusively the use of curse tablets was by no means limited to 'unlettered and superstitious' members of the lower classes. In classical Greece as in imperial Rome, their power was accepted and employed by all, including the wealthy and powerful Athenian aristocrats cited on numerous Greek tablets. Similarly, just as *defixiones* cut across all social categories, they were no respecters of gender." See Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic,* pp. 49–52, on the overlap between curses and erotic spells. Fritz Graf notes, "Perishable sheets must also have existed in other areas of the ancient world from which have come down to us only texts on the infinitely more resistant sheets of lead." Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World,* p. 133.

18. James Russell, "The Archaeological Context of Magic," in *Byzantine Magic,* ed. Henry Maguire (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1995), p. 42, figs. 9–10.

extraordinary wealth of Egyptian subliterary papyri, including "applied magic" (brief magic texts written on small pieces of new or palimpsested papyrus) and also "theoretical magic" (extant fragments of magic scrolls serving as handbooks for the preparation and proper use of verbal charms and textual amulets, the "activated form" of the exemplars found in handbooks).[19] Papyrus amulets were generally written on one side along the fibers, then rolled, folded, tied, and housed in different ways. While the size of papyrus amulet varied considerably, small rectangles no larger than 10.0 × 15.0 cm were quite common. Ribbon-like strips and oblong shapes were also possible. In addition to papyrus, other possible writing supports included parchment, ostraka, wooden tablets, metal sheets, disks, and rings.

The bulk of surviving Christian amulets are from Byzantine Egypt, coinciding with the proliferation of Coptic magical papyri. Extant fragments of a magic formulary and textually related papyri from the fourth to sixth centuries suggest the existence of organized workshops capable of producing textual amulets in Greek, Coptic, and Aramaic. Monastic scriptoria in Byzantine Egypt had the capacity to produce textual amulets in quantities, but local magicians, healers, and other people of limited education were also responsible. Whether relying on personal memory or written exemplars (usually in the form of handbooks), such producers routinely did violence to sacred text by misspellings and egregious grammatical errors. Textual impurities would not undermine the belief of unlettered customers in the ritual efficacy of amulets.[20] Unlettered people might tend to see written words as magical, even if no magic had been intended.[21]

19. William Brashear, "Magical Papyri: Magic in Bookform," in *Das Buch als magisches und als Reprasentätionsobjekt,* ed. Peter Ganz, Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studien, vol. 5 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), pp. 25–57, especially pp. 36–37.

20. For a general introduction, see Fernand Cabrol, ed., *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, Éditeurs, 1907), vol. 1, cols. 1784–1860; Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Karl Preisendanz, *Papyri graecae magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri,* revised edition by Albert Henrichs (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1973–74), vol. 2, pp. 209–36; Marquès-Rivière, *Amulettes*; H. A. Winkler, *Siegel und Charactere in der Muhammedanischen Zauberei,* Studien zu Geschichte und Kultur des Islamischen Orients, Heft 7 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1930); Peter W. Schienerl, *Schmuck und Amulet in Antike und Islam* (Aachen: Alano, 1988), chaps. 9–10; Ludwig Blau, *Das altjüdische Zauberwesen* (Berlin: Verlag von Louis Lamm, 1914), pp. 86–146; Joseph van Haelst, *Catalogue des papyrus littéraires juifs et chrétiens* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1976), p. 414 (the index lists more than a hundred items); Orsolina Montevecchi, *La papirologia,* revised edition (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1991), pp. 275–76, 394; Ulrike Horak, "Christliches und Christlich-magisches auf illuminierten Papyri, Pergamenten, Papieren und Ostraka," *Mitteilungen zur christlichen Archäologie* 1 (1995): 27–48; Meyer and Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic,* passim; Daniel and Maltomini, *Supplementum magicum,* vol. 2, p. 231; and Vakaloudi, "Apotropaic Amulets of the First Byzantine Period," p. 224.

21. Armando Petrucci, "The Christian Conception of the Book in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries," in *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy: Studies in the History of Written Culture,* ed. and

Papyrus remained the principal writing material after the Muslim conquest (642), until being replaced gradually by parchment and paper from the eighth to tenth centuries. Physical evidence documents the continuing use of textual amulets in Egypt by Muslims, Coptic Christians, and Jews during the centuries corresponding to the Middle Ages in the West. Arabic words such as *hijab, tilsam* (or *tilasam*), and *al-kitāb* (literally "writing" or "book") were used to refer to Islamic textual amulets or preservatives. Arabic textual amulets were folded up or rolled (or both), then placed in suspension capsules worn horizontally; amulets could also be kept in sacks, purses, and other containers suspended from the neck, attached to turbans, worn on belts, slung over the shoulder (especially the Qur'ān), or bound to the body in other ways.[22] In medieval Egypt, the Jewish practice of storing worn-out and discarded written matter, lest the name of God be destroyed, also resulted in the preservation of many textual amulets among the thousands of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Judeo-Arabic religious texts, legal documents, and other manuscript items discovered in the storeroom (*geniza*) of Ben Ezra Synagogue in Old Cairo (Fustat) in 1896. These textual amulets were written on one or both sides of pieces of paper and occasionally parchment (length generally exceeding width), which were then folded or rolled for amuletic use.[23] The contrast between the abundance of extant examples in ancient and medieval Egypt and the paucity in the West has undoubtedly

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trans. Charles M. Radding (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 21–22 n. 4. Christian magic might have been attractive to pagans in the way that Islamic magic has been to non-Muslim peoples in sub-Saharan Africa in recent centuries. Goody, *Interface,* p. 130: "The area in which the influence of Islam on non-Islamic, non-literate cultures is most immediately apparent is that of magico-religious activity . . . even for pagan cultures and for non-Muslim groups, Islam has a considerable magico-religious appeal and its practices are often incorporated in ritual activities of various kinds."

22. Seligmann, *Die magischen Heil- und Schutzmittel,* pp. 59–62; Rudolf Kriss and Hubert Kriss-Heinrich, *Amulette, Zauberformeln und Beschwörungen,* vol. 2 in *Volksglaube im Bereich des Islam* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1962), pp. 1–139; Angelo M. Piemontese, "Aspetti magici e valori funzionali della scrittura araba," *La ricerca folklorica,* no. 5 (1982–83): 27–41 (especially 30–31); Paul Eudel, *Dictionnaire des bijoux de l'Afrique du Nord* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1906), p. 23. On the "ninety-nine names of Allah," see Budge, *Amulets and Talismans,* pp. 46–50.

23. These provide a representative sampling of the physical manifestations of literacy in a medieval Jewish community from about 950 to 1250, though materials were deposited there until the nineteenth century. Prepared by experts in practical magic, the *Geniza* amulets were intended for a broad spectrum of Jewish society, including shopkeepers, artisans, and clerks. Lawrence H. Schiffman and Michael D. Swartz, eds., *Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Genizah: Selected Texts from the Taylor-Schechter Box K1,* Semitic Texts and Studies, vol. 1 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), pp. 21, 45–49; Peter Schäfer and Shaul Shaked, eds., *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza: Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum,* 2 vols., nos. 42, 64 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1994–97), vol. 1, pp. 9–10; vol. 2, p. 40; Malachi Beit-Arié, "Genizot: Depositories of Consumed Books as Disposing Procedure in Jewish Society," *Scriptorium* 50, no. 2 (1996): 407–14.

contributed to a false impression that textual amulets, vigorously opposed by the early church, never took firm hold during the Middle Ages.[24]

Early Christian Responses

The Gospels portray Christ as a miracle worker, lay healer, and exorcist who cast out demons, accomplished miraculous feedings, quelled life-threatening natural forces, and gave the Apostles access to divine power over evil demons and disease. Christ believed in the efficacy of words and power of divine names and performed supernatural acts through the power of God.[25] "Both as god-man and as the hero of a mystery tale," E. M. Butler wrote, "Christ represented a limit beyond which human imagination could not go in developing the magus-legend."[26] Yet the New Testament distinguishes the divinity and healing powers of Christ from the magical ways of sorcerers and healers. "Christ had promised to do anything that his followers requested in his name (John 14:14)," Richard Kieckhefer has reminded us, "and a Christian with faith would surely expect this promise to be unfailing."[27]

The Acts of the Apostles (19:19) recounts that Jewish and Greek magicians in Ephesus, a city renowned for the magical arts,[28] converted to Christianity and burned their valuable magic books, worth "fifty thousand pieces of silver." After Jewish exorcists had failed, the Ephesians witnessed the miraculous cures and exorcisms that the Apostle Paul was able to effect in Christ's name. Most likely, the magic books of Ephesus were rolls containing Greek charms, formulas, incantations, and secret names of gods and demons. These books of magic were probably similar in content, though not format, to the large Egyptian handbook of magic, a papyrus codex of ca. 300 C.E. in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale

24. Textual amulets and other ephemeral texts on perishable wooden boards and flexible writing supports such as papyrus and parchment almost always disintegrated in the moist soil of Europe. A notable exception is the Russian cache of 915 birch-bark documents of the eleventh to fifteenth centuries. Excavated at Novgorod since 1951, the chance survival of ephemeral written pieces provides unique documentation of everyday life. Individual items include the beginning of Psalm 94 in Latin, a magic formula in Finnish, prayers in Russian evoking the names of angels, and other items that may have served as amulets. Jean Blankoff, "Letters from Old Russia," *Archaeology* (November/December 2000): 30–35.

25. Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (London: Collins, 1973), p. 69; Stephen D. Ricks, "The Magician as Outsider in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament," in Meyer and Mirecki, *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power,* pp. 142–43.

26. E. M. Butler, *The Myth of the Magus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), p. 66.

27. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages,* p. 15.

28. For example, Plutarch (A.D. 46?–120?) referred to such textual elements as Ephesian letters (Ἐφέσια γράμματα). Karl Wessely, *Ephesia grammata aus Papyrusrollen, Inschriften, Gemmen, etc.* (Vienna: A. Pichlers Witwe und Sohn, 1886), p. 3.

de France.[29] From its earliest history, Christianity had to compete with pagan magic in order to win converts and maintain their loyalty. Evil demons lurked everywhere and, through the magicians who served them, could turn pagans to astrology, divination, necromancy, and other magical arts.[30] In his Epistle to the Ephesians (6:13–17), St. Paul exhorts the Christians of Ephesus to protect themselves with the armor of divine truth to resist the Devil's temptations, the shield of faith "to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked," and the "helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Based in part on the message of scripture, the church fathers strongly condemned the use of textual amulets, along with a host of other ritual and syncretistic practices regarded as dangerous survivals from the pre-Christian past.[31] Among the Latin fathers, St. Augustine offers the best-developed arguments against textual amulets and related ritual practices. He devoted considerable attention to the use of textual amulets, which he included among useless pagan signs such as *characteres*—magic symbols written in strange scripts of non-Christian origin—which were most offensive and dangerous when mingled with Christianity. *Characteres* could be easily written down and used along with sacred signs; that is, symbols made possible by the incarnation of Christ; for example, the cross, the Christogram or Chi-Rho monogram (formed by superimposing the first two letters of Χριοτος), and the Greek letters *alpha* and *omega*.[32]

29. Adolf Deissman, *Licht vom Osten: Das neue Testament und die neuentdeckten Texte der hellenistisch-römischen Welt* (Tübingen: Verlag von J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1909), pp. 186–96.

30. For example, Lactantius would later argue in the *Divinae institutiones* 2.16: "Eorum inventa sunt astrologia et haruspicina et auguratio et ipsa quae dicuntur oracula et necromantia et ars magica et quidquid praeterea malorum exercent homines vel palam vel occulte." Samuel Brandt and Georg Laubmann, eds., *L. Caeli Firmiani Lactantii Opera omnia,* Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, vol. 19 (Vienna: Von Tempsky, 1890), vol. 1, p. 167. For a discussion, see Emil Schneweis, *Angels and Demons According to Lactantius* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1944), pp. 129–30, 137–39.

31. Concerning changing definitions of superstition, see Jean-Claude Schmitt, *The Holy Greyhound: Guinefort, Healer of Children Since the Thirteenth Century,* trans. Martin Thom, Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture, no. 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 15–18.

32. For discussions of St. Augustine on magic and superstition, see Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 413–18; Pietz, "Problem of the Fetish, II," pp. 27–30; Valerie I.J. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 244–45; Brian Stock, *Augustine the Reader: Meditation: Self-Knowledge, and the Ethics of Interpretation* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 7–8, 201–2, 389–90 nn. 207–8. For a discussion of *characteres,* see Dieter Harmening, *Superstitio: Überlieferungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittelalters* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1979), pp. 238–39; Janowitz, *Icons of Power,* pp. 13–14. Concerning the use of *alpha* and *omega* as magic symbols, see Franz Dornseiff, *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie,* Studien zur Geschichte des antiken Weltbildes und der griechischen Wissenschaft, no. 7 (Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1925), pp. 122–25.

St. Augustine came to accept the possibility of contemporary miracles associated with relics, but he strenuously condemned what he saw as pagan superstition (either appropriated outright or thinly veiled beneath the trappings of Christianity), which appealed to human frailty in a world of disease and death. In *De doctrina christiana,* St. Augustine condemned as demonic all traditional textual amulets worn around the neck or otherwise bound to the body.[33] Only God can work miracles, St. Augustine argued, while most varieties of pagan magic are fraudulent or based on demonic pacts.[34] He believed that the blessings of God are reserved for Christians of sincere faith who pray in approved ways. Christian ritual practices are useless when based on an idolatrous devotion to handmade objects rather than on faith. Oral repetition and magical arrangements of divine names produce sounds without meaning, words without truth. They are the Devil's traps to snare the unwary and place their souls in grave peril. As the servants of the demonic world, magicians would tell Christians how magic spells and diabolical incantations cured people of demonic afflictions. Neighbors might even offer testimonials to their efficacy. But martyrdom is preferable to the sacrilege of taking sides with the Devil by participating in magic arts and practices that can never win divine grace.[35]

33. St. Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* 2.20.30, in *Aurelii Augustini opera* 4.1, Corpus Christianorum, Series latina, vol. 32 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1962), p. 54: "Ad hoc genus pertinet omnes etiam ligaturae atque remedia, quae medicorum quoque disciplina condemnat, siue in precantationibus siue in quibusdam notis, quos caracteres uocant, siue in quibusque rebus suspendendis atque inligandis uel etiam saltandis quodammodo, non ad temperationem corporum, sed ad quasdam significationes aut occultas aut etiam manifestas." Cf. *Sermones de diversis* (Sermo 215. De christiano nominee cum operibus non christianis), in *Patrologia latina,* vol. 39, col. 2239: "Per fontes et arbores, et diabolica Phylacteria, per characteres, et aruspices et divinos vel sortilegos multiplicia sibi mala miseri homines conantur inferre." St. Augustine was exposed to other popular religious practices such as *sortes biblicae,* divination by dipping into scripture, which he discusses in *Confessions* 8.12. Harris, *Ancient Literacy,* p. 303. Concerning bibliomancy and divination, see Pierre Boglioni, "L'Église et la Divination au Moyen Âge ou les avatars d'une pastorale ambiguë," *Théologiques: Revue de la Faculté de Théologie de l'Université de Montréal* 8, no. 1 (April 2000): 33–66.

34. St. Augustine believed that magic worked, according to Brian Stock, because of "previously established assumptions about a language shared in common with malevolent spirits and binding us to them." Stock adds, "Superstitions, like other sign systems, are conventional arrangements (*pacta, conventa*) between symbols and audiences; they achieve meaning and influence behavior in accordance with a consensus (*consensio*) established beforehand in their respective societies." Stock, *Augustine the Reader,* pp. 201–2.

35. St. Augustine, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini de Civitate Dei libri I–X,* in *Aurelii Augustini opera* 14.1, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, vol. 47 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), p. 236 (bk. 8, chap. 19): "Deinde auaero, quales preces hominum diis bonis per daemones allegari putat, magicas an licitas? Si magicas, nolunt tales; si licitas, nolunt per tales." Ibid., p. 281 (bk. 10, chap. 9): "Fiebant autem simplici fide atque fiducia pietatis, non incantationibus et carminibus nefariae curiositatis arte compositis." St. Augustine, *Sancti Augustini Confessorum libri XVIII,* ed. Lucus Verheijen, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, vol. 27 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1981), p. 31 (bk. 3, chap. 6 [10]): "Itaque incidi in homines superbe delirantes, carnales nimis et loquaces, in quorum ore laquei diaboli et uiscum

St. Augustine's scathing condemnations influenced St. Martin of Braga (ca. 515–80), St. Gregory of Tours (538?–93), St. Gregory the Great (540?–604), St. Isidore of Seville (560?–636), St. Eligius of Noyon (588–659), and other Christian writers of the early Middle Ages who criticized magical practices.[36] Among texts falsely attributed to St. Augustine was an anonymous sermon against "superstition"; the text, possibly written in Germany, condemned textual amulets written on papyrus, parchment, lead tablets, and other materials, and then hung around the necks of people and livestock.[37] Augustinian views on textual amulets had an influence throughout the Middle Ages and informed late medieval discussions of Devil-pacts and witchcraft.

Patristic condemnation of textual amulets, especially those containing brief quotations from scripture, was based in part on confusion about Jewish use of *tefillin* and *mezuzah*.[38] Early Christians believed, sometimes with reason, that

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confectum commixtione syllabarum nominis tui et domini Iesu Christi et paracleti consolatoris nostri spiritus sancti. Haec nomina non recebant de ore eorum, sed tenus sono et strepitu linguae; ceterum cor inance ueri." François Dolbeau, ed., *Augustin d'Hippone: Vingt-six sermons au people d'Afrique,* Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Serié Antiquité, no. 147 (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1996), p. 215 (301): "Quid si enim febrienti et in periculo mortis constituto aduenit aliquis qui se promittat quibusdam incantationibus pellere febrem tuam, atque illae incantationes sint illicitae, diabolicae, detestandae atque anathemandae, deinde tibi ab eo aui hoc suadet, et eorum aui sic sanati sunt multa proponantur exempla et dicatur tibi: 'Ille cum hoc haberet, fecit ei, incantauit ei, lustrauit eum, adfuit ei, et sanus est factus. . . . Quod enim dicebat martyri in catena uel catasta constituto iudex iniquus: 'Consenti ad sacrificium, et ab hac tribulatione dimitto te,' hoc febrienti diabolus in occulto: 'Consenti ad hoc sacrilegium, et ab hac febre dimitto te.'"

36. For example, St. Martin of Braga argued in his *De correctione rusticorum* (16.3–7) of ca. 573–74, influenced by St. Caesarius of Arles and St. Augustine, that by invoking the names of demons one effectively severed one's *pactum* with God. It was impossible to use the Credo and Pater Noster together with demonic incantations because one could not serve both God and the Devil. Mario Naldini, ed., *Contro le superstizioni: Catechesi al popolo, de correctione rusticorum* (Florence: Nardini Editore, 1991), pp. 66–68: "Ecce ista omnia post ab renuntiationem diaboli, post baptismum facitis et, ad culturas daemonum et ad mala idolorum opera redeuntes, fidem vestram transistis et pactum quod fecistic cum deo disrupistis. . . . Similiter dimisistis incantationem sanctam, id est symbolum quod in baptismo accepistis, quod est *Credo in deum patrem omnipotentem,* et orationem dominicam, id est *Pater noster qui es in caelis,* et tenetis diabolicas incantationes et carmina."

37. Carl P. Caspari, ed., *Eine Augustin fälschlich beilegte Homilia de sacrilegiis* (Christiania: Dybwad, 1886), chaps. 5–6; S. B., "Un sermon sur la superstition," *Mélusine: Recueil de mythologie, littérature populaire, traditions et usages* 3 (1886–87): cols. 217–20: "Quiconque recite ou écrit des formules contre les fièvres, suspend des caractères ou des paroles de Salomon ou des anges, ou attache une langue de serpent au cou de hommes. . . . Quiconque fait des écritures de Salomon, et écrit des caractères sur le papier ou sur le parchemin ou le nom du Christ sur des lames d'airain, de fer, de plomb ou d'autres et l'attache au cou des hommes ou des animaux muets, n'est pas un chrétien, mais un paiën" (cols. 218–19). The sermon, discussed briefly in Gager, *Curse Tablets,* pp. 263–64, survives in an eighth-century monastic manuscript from Einsiedeln, Switzerland.

38. Deuteronomy (6:14, 11:13–21) provides the Hebrew text of the *mezuzah,* which was physically configured like a miniature Torah scroll; that is, written and read horizontally in the manner of ancient book rolls, not vertically (*carta transversa*) like late antique, medieval Christian, Ethiopic,

Jewish phylacteries could be used as textual amulets. The Old Testament and Jewish practice ordained the use of *tefillin* and *mezuzah* as religious obligations, but many Jews did believe in the inherently magical powers of Torah scrolls and representations of the divine name.[39] From antiquity to the present day, Jews (even rabbis) have sometimes used *tefillin* and *mezuzot* in an amuletic way.[40] In popular Jewish belief, *tefillin* could be seen as a personal guarantor of divine protection and the *mezuzah* as an effective shield for one's home against demons and evil spirits. Christians occasionally sought Jewish phylacteries or tried to imitate their use.[41] Rabbis might tolerate or produce traditional textual amulets

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and Muslim rolls. The small written piece was rolled from left to right, perhaps with some flattening, to fit it into a capsule that was affixed to doorposts of proper Jewish homes. For thousands of years, Jews have used phylacteries prepared by Torah scribes writing in a very formal book hand, unrelated to the informal scripts used in Hebrew amulets. Then as now, observant Jews believe that they are obeying divine commandment in the Torah and fulfilling the will of God.

39. Heszer, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine,* pp. 209–10: "Magic has a long tradition within Near Eastern religions in general and Judaism in Palestine in particular . . . the Torah itself was considered a holy object and had obtained artefactual status by the first c. C.E. already. This belief in the sacredness of the Torah seems to have sometimes led to a magical understanding of the power inherent in the biblical text itself, in scriptural verses, the Divine name, or letters representing that name, whether in the form of Torah scrolls, *mezuzot, tefillin,* amulets, or tattoos on one's skin."

40. In his novel *The Manor,* for example, Isaac Bashevis Singer provides an example of amulet use in the tradition-bound world of Polish Jewry during the period 1863–1900. To help his pregnant wife Jochebed, Singer writes, "Mayer Joel had hung amulets inscribed with psalms about her room [and] he had the Book of Raziel ready to place under her pillow when her labor began." Isaac Bashevis Singer, *The Manor* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967), p. 51. It is not clear who prepared the textual amulets, but others were sought from a "miracle-working rabbi" in the area. In Rabbi Yehoshua Zelig Diskin's 1959 Chassidic story "The Magic Remedy," a Lubavitcher rabbi in New York City tells a man named Mordechai, said to have been suffering from stomach cancer, to wear *tefillin* daily for three weeks and maintain a special diet to avoid surgery. The cancer miraculously disappeared. Yechezkel Rittenberg, ed., *Sign and Glory: An Anthology on Tefillin* (Tel-Aviv: Netzach, 1974), pp. 162–64. On magical uses, see Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study of Folk Religion* (New York: Atheneum, 1984), pp. 132–52: "Amulets were the favored Jewish magic device during the Middle Ages, and the fact that they were predominantly of the written type, prepared especially for specific emergencies and particular individuals, enhanced their magical character" (p. 133).

41. The influence of *tefillin* can perhaps be seen in the Byzantine popular religious custom of using threads as a reminder to keep the Ten Commandments. Vakaloudi, "Δεισιδαιμονια and the Role of the Apotropaic Magic Amulets," p. 203. Even when Jews were not the actual purveyors of textual amulets, Christians might suspect their invisible hand at work, as when the eighteenth-century English physician Matthew Guthrie described Russians wearing amuletic "bands or frontlets of parchment" on their foreheads like Jewish phylacteries, not from their necks like Christian amulets. See Ryan, *Bathhouse at Midnight,* p. 293. This discussion is based on Matthew Guthrie's pre-1795 "*Noctes rossicae,* or Russian Evening Recreations" (London, British Library, Additional MS 14390). According to a Judeo-Spanish folktale, Rabbi Yehuda Anasi gave the king of Persia a *mezuzah* containing biblical verses that would protect the royal household against any harm because of God's promise, "I will protect you while you sleep." Reginetta Haboucha, *Types and Motifs of the Judeo-Spanish Folktales,* The Garland Folklore Library, no. 6 (New York: Garland, 1992), pp. 712–13, no. 1871. The amuletic possibilities of *mezuzoth* were enhanced by the addition of magic names, formulas, and figures to the divinely ordained text. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols,* vol. 2, pp. 210–11.

or *qame'ot* (a Hebrew word that originally referred to binding), which included names of God and helpful angels, Bible quotations associated with divine protection or healing, an assortment of *characteres* and symbols, and lists of benefits for the person who commissioned the amulet and whose name was indicated.[42]

Lending weight to patristic condemnations of textual amulets is the criticism of "scribes and Pharisees" (Matthew 23:5). "They make broad their phylacteries," Christ is reported saying, "and enlarge the borders of their garments" ("Dilatant enim phylacteria sua, et magnificant fimbrias"). The Evangelist was probably referring not to *tefillin,* but rather to the stripes and fringes on the Jewish prayer shawl (*tallith*) in order to suggest an ostentatious, self-righteous display.[43] Among the Latin fathers, St. Jerome (340?–420) was most influential in his interpretation of this passage in connection with the deadly sin of religious pride. In his *Commmentarium in Evangelium Matthaei,* he incorrectly describes Jewish phylacteries (*phylacteria* or *pictatiola*) as small pieces of parchment containing the Ten Commandments.[44] Wearing phylacteries was supposed to remind Jews to be obedient to the Law, St. Jerome argued, but (like the possession of sacred books) physical propinquity to Holy Writ does not provide a true knowledge of God. The Latin word *pictaciolum* is the diminutive of *pittacium* (from the Greek πιττακιον), which the church fathers and medieval writers used somewhat pejoratively to signify a brief document, small letter, or piece of writing (like the medieval Latin word *brevis*) on papyrus or parchment.[45] St. Jerome viewed Jewish phylacteries as an antecedent to Christian textual amulets in his contemporary world. For example, by wearing small amulet rolls based on the Gospels (*parvula evangelia*), Christian "old wives" showed a "zeal for God"

42. Bartelink, "Φυλακτήριον-phylacterium," pp. 29–31; Heszer, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine,* pp. 222–23.

43. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols,* vol. 2, p. 210. "Jesus' reference to phylacteries probably related to the stripes on the garment of piety, stripes which seems to have survived in the stripes on the prayer shawls. It will appear also that even the tassels on the prayer shawls have the inherent value which we associate with talismanic power."

44. It is unclear why the church fathers and later Christian critics assumed that the text of *tefillin* was comprised exclusively of the Ten Commandments. *Tefillin* and *mezuzah* remind Jews to keep the law, including the 613 obligations (*mitsvot*) found in the Torah; both *tefillin* and *mezuzah* are obligations. However, the text of the Ten Commandments, constituting the first ten obligations, is not supposed to be in *tefillin* and certainly is not today. Found among the Dead Sea scrolls excavated at Qumran were *tefillin* with the customary verses of Exodus and Deuteronomy, as well as examples with the Ten Commandments. See Naomi Janowitz, *Magic in the Roman World: Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 56. In addition, the association of the Ten Commandments with Moses was perhaps a factor because Christians considered him a master of the magic arts.

45. Alexander Souter, *A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 A.D.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), p. 305; J. F. Niemeyer, *Mediae latinitatis lexicon minus* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), vol. 1, p. 799; François Dolbeau, "Noms de livres," in Weijers, *Vocabulaire du livre,* p. 95.

devoid of true knowledge. This echoed Christ's condemnation of "scribes and Pharisees."[46]

St. Jerome's bitter criticism was influential in the Middle Ages. In a letter to Bishop Aethelred of Canterbury, Alcuin (735–804) condemned the practice of wearing textual amulets (*pittaciola*) comprised of Gospel passages as *pharisaica superstitio*.[47] In the ninth century, commenting on the same passage in the Gospel of Matthew, Agobard of Lyons and Haimo of Halberstadt echoed St. Jerome's critique.[48] The author of *Opus imperfectum in Evangelium Mattheum,* a medieval commentary incorrectly attributed to St. John Chrysostom, compared the Jewish practices criticized by St. Matthew to contemporary Christian practice of wearing textual amulets (*phylacteria*) comprised of quotations from the Gospels.[49] St. Jerome's interpretation was incorporated into the *glossa ordinaria* for

46. St. Jerome, *Commentarium in evangelium Matthaei* 4.6, in *Patrologia latina,* vol. 26, col. 168: "Pictatiola illa Decalogi, phylacteria vocabant: quod quicumque habuisset ea quasi ob custodiam et monimentum sui haberet: non intelligentibus Pharisaeis quod haec in corde portanda sint, non in corpore: alioquin et armaria, et arcae habent libros, et notitiam Dei non habent. Hoc apud nos superstitiosae mulierculae, in parvulis Evangeliis, et in crucis ligno, et istiusmodi rebus (quae habent quidem zelum Dei, sed non juxta scientiam)." See the discussion of this passage in Hanns Otto Münsterer, *Amulettkreuze und Kreuzamulette: Studien zur religiösen Volkskunde,* ed. Manfred Brauneck (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1983), p. 13. St. John Chrysostom (345?–407) made a similar argument about *phylacteria* or *conservatoria* in his *Homiliae in Matthaeum* (no. 72), claiming that many women in his time wore *evangelia* from their necks. "Homiliae in Matthaeum," in *Patrologia cursus completus . . . Series graeca* [hereinafter, *Patrologia graeca*], ed. J. P. Migne, 161 in 166 vols. (Paris: J. P. Migne, 1857–66), vol. 57, col. 669: "Quae phylacteria, quasi dicas conservatoria, vocabantur, ut multe nunc mulieres evangelia ex collo pendentia habent." While these condemnations are vague, the text in question probably contained the prologue of the Greek Gospel of John (1:1–14), if not the full text.

47. Ernst L. Dümmler, ed., *Epistolae Karolini aevi,* vol. 4, p. 448 (no. 290), in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Epistolae* (Hannover: Hahn, 1895): "Multas videbam consuetudines, que fieri non debebant. Quas tua sollicitudo prohibeat. Nam ligaturas portant, quasi sanctum quid estimantes. Sed melius est in corde sanctorum imitare exempla, quam in sacculis portare ossa; evangelicas habere scriptas ammonitiones in mente magis, quam in pittaciolis exaratas in colle circumferre. Haec est pharaisica superstitio; quibus ipsa veritas improperavit philacteria sua."

48. Agobard of Lyons, *Liber de imaginibus sanctorum,* chap. 26, in *Patrologia latina,* vol. 104, col. 221: "Sic consimile quid beatus Hieronymyus loquitur, cum verba Domini illa tractaret, quae ita se habent: 'Dilatant enim phylacteria sua, et magnificant fimbrias.' Pittaciola, inquit, illa decalogi phylacteria vocabant." Haimo of Halberstadt, "Dominica decima octava post Trinitatem," homily 39, in *Homiliae de tempore,* in *Patrologia latina,* vol. 118, col. 2082: "Huic litterae Pharisaei adhaerentes, scribant decem mandata in pictatiolis, et in fronte sua suspendebant, ut prae caeteris, legis observatores viderentur. Unde et haec pictatiola vocat hic phylacteria." Haimo of Halberstadt, "Dominica decima nona post pentecosten," homily 133, ibid., cols. 708–9: "Scribae ergo et Pharisaei vanae gloriae amatores, decem verba legis in membranulis scribebant, et ea frontibus suis circumligabant ut invicem se salutantes atque obviantes, praeceptorum legis recordarentur, et ipsa pictatiola phylacteria vocabant."

49. *Opus imperfectum in Evangelium Mattheum,* homily 48, in *Patrologia graeca,* vol. 56, col. 878: "Puto quod illorum tunc scribarum et Pharisaeorum exemplo et nunc multi aliqua nomina Hebraica angelorum confingunt, et scribunt, et alligant sibi, et quae non intelligentibus linguam

the Gospel of Matthew, so that it was widely available in twelfth- and thirteenth-century glossed books of the Bible.[50] Patristic views influenced church councils, canon lawyers, and later medieval writers, who adduced New Testament authority to dismiss Jewish phylacteries as "Old Covenant" (the "Old Law of Moses," not the "New Law of Grace through Jesus Christ").[51]

Competition with Paganism

Faced with the tenacious appeal of traditional ritual practices, church leaders frequently sought to remind Christian believers that the word of God was more powerful than "pagan magic." Early medieval authors of sermons, monastic *exempla,* and other forms of didactic literature tended to condemn most textual amulets as the product of ignorance and superstition.[52] This type of moralistic

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Hebraicam quasi metuenda videntur. Sic ergo et isti vani sunt, sicut illi fuerunt: quoniam personae illorum de mundo recesserunt, non mores. De hominibus itaque nostri temporis exponentes, de illis videmur exponere. Ergo sacerdotes ex eo quod ab hominibus volunt videri justi, phylacteria alligant circa collum, quidam vero partem aliquam Evangelii scriptam." Concerning the textual tradition, see J. van Banning, ed., *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum,* Corpus Christianum, Series Latina, no. 87B.

50. *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria: Facsimile Reprint of the Editio Princeps Adolph Rusch of Strassburg 1480/81* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992), vol. 4, p. 71.

51. Giovanni Balbi (d. 1298) and Firmin Le Ver (ca. 1370/75–1444), following Balbi, defined *filaterium* as small pieces of parchment or *brevets* on which Torah readings were written and emphasized that they were used by the Pharisees in a vain public display of religiosity, as described by Matthew. *Summa que catholicon appellatur fratris Johannis ianuensis sacri ordinis fratrum predicatorum* . . . (Lyon: M. Stephano Gueynard Bibliopola, 1506), *de litera F ante I:* "Filaterium . . . membranula vel breuicelius in quo erat scripta lex et scripta lex et seruabatur quam deferebant ante frontem vel pectus: ut sic viderentur religiosi. Sed hoc non fiebat nisi causa iactantie et vanitatis. unde et sepe invenitur pro vanitate." Brian Merrilees and William Edwards, eds., *Firmini Verris dictionarius: Dictionnaire Latin-Français de Firmin le Ver,* Corpus Christianorum: Continuatio Mediaevalis, Series in 4°, vol. 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1994), pp. 173–74: "Filaterium . . . membranula vel brevicellus in quo erat scripta lex quam deferebant Farisei ante frontem vel pectus ut sic viderentur religiosi, sed hoc non fiebat nisi causa iactantie et vanitatis, unde et sepe invenitur pro vanitate." Both the original Latin text of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* (4.4) and John Trevisa's Middle English translation follow St. Jerome in saying that the Pharisees wore rolled phylacteries (*pittacia cartarum* or *phylacteria* in Latin; *scrowes* or *philateria* in English) containing the Ten Commandments on their foreheads and left arms. Joseph Rawson Lumby, ed., *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden monachi Cestrensis; Together with the English Translations of John Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century,* Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores, The Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages [Rolls Series], no. 41, vol. 4 (London: Printed by Eyre and Spottiswoode for Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1872): "pittacia cartarum in fronte et in sinistro brachio decalogo inscripta, quae phylacteria dicebantur in legis memoriam gerebant" (p. 324); "They bere scrowes in her forhedes and in hir life armes cleped scrowes philateria; in the scrowes were the ten hestes i-write in mynde of the lawe" (p. 325).

52. For a brief definition of *exempla,* see Jacques Berlioz, "Introduction à la recherche dans les *exempla* médiévaux," in *Les exempla médiévaux: Introduction à la recherche, suivie des tables critiques d'Index exemplorum de Frederic C. Tubach,* ed. Jacques Berlioz and Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu (Carcassonne: Garae/Hesiode, 1992), pp. 17–20.

literature contained cautionary tales directed toward the clergy and laity, the producers and users of textual amulets. Such tales were not merely literary tropes or rhetorical constructions resulting from a mindless perpetuation of complaints articulated centuries earlier, with no resonance in contemporary life. Critics used familiar motifs to describe a widespread and enduring practice. Themes in moralistic literature reflected the expectations of the culture that produced them. Stock tales related to textual amulets would not have been believable unless details were familiar to the Christian audiences and readers toward whom they were directed.

Cautionary tales about textual amulets share a basic underlying theme or common narrative element, despite differences in details. In these tales, errant clerics, deceitful charlatans, illiterate sorcerers, and other purveyors of practical magic operate outside the bounds of Christian orthodoxy and produce textual amulets for superstitious folk, who are foolish enough to expect God's blessings and protection in a quasi-mechanical way. Yet religious truth will always trump magic, Christian moralists argued, just as Aaron triumphed with God's help over pharaoh's magicians, when Moses and Aaron went before pharaoh and turned a rod into a serpent (Exodus 7:8–13).[53] Stories about amulets sold commercially might well remind Christians of the Samaritan sorcerer Simon Magus, whom St. Peter had sternly rebuked for coveting the miraculous powers of the Apostles and trying to buy his way to the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:9–24). True Christian holy men, unlike magicians and charlatans, do not buy or sell sacred power in the form of textual amulets any more than they peddle holy relics or offer salvation outside the church.

In early Christian miracle-working contests, as in Old Testament stories, there was no competition between divine power and magical alternatives. Two Byzantine sources provide early examples of moralistic tales with amulet motifs. A sixth-century story about the miracles of St. Demetrios describes a textual amulet based in part on Hebrew sources. In the story, the Devil has visited the plague upon the Byzantine port city of Thessaloniki and made its provincial governor Marianos gravely ill. After local physicians fail to cure Marianos, a young man or slave attempts to convince him to wear a textual amulet around his neck. Marianos declines out of fear for his immortal soul. Instead, he prays to St. Demetrios and venerates his relics in hope of divine healing. The rejected

53. R. Campbell Thompson, *Semitic Magic: Its Origins and Development* (London: Luzac, 1908), p. xviii: "As religious principles developed themselves among primitive savages, men began to learn something of the mysterious natural forces which would enable one tribal wizard to pit himself in hostly combat against the warlock of another clan, and defeat him by his superior magic. When Elijah, priest of Yahweh, challenges the priests of Baal to a test of comparison between his god and theirs, he is only doing what medicine men of different savage tribes always do [1 Kings xviii]."

amulet is described as having been written on both sides of a piece of parchment (βεμβρανε δερμα) and containing magical letters and signs, names of unknown angels (which detractors could condemn as demonic), Hebrew writing (γραμμασιν εβραικοις), and multi-rayed figures (asterisks), which were used in late antique Syria to symbolize Hermes, divine messenger (a function comparable to that of Christ as Mediator). If the Jews knew the secret name of God, it followed that Hebrew words, names, and formulas would be particularly effective against demons.[54]

In another early Byzantine tale, Leontios of Neapolis (ca. 590–ca. 650) describes how St. Symeon Salos (ca. 522–ca. 588) easily tricks a soothsayer to prevent her from dispensing textual amulets (φυλακτήρια) and verbal charms. After winning the sorceress's trust, St. Symeon offers to make a tablet-shaped amulet against the Evil Eye. The soothsayer does not realize that the Syriac inscription is a clever Christian ploy against a veritable plague of magic practices in the Byzantine Empire. "God will abolish your powers," St. Symeon Salos had secretly written in Syriac on the tablet, "and make you to desist from turning men from Him to you." As long as she carries the tablet on her person, the sorceress is unable to prepare textual amulets for sale.[55] The message was simple. Common folk should not fall prey to unprincipled tricksters peddling magical nonsense in return for money. Christian holy men have superior powers, wielding sacred words in approved ways that can overcome pagan magic and bind the actions of its evil practitioners, who dispense strangely exotic but powerless words that can never win divine grace and blessing.[56]

54. Paul Lemerle, ed., *Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de Saint Démétrius et la pénétration des slaves dans les Balkans* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1979), pp. 54–55, 61–62 (miracle 1, chapter 15). Vakaloudi, "Δεισιδαιμονια and the Role of the Apotropaic Magic Amulets," p. 195; Vakaloudi, "Apotropaic Amulets of the First Byzantine Period," pp. 226–29; Jeffery Spier, "Medieval Byzantine Magic Amulets and Their Tradition," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 56 (1993): 34–35. Concerning asterisks, see Alfons A. Barb, "Three Elusive Amulets," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 27 (1967): 8–9: "And it can be added—although I would not overrate the importance of this coincidence—that the symbol of this Syrian solar Hermes is the same six-rayed or eight-rayed asterisk which very soon became the symbol of Christ, to be interpreted and transformed only gradually and later into monogram and cross."

55. A. J. Festugière and Lennart Rydén, eds., "Conversion d'une devineresse," in *Léontios de Néapolis: Vie de Syméon le Fou et Vie de Jean de Chypre* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1974), pp. 96–97, 152; Lennart Rydén, *Das Leben des Heiligen Narren Symeon von Leontios von Neapolis,* Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Graeca Upsaliensia, no. 4 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell), pp. 59–60, 162–63; Henry Maguire, "Magic and the Christian Image," in Maguire, *Byzantine Magic,* pp. 62–63; H. J. Magoulias, "The Lives of Byzantine Saints as Sources of Data for the History of Magic in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries A.D.: Sorcery, Relics and Icons," *Byzantion* 37 (1967): 240–41.

56. For thematically related Byzantine stories, see Gager, *Curse Tablets,* pp. 261–63.

Christian moralistic tales underscoring the apotropaic power of Christian words and the futility of pagan magic encouraged the faithful to seek spiritual assistance from local clergy. Assistance could take the form of textual amulets based on Christianity, pagan magic, or some combination of the two. As the principal custodian of writing, the church (through its literate clergy) came to play a central role in the transmission of textual amulets and related ritual practices from late antiquity to the early Middle Ages, probably beginning in areas that were once securely within the Roman cultural orbit—Italy, Spain, and Southern France—and gradually radiating outward into predominantly Celtic and Germanic areas. Throughout the Roman world during the late fourth and early fifth centuries, bishops and other elite members of urban society railed against proscribed ritual practices in the countryside, though at the same time they promoted the cult of saints and other ritual practices that scholars may interpret as being anchored in beliefs that were not less dependent on an idea of holy power.

Urban Christians occasionally could not resist pagan magic, as we learn in a story by St. Gregory of Tours (538–93) about an incident in Brioude (in what is now south-central France), which was the cult site of St. Julian the Martyr. Peter Brown notes, "When members of Gregory's own entourage, traveling to Brioude to avoid the plague, resorted to use of amulets applied by local diviners to cure one of their fellows, what angers him is not that they were behaving like pagans, but that they had lost their sense of *reverentia* for the saints."[57] Early medieval theologians saw temptations to paganism everywhere. Isidore of Seville condemned false monks who roamed the countryside, selling what were purported to be the relics of martyrs and esteeming *fimbrias et phylacteria*. His condemnation echoes Christ's attack on the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23:5).[58] Mainstream and proscribed ritual practices could be equally appealing to the clergy and laity, and this dangerous situation contributed to ecclesiastical strictures against textual amulets.

The sermons of St. Caesarius of Arles (470?–542) deal in part with the problems of imperfect Christianization, inconstant clerical discipline, and "pagan

57. Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity,* The Haskell Lectures on History of Religions, new series, no. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 118–20. For a translation of the story (46a) in St. Gregory of Tours, *Liber de passione et virtutibus sancti Iuliani martyris,* see Raymond Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 191–92.

58. St. Isidore of Seville, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.16.7, in *Patrologia latina,* vol. 83, cols. 796–98: "Quintum genus est circumcellionum, qui suo habitu monachorum usquequaque bagantur, venalem circumferentes hypocrisin, circumeuntes provincias, nusquam missi, nusquam fixi, nusquam stantes, nusquam sedentes; alii quae non viderunt confingunt, opiniones suas habentes pro Deo; alii membra martyrum (si tamen martyrum) venditant; alii fimbrias et phylacteria sua magnificant, gloriam captantes ab hominibus; alii criniti incedunt, ne vilior habeatur tonsa sanctitas quam comata."

magic." Serving as bishop of Arles from 502, Caesarius struggled to extirpate ritual practices offering the hope of protection and healing outside the context of the institutional Christian church and doctrine. He railed against the futility of using textual amulets (*phylacteria* or *filacteria*), especially those containing diabolical symbols and *characteres,* as contrary to divine law and a spiritual blight on the countryside of southern Gaul. Textual amulets were no less offensive, in his view, when provided by priests and monks, though it is not difficult for us to imagine that many clerics viewed the act of dispensing amulets based on sacred text as a legitimate exercise of pastoral care, or at least a harmless practice helping to keep their flock in the Christian fold. Yet Caesarius considered clerical fabricators of amulets to be the Devil's helpers. Users of these amulets risked revocation of baptism and destruction of their immortal souls.[59] His sermons became models for preaching to imperfectly Christianized peoples and influenced the writings of St. Martin of Braga, St. Eligius (or St. Éloi) of Noyon, and St. Pirmin of Meaux (d. 753). An anonymous eighth-century missionary, so poorly educated that he inferred from the *us*-ending of Venus that she was a man, freely borrowed from Caesarius's condemnations of textual amulets (*diabolica filactiria*) to preach against pagan survivals and heathen gods.[60] In 742, St. Boniface (d. 754), the Anglo-Saxon missionary and reformer of the Frankish church, complained to Pope Zacharias about the survival of pagan

59. St. Caesarius of Arles, *Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis sermones,* vol. 1, pt. 1, p. 11 (sermon 1), in *Sancti Caesarii episcopi Arelatensis opera omnia,* ed. Germain Morin (Maretioli: n.p., 1937): "nullus phylacteria aut diabolicos characteres vel aliquas ligaturas sibi aut suis adpenat"; ibid., pp. 65, 66 (sermon 13): "diabolica fylacteria"; ibid., p. 70 (sermon 14): "Phylacteria diabolica, caracteres, sucinos et herbas nolite vobis et vestris adpendere: quia qui hoc malum fecerit, sacrilegium se non dubitet admisisse"; ibid., p. 86 (sermon 19): "Nullus filacteria aut ligaturas sibi aut suis adpendat: quia, quicumque fecerit hoc malum, si paenitentia non subvenerit, perdit baptismi sacramentum"; ibid., p. 87 (sermon 19): "Quare ergo per caraios et divinos, precantatores et filacteria diabolica occidat animam suam"; ibid., pp. 215–16 (sermon 50): "sed, quod dolendum est, sunt aliqui, qui in qualibet infirmitate sortilegos quaerunt, aruspices et divinos interrogant, praecantatores adhibent, fylacteria sibi diabolica et caracteres adpendunt. Et aliquotiens ligaturas ipsas a clericis ac religiosis accipiunt; sed illi non sunt relegiosi vel clerici, sed adiutores diaboli . . . quia etiam si per ipsas ligaturas aliqui sanitatem receperint, diaboli hoc calliditas facit. . . . Qui enim filacteria facit, et qui rogant ut fiant, et quicumque consentiunt, toti pagani efficiuntur"; ibid., p. 221 (sermon 52): "Et illi qui castigat, ut non observentur auguria, filacteria non adpendantur, nec praecantatores vel aruspices requirantur, dum contra istas temptationes diaboli loquitur, pro Christo testimonium dare cognoscitur"; ibid., vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 778 (sermon 204): "auguria non observent, fylacteria vel caracteres diabolicos nec sibi nec suis aliquando suspendant." Concerning Caesarius of Arles and Christian magic, see Giselle de Nie, "Caesarius of Arles and Gregory of Tours: Two Sixth-Century Gallic Bishops and 'Christian Magic,'" in *Cultural Identity and Cultural Integration: Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages,* ed. Doris Edel (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1995), pp. 170–96 (especially pp. 189–91).

60. Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century: The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford in the Hilary Term, 1943* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), pp. 151, 302–14 (appendix 10, "Venus, A Man. From an Unpublished Sermon").

magic among German women, who bound *phylacteria et ligaturas* to their arms and legs, even offering the amulets for sale.[61]

Efforts to extirpate the intermingling of Christianity with non-Christian ritual practices of Near Eastern, Germanic, and Celtic origin were largely unsuccessful. This coalescence could occur in a predominantly oral culture, as we learn in the lives of particular Irish saints. Traveling monks and laymen mentioned in these lives were known to intone particular Latin psalms and vernacular hymns from memory as verbal charms offering "path-protection."[62] From the sixth to ninth centuries, Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Christian hymns or prayers called *loricae* (from the Latin word for a leather cuirass or metal breastplate) offered verbal body armor to protect people and their immortal souls, to resist and expel demons, to overcome deadly sins and prevent sudden death, and perhaps even to counteract evil spells and incantations.[63] The *loricae* attributed to St. Patrick and to the British monk and historian Gildas (or Laidcenn) were Latin hymns primarily intended for oral use. Some *loricae* survive in monastic manuscripts of the eighth to tenth centuries that include Old English glosses. St. Patrick and Gildas metaphorically bound divine power to themselves by invoking Christ, the Trinity, and a heavenly host of protectors against demons, evil spells, and assorted dangers. In the *lorica* of Gildas, an angel assures that one's body and soul can enjoy divine protection against all enemies, whether demonic or human, if one chants the text on a particular day.[64] Writing made it possible to turn apotropaic prayers for verbal use into textual amulets worn on the body.

The conversion of the barbarian kings was only the beginning of a centuries-long process to convert pagans to Christianity while resisting tenacious pre-Christian ritual practices. A story in the *Historia ecclesiastica* of the Venerable Bede (d. 735) vividly illustrates the place of textual amulets, at least in Bede's

61. *Epistola Bonifacii ad Zachariam papam* (Epistola 49), in *Patrologia latina,* vol. 89, col. 747: "Dicunt quoque se vidisse ibi mulieres pagano ritu phylacteria et ligaturas, et in brachiis, et cruribus ligatas habere, et publice ad vendendum venales ad comparandum aliis offere."

62. Charles Plummer, ed., *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), vol. 1, pp. cxxvi, clxxix; vol. 2, pp. 198–99.

63. Even when not inscribed with powerful words, shields were an obvious form of personal protection. In fact, small scutiform pendants found among Anglo-Saxon and contemporary Continental grave goods could have been amulets. See Meaney, *Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones,* pp. 159–62.

64. Louis Gougaud, "Étude sur les 'Loricae' celtiques et sur les prières qui s'en approchent," *Bulletin d'ancienne littérature et archéologie chrétiennes* 1 (1911): 265–81; 2 (1912): 33–41, 101–27; Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine,* pp. 68–70; Charles Singer, "The Lorica of Gildas the Briton: A Magical Text of the Sixth Century," in *From Magic to Science: Essays on the Scientific Twilight* (London: Ernest Benn, 1918), pp. 111–32. According to Robin Flower, Irish *loricae* of the eighth to eleventh centuries "were plainly used as amulets, possessing a kind of magical efficacy to ward off danger and the assault of demons." Robin Flower, "Irish High Crosses," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17 (1954): 91.

view, of the competition between Christianity and paganism. Bede's story concerns an Anglo-Saxon warrior named Imma, who was a young thane in the service of King Egfrith of Northumbria (670–85). In 679, soldiers of an unnamed retainer of King Ethelred of Mercia (674–704) took Imma prisoner in battle.[65] When repeated efforts to keep Imma in shackles failed, the retainer asked Imma if he had been able to break his *vincula* by means of loosing spells (*literas solutorias*) such as those spoken of in fabulous tales. These spells might have been verbal charms, perhaps like those used elsewhere to free individuals from fetters and escape captivity.[66] However, Bede's use of the word *litera* seems to point to a written amulet.[67] The Old English translation of the *Historia ecclesiastica* suggests that Imma's captors thought he had loosing spells in written form. In this version, Imma was asked if he knew the charm or writing (*run*) for loosing and possessed the words in written form (*awritene*).[68]

Imma responded that his power resulted not from the arts of magic (*talium artium*), but rather from divine intercession in response to masses for the dead said on his behalf by his brother Tunna, a Northumbrian priest and abbot who mistakenly believed him dead. According to Bede, the masses were so powerful that they released Imma, who was still alive, from his fetters. Christianity was more powerful than non-Christian ritual practices. Bede rejected pagan beliefs in the magical efficacy of words, even though he celebrated miraculous cures based on the power of sacred text.[69] Bede does not describe the physical form of

65. Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica,* bk. 4, chap. 22, in *Baedae opera historica,* edited with an English translation by J. E. King, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1930), vol. 2, pp. 118–25. Aron Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception,* trans. János M. Bak and Paul A. Hollingsworth, Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture, vol. 14 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 54: "His captor expressed the fear that Imma was using magic incantations or runes." No specific "loosing spell," either for verbal or written amuletic use, appears to survive among Anglo-Saxon charms.

66. For example, an Old High German charm from Merseburg, commonly dated on linguistic grounds as early as ca. 750 though copied ca. 925. Susan D. Fuller, "Pagan Charms in Tenth-Century Saxony? The Function of the Merseburg Charms," *Monatshefte für deutschen Unterricht, deutsche Sprache und Literatur* 72, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 162–70. This is one of two charms for oral delivery, found on the flyleaf of a ninth-century manuscript (Merseburg Cathedral Library, Cod. 136, fol. 84r). Fuller suggests, "Probably around 924–28, a frightened cleric in Merseburg may have had the Charms dictated to him. They functioned as defense measures against the Magyar onslaughts" (p. 168).

67. Elsewhere in the *Historia ecclesiastica* (bk. 4, chap. 27), Bede uses the phrase "per incantationes, vel fylacteria" to refer to charms and amulets (characterized as idolatrous and diabolical) in Northumbria, against which St. Cuthbert (635?–687) preached as the abbot of Melrose. In *Baedae opera historica,* vol. 2, pp. 166–67.

68. Thomas Miller, ed., *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People,* Early English Text Society, vol. 96 (London: N. Trübner, 1891), pp. 328–29 (bk. 4, chap. 22): "Ond hine adconde hwaeðer he ða alysendlecan rúne cuðe, 7 Þa stafas mid him awritene haefde."

69. Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine,* p. 92.

the "spells for loosing" that Imma's captors suspected him of possessing. It is possible that such a spell would have been written in runes, the early Germanic writing system sometimes used in Anglo-Saxon England and on the Continent for magic texts.[70] Such a text would most likely have been inscribed on a wooden writing board, originally *bóc* ("beechwood") in Old English, and one could wear a textual amulet and use it in conjunction with incantations.[71] In the predominantly oral culture of Anglo-Saxon England, like other imperfectly Christianized areas of Western Europe, there were occasions for the use of textual amulets based on pre-Christian texts, objects, and rituals.[72]

70. The magical use of runes has been a matter of academic disagreement. Some scholars have argued that Anglo-Saxon runic inscriptions could be perceived to enjoy supernatural power sufficient to raise the dead or break shackles. Meaney, *Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones,* pp. 18–23. A. C. Paues, "Runes and Manuscripts," in *The Cambridge History of English Literature,* ed. A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1949), p. 8: "Runes could raise the dead from their graves; they could preserve life or take it, they could heal the sick or bring on lingering disease; they could call forth the soft rain or the violent hailstorm; they could break chains and shackles or bind more closely than bonds or fetters; they could make the warrior invincible and cause his sword to inflict none but mortal wounds; they could produce frenzy and madness or defend from the deceit of a false friend." Other scholars have argued against runes being inherently magical or unquestionably associated with pagan magic. In particular, see R. I. Page, "Anglo-Saxon Runes and Magic," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association,* 3rd series, 27 (1964): 14–31; R. I. Page, "Roman and Runic on St. Cuthbert's Coffin," in *St. Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200,* ed. Gerald Bonner, David Rollason, and Clare Stancliffe (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1989), pp. 257–65; and R. I. Page, *An Introduction to English Runes,* 2nd edition (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1999), pp. 105–9. For other views of runes in connection with magic, see Stephen E. Flowers, *Runes and Magic: Magical Formulaic Elements in the Older Runic Tradition,* Germanic Languages and Literature, vol. 53 (New York: Peter Lang, 1986), especially pp. 125–86 (chap. 5, "Runes and Germanic Magical Practice"); and Elmer H. Antonsen, "The Runes: The Earliest Germanic Writing System," in *The Origins of Writing,* ed. Wayne M. Senner (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), pp. 139–40.

71. Amuletic text could have been written on wooden staves, sticks, stones, animal horn, and bone. For a later description of a wooden amulet with a runic inscription, we may turn to Olaus Magnus (1490–1558), the Swedish Roman Catholic historian. In his *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (1555), he describes such amulets. In a large cave on the island of Vising in Lake Vetter, the magician Gilbertus was immobilized ("superatum atque ligatum") by the counter-magic of two amulets inscribed with Old Germanic runes ("certis characteribus Gothicis seu Ruthenicis"). A woodcut found in various sixteenth-century editions depicts these amulets as rectangular wooden boards (perhaps measuring about 10.0 × 60.0 cm) on which runes were written lengthwise. One of the amulets is shown between the partially outstretched arms of Gilbertus to cover his heart, while the other was placed over his feet so that he could not move. Olaus Magnus, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (Antwerp: Apud Ioannem Bellerum, 1562), pp. 41–42 (bk. 3, chap. 19). The story *De mago ligato* corresponds to *D'un mago legato* in the Italian translation, *Historia delle genti et della natura delle cose settentrionali* (Venice: Appresso i Giunti, 1555), pp. 45–46 (bk. 3, chap. 22).

72. Another example is the medieval Swedish practice of reusing Stone Age worked-flint objects as apotropaic devices against thunder and lightning. Peter Carelli, "Thunder and Lightning, Magical Miracles: On the Popular Myth of Thunderbolts and the Presence of Stone Age Artefacts in Medieval Deposits," in *Visions of the Past: Trends and Traditions in Swedish Medieval Archaeology,* ed. Hans Andersson, Peter Carelli, and Lars Ersgård, Lund Studies in Medieval Archaeology, no. 19

Ecclesiastical Proscriptions

The sudden triumph of Christianity in the Roman Empire during the fourth century led to early church legislation against textual amulets at the Council of Laodikeia in Phrygia. The imperfect mass Christianization of Germanic and Celtic populations led to protracted effort through five centuries of church legislation, briefly summarized here, to suppress textual amulets and other magical practices. A decretal attributed to Pope Gelasius I (492–96) specifically condemned "phylakteria non angelorum sed daemonum nominibus consecrata." The Council of Constantinople in 692 also condemned textual amulets and their makers.[73] At the Council of Ratisbon in 742, the use of *phylacteria* and *ligatura* was condemned along with divination, incantations, and a host of other practices considered pagan. Condemnations are also found in King Carloman's capitulary of 21 April 742 (article 5) for church reform in the eastern half of the Frankish realm; in article 10 (*De filacteriis et ligaturis*) of thirty forbidden practices listed in the *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum,* which was probably the work of a cleric associated with St. Boniface and was related in substance to decrees of the councils of 743–44; in Charlemagne's capitulary of 769 (articles 6–7); and in the rescript of 829 by the Frankish bishops to Emperor Louis I.[74] In capitularies of 858, Archbishop Herard of Tours mandated punishment for the use of fever amulets (*brevibus pro frigoribus*), while prohibiting acts of necromancy, magic incantations, divination, and sorcery.[75] Repeated legal proscriptions are not an absolute indication of continued practice, but it is likely that people (despite the low level of literacy) occasionally resorted to textual

(Stockholm: Central Board of National Antiquities, 1997), pp. 393–417. This related to the popular medieval belief that actual thunderbolts were thrown down from heaven during lightning storms, and therefore people carried variously shaped pieces of stone as amulets.

73. Karl Joseph von Hefele, *Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, Éditeurs, 1907), vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 1018–19 (canon 36). In the twelfth century, the condemnations by church councils were repeated in Gratian's *Decretum* (see causa 26, qu. 5, cap. 4). Bartelink, "Φυλακτήριον-phylacterium," pp. 33.

74. Alfredus Boretius and Victor Krause, eds., *Capitularia regum francorum,* in *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Legum sectio II* (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1883–90), vol. 1, pp. 25, 45, 223; vol. 2, pt. 1, pp. 44–45. Concerning the *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum,* see Alain Dierkens, "Superstitions, christianisme et paganisme à la fin de l'époque mérovingienne: À propos de l'*Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum,*" in *Magie, sorcellerie, parapsychologie,* ed. Hervé Hasquin, Laïcité, Serie "Recherches," no. 5 (Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1984), pp. 9–26, and Dierkens, "The Evidence of Archaeology," in *The Pagan Middle Ages,* ed. Ludo J.R. Mills, trans. Tanis Guest (Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 1998), pp. 54–55.

75. Rudolf Pokorny and Martina Stratmann, eds., *Capitula episcoporum,* Monumenta Germaniae Historica (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchlandlung, 1995), vol. 2, p. 128 (chap. 3); *Patrologia latina,* vol. 121, col. 764 (chap. 3).

amulets, as they did to relics and other ritual practices designed to secure divine favor, protection, and healing.

Early medieval penitentials and collections of canons also specified a range of penance and punishments for Christians who confessed their involvement in proscribed practices. Uniformly condemned was any form of heterodoxy based on the intermixture of Christian prayers with text and symbols borrowed from other religions, or with any unapproved text that the church proscribed as magic.[76] The *Scarapsus* of St. Pirmin (ca. 724), a contemporary of St. Boniface, is a compilation of Christian fundamentals, preserved in a manuscript from the Benedictine abbey of Einsiedeln in Switzerland. The text, which is addressed to "fratres karissimi," prohibits textual amulets and other ritual practices deemed to be magic or superstition.[77] In Anglo-Saxon England, Egbert's penitential (ca. 750), under the rubric of augury and divination, prescribed years of penance for clerics and laymen involved with *filecteria* and other forms of magic.[78] The small size and simple outward appearance of tripartite penitentials from the British Isles and Frankish realm from the sixth to eighth centuries suggest that they were for use by parish priests. The texts of penitentials changed slowly over time, often by minor additions from canonical sentences.[79] Legal proscriptions set at church councils were also circulated to parish priests through popular collections of canons such as the *Decretum* compiled by Burchard of Worms around 1008–12 (especially in book 19, *Corrector et medicus*), and later the collection compiled by Ivo of Chartres (1040?–1116). Textual amulets (*phylacteria*) were

76. In Anglo-Saxon England, for example, the *Penitential of Egbert* permitted the gathering of herbs with recitation of the Lord's Prayer and Credo, not illicit charms. Karen Louise Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 93; Flint, *Rise of Magic,* pp. 301–4, 397–401.

77. *Dicta abbatis Priminii, de singulis libris canonicis scarapsus,* in *Kirchenhistorische anecdota nebst neuen Ausgaben patristischer und kirchlich-mittelalterlicher Schriften,* ed. Carl Paul Caspari (Christiania: Mallingsche Buchdruckerei, 1883), pp. viii–x, 153–93. Article 22: "Karactires, erbas, sucino nolite uobis uel uestris apendire" (p. 173); "Omnia filactiria diabolica et cuncta supradicta nolite ea credire, nec adorare, neque uota illis reddere, nec nullum honorem impendire" (p. 176).

78. Arthur West Haddan and William Stubbs, eds., *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871), vol. 3, p. 424: "Caraios et divinos precantatores, filecteria etiam diabolica vel erbas vel facino suis vel sibi inpendere vel V. feria in honore Jovis vel Kalendas Januarias secundum paganam causam honorare, si non, V annos peniteat clericus, si laicus, III annos peniteat." Concerning Egbert's penitential and other official condemnations from the eighth to eleventh centuries, see Edward Pettit, *Anglo-Saxon Remedies, Charms, and Prayers from British Library MS Harley 585: The Lacnunga,* vol. 1, *Introduction, Text, Translation, and Appendices,* Mellen Critical Editions and Translations, vol. 6a (Lewiston, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), pp. xlviii–li.

79. Rob Meens, *Het Tripartite Boeteboek: Overlevering en Betekenis van vroegmiddeleeuwse Biechtvoorschriften (met Editie en Vertaling van vier tripartita),* Middeleeuwse Studies en Bronnen, no. 41 (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994), pp. 565–73.

among the proscribed ritual practices in both compilations.[80] While it is difficult to generalize for the medieval West, penitentials continued to condemn textual amulets because clerics occasionally produced them. But enforcement must have been erratic, and the proscriptions were endlessly repeated, it sometimes seems, in hope of compliance.

Clerical Dissemination

In the early Middle Ages, clerics were generally the only people with the basic Latin literacy, writing materials, and access to written exemplars needed to produce textual amulets to meet the needs of the laity, including parishioners, neighbors, social peers, and kin.[81] Among the earliest and most important church-sanctioned uses of textual amulets was in connection with exorcism rituals to repel and cast out demons, a practice dating back to the very beginnings of Christianity.[82] Early medieval Christians could use exorcism amulets in the knowledge that Christ had healed the demon-possessed through the therapy of words and touch. Christian exorcisms were predicated upon a belief in the efficacy of clerically dispensed rituals and words could win divine protection in a way that the "magic for hire" of Simon Magus and sorcerers could not.

80. *Libri decretorum Burchardus Wormaciensis,* bk. 10, chap. 23, in *Patrologia latina,* vol. 140, col. 836: "Si quis hariolos, haruspices, vel incantatores observaverit, aut phylacteriis usus fuerit, anathema sit"; *Libri decretorum Burchardus Wormaciensis,* bk. 19, chap. 5, in ibid., col. 961: "Fecisti ligaturas, et incantationes, et illas varias fascinationes." Greta Austin, "Jurisprudence in the Service of Pastoral Care: The *Decretum* of Burchard of Worms," *Speculum* 79, no. 4 (October 2004): 929–59: "Scholars have attributed the popularity of Burchard's *Decretum* to the ease with which parish preists could use it in their day-to-day work. The collection addresses a wide variety of topics . . . and the first canons in book 19 provide a guide to administering penance" (932).

81. Concerning the role of clerics as practitioners of magic, see Françoise Bonney, "Autour de Jean Gerson: Opinions de théologiens sur les superstitions et la sorcellerie au debut du XVe siècle," *Le moyen âge* 77 (1971): 85–86 n. 3. Ryan, *Bathhouse at Midnight,* p. 408: "The attitudes of the Eastern and Western Churches towards magic and divination have generally been condemnatory, both on theological grounds and because of biblical and patristic precept. It takes a shrewd theologian, however, to distinguish miracles from magic, and most ordinary people of any period would have seen no difference. In practice the Christian Churches have found difficulty in ensuring that their official view of the matter prevailed, not least because some of those who practiced magic and divination from the earliest times up to the present, were themselves members of the clergy, and because at least some forms of divination (e.g., the interpretation of dreams) as reported in Scripture, hagiographic and patristic writing, not to mention medieval and post-medieval works, by otherwise fairly orthodox Christian writers, as normal and legitimate activities."

82. Exorcism formulas have been found in early Christian amulets on papyrus, parchment, metal, pottery, and other writing supports. Probably the earliest extant Christian amulet is a second-century gold *lamella* found in Beirut. Inscribed on both sides of this amulet are Greek exorcism formulas. It was then carefully rolled up inside a capsule with rings or loops by means of which it could be worn around the victim's neck. Its thirteen-line inscription invokes Christ and the cross to cast out the Devil. Cabrol, *Dictionnaire,* vol. 1, pt. 2, cols. 1795–96.

Medieval evidence of exorcism amulets dates from as early as the sixth century. According to an anonymous Merovingian life of St. Eugendus of Saint-Claude (ca. 449–ca. 510), abbot of Condat, a girl in what is now the Jura region of France had tried unsuccessfully to cast out demons by wearing such an amulet around her neck. The author of this saint's life identified the exorcism amulet as being "Alexandrian." Perhaps it had been transported via sea and land routes from the Egyptian port of Alexandria, with its reputation for magic,[83] but it is equally possible that the amulet was Alexandrian in the sense of containing the names of forbidden pagan divinities associated with Egypt. Even if produced locally in France, the amulet might have contained elements reminiscent of pagan models and therefore warranted ecclesiastical disapproval.[84] The life of St. Eugendus tried to show that pagan magic could not work, while textual amulets firmly rooted in the Christian faith could succeed. Exorcism required counter-magic in the form of a textual amulet (*scriptura*). St. Eugendus wrote it out himself, incorporating the name of Christ and liturgical exorcism formulas. Ostensibly, the girl was cured because the Devil feared the powerful Christian words. The abbot's sanctity, charismatic reputation, and Christian charity contributed to the exorcistic power of his written words. In condemning one textual amulet and preparing another, moreover, St. Eugendus did not seek or expect financial remuneration, as would lay healers and country charlatans.[85]

83. Among grave goods dating from the fourth to seventh centuries, archeologists have unearthed inscribed gold *lamellae,* crystal balls, and other Egyptian amulets that had been imported into Western Europe as far as England. At least three textual amulets from Roman Egypt, taking the form of small rolled gold *lamellae* inscribed with divine names (e.g. the Hebrew names Adonai, Sabaoth, and IAO) written in Greek, have been excavated in England. Found in a Danish grave, probably of the fourth century, is an inscribed magic crystal ball from the Egypt or the eastern Mediterranean, with ΑΒΛΑΘΑΝΑΛΒΑ in Greek majuscule. Meaney, *Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones,* pp. 9–10, 91, 264–65.

84. Later Neoplatonic philosophers had given Alexandria a special reputation for magic as well as a center of learning. Samuel Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire,* 2nd revised edition (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), pp. 50–51. On the relationship between Egyptian priestly magic and Alexandrian medicine, see Heinrich von Staden, *Herophilus: The Art of Medicine in Early Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 6–9.

85. *Vita patrum Iurensium Romani, Lupicini, Eugendi,* sec. 11, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum: Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi Merovingici et antiquiorum aliquot,* ed. Bruno Krusch (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1896), vol. 3, pp. 158–59: "Eugendus servus Christi Iesu in nomine domini nostri Iesu Christi, Patris et Spiritus Dei nostri praecipio tibi per scripturam istam: Spiritus gule et ire et fornicationis et amoris, et lunatice et dianatice et meridane et diurne et nocturne et omnis spiritus inmunde, exi ab omine, quae istam scripturam secum habet. Per ipsum te adiuro verum filium Dei vivi: Exi velociter et cave, ne amplius introeas in eam. Amen. Alleluia." See the analyses in Adolph Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1909), vol. 2, pp. 548–49, and Poulin, "Entre magie et religion," p. 136.

In other early church-sanctioned exorcism amulets, we can see lines of continuity between ancient and medieval magic, as well as a degree of overlapping between Christian amulets and devotional objects. In 603, for example, Pope Gregory the Great gave a phylactery cross or *enkolpion* to the Lombard queen Theodelinda (d. 628), who was a Catholic rather than an Arian. She had first been married to King Authari (584–90) and then to King Agilulf (591–616), whose savage military conquests of Byzantine Italy led to the establishment of the Lombard kingdom. Pope Gregory I's gift has been identified with the *sacro amuleto,* found among the collection of holy relics in the treasury of Monza Cathedral. The object is an enameled-metal pectoral cross that was made in the Holy Land during the second half of the sixth century and probably acquired on pilgrimage. The obverse of the amulet features a Crucifixion scene with a Greek inscription including a portion of the Seven Last Words of Christ, and the reverse includes the first ten verses of a Greek poem written by St. Gregory of Nazianzus around 383–90. In the poem Christ is depicted as an exorcist who commands the Devil to leave the body at once.[86]

Another example is a Greek-style silver pectoral cross of the seventh or eighth century, excavated at Lausanne Cathedral in 1910 from a tomb that was probably once in the cemetery of an early medieval church formerly on that site (Musée Historique de Lausanne, no. 30969). The thin pectoral cross measures approximately 8.2 cm in height and width. It has inscriptions comprised of crosses and variations on ABRAXAS and ABRACADABRA, ancient *voces magicae* found in Roman Egypt from the second century, in the papyrus amulets of the Gnostics, who emphasized spiritual knowledge over faith as the path to salvation. The magic words were incised in a crude roman majuscule (possibly incorporating some Greek letters) on the front and back of the pectoral cross. A suspension loop permitted the cross to be worn from its owner's neck. Waldemar Deonna noted that the inscribed pectoral cross, excavated in an area once part of the kingdom of Burgundy, was of a type encountered in other Christian

86. Luciano Bossina, "Il caso dell'amuleto di Monza: Il più antico testimone di Gregorio Nazianzeno, trafugato da Napoleone," *Revista di studi bizantini e neoellenici,* n.s., 35 (1998): 3–15. The poem against the Devil is in *Patrologia graeca,* vol. 37, cols. 1399–1400. Concerning early Byzantine amulets (including amuletic pendants, armbands, and magical gems of the fifth to seventh centuries), see Gary Vikan, "Art, Medicine, and Magic in Early Byzantium," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers,* no. 38 (1984): 65–86; Anna D. Kartsonis, "Protection against All Evil: Function, Use and Operation of Byzantine Historiated Phylacteries," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 20 (1994): 73–102, plates 1–9; Victor H. Elbern, "Heilige, Dämonen und Magie an Reliquaren des frühen Mittelalters," in *Santi e demoni nell'alto medioevo occidentale (secoli V–XI),* Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, no. 36, 7–13 April 1988 (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1989), vol. 2, pp. 950–980, plates 1–28; and Alfons A. Barb, "Der heilige und die Schlangen," *Mitteilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 82, no. 1–3 (1953): 1–21.

tombs of the Germanic kingdoms.[87] These early medieval pectoral crosses and their texts offered the spiritual benefits of divine grace and protection.

Clerically produced textual amulets could take many physical forms in the early Middle Ages. Certain sacred books in codex format were used amuletically to protect, cure, and exorcise because they were associated with particular saints and considered sacred relics. In terms of canon law, books and other bits of writing copied by saints were second-class relics (like a saint's garments), rather than first-class relics (like instruments of a saint's martyrdom or notable body parts) or third-class relics (other artifacts that came in contact with saints).[88] "The wearing of a relic, Gospel text or cross," G.J.C. Snoek has noted, "carried the risk of the wearer according it the same value as that given to a pagan amulet. This was not an imaginary danger, since people tended to transfer to the relic the power held by the saint from whom it originated. In such a case the direct apotropaic power was accorded to the *fylacterium* itself rather than to the indirect protection afforded by divine providence." So a saint's book could be seen as a self-contained source of divine power and used like a textual amulet.[89]

Among the most important early medieval evidence of the amuletic use of books relates to St. Cuthbert (ca. 634–87). The Venerable Bede recounted that St. Cuthbert, after recovering from a grave pestilence in the year 661, was advised by his teacher St. Boisil (d. 664), prior of Melrose Abbey, on his deathbed to study the Gospel of John, a codex in seven quires, each with enough to read in a day, so that the entire book could be read in a week. After Boisil's death, St. Cuthbert succeeded him as prior and began preaching to local villagers who had ignored the sacraments and turned instead to verbal charms and textual amulets ("per incantationes vel alligaturas or fylacteria") for protection against the plague. Through pastoral journeys, St. Cuthbert tried to uncover pagan magical

87. Deonna, "Abra, Abraca," pp. 116–37.

88. Eugene A. Dooley, *Church Law on Sacred Relics,* Catholic University of America, Canon Law Studies, no. 70 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1931), p. 4.

89. Snoek, *Medieval Piety,* pp. 88–89. Reformers rejected the externalism and materialism of popular religion. Instead, Guibert of Nogent emphasized the importance of inner spirituality, sincere faith, preaching, and confession. In *De pignoribus sanctorum* (ca. 1125), he examined the relationship between oral and written traditions, between the physical symbolism of holy relics and the spiritual teachings of sacramental theology. His goal was to find the proper textual framework for the cult of relics, accepted uncritically by the unlettered even to the point of embracing saints and relics of dubious authenticity. Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 244–52; Colin Morris, "A Critique of Popular Religion: Guibert of Nogent on the Relics of the Saints," in *Popular Belief and Practice: Papers Read at the Ninth Summer Meeting and the Tenth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society,* ed. G. J. Cuming and Derek Baker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 55–60; Julia M. H. Smith, "Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles, and Relics in Brittany, c. 850–1250," *Speculum* 65, no. 2 (April 1990): 343.

practices that the church condemned as idolatrous or superstitious.[90] While St. Cuthbert used the Boisil Gospel as a devotional book, the boundary line between religion and magic could be fluid.

After his death, St. Cuthbert's book came to be identified with the Stonyhurst Gospel, a small codex of the Gospel of John, measuring approximately 13.3 × 9.0 cm, which is not arranged in seven quires like the Boisil Gospel. The Stonyhurst Gospel was made in Wearmouth-Jarrow at the end of the seventh century and was probably in St. Cuthbert's coffin when it was opened in 1104 and the saint's remains moved to Durham. The book came to be associated with the saint's relics and was among the most precious possessions of Durham Cathedral. After the Norman Conquest, the book was kept in a leather case with a silk cord, enabling it to be transported or worn on the body. Some distinguished visitors to the cathedral enjoyed the special honor of wearing the book around their necks. In this way, the bishops of Durham could carry the portable book and display it to pilgrims and parishioners. The manuscript survives in its original binding of Coptic-design decorated red goatskin over beechwood boards.[91] Like

90. Bede recounts St. Cuthbert's condemnation in *Historia ecclesiastica* (bk. 4, chap. 27), previously discussed, and in *Vita et miracula sancti Cuthberti* (8.14–9.15). Joseph Stevenson, ed., *Venerabilis Bedae opera historica minora* (London: Sumptibus Societatis, 1841), vol. 2, pp. 65–67: "ad erratica idololatriae medicamina concurrebant, quasi missam a Deo conditore plagam per incantationes vel alligaturas, vel alia quaelibet daemonicae artis arcana, cohibere valerent." Concerning Bede's references to incantations and amulets, see Bertram Colgrave, ed., *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), pp. 346–47, and Meaney, *Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones,* p. 14.

91. James Raine, ed., *Reginaldi monachi Dunelmensis libellus de admirandis Beati Cuthberti virtutibus quae novellis patratae sunt temporibus,* Publications of the Surtees Society, vol. 1 (London: J. B. Nichols and Son for the Surtees Society, 1835), pp. 197–201 (chap. 91); *Capitula de miraculis et translationibus Sancti Cuthberti,* chap. 21, in Thomas Arnold, ed., *Symeonis monachi opera omnia,* Rolls Series, vol. 75, pt. 2 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1885), p. 361: "Hunc codicem, cum pro merito utriusque, videlicet docentis et discentis, priscae adjuc novitatis retineat gratiam, inter alias sacrae venerationis reliquias honesto haec, scilicet Dunelmensis, ecclesia reservat loco. Est autem huic, in quo ponitur, ex pelle rubricata in modum perae loculus, habens ex serico, quod jam vetustas dissolvit in fila, suspendiculum quo per colla, ut dicitur, Sanctorum, videlicet beati magistri et post cum discipuli sui, pii haeredis, liber circumferebatur pendulus." The Stonyhurst Gospel is on permanent loan to the British Library and is currently exhibited among its treasures (Loan MS 74, from the English Province of the Society of Jesus). Listed in Helmut Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100,* Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, vol. 241 (Tempe, Ariz.: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001), p. 86, no. 501.2. Concerning the Gospel and Durham books used as relics, see A. J. Piper, "The Libraries of the Monks of Durham," in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries. Essays Presented to N. R. Ker,* ed. Malcolm B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (London: Scolar Press, 1978), pp. 213–41 (especially pp. 236–37); Victoria Tudor, "The Cult of St. Cuthbert in the Twelfth Century: The Evidence of Reginald of Durham," in Bonner, Rollason, and Stancliffe, *St. Cuthbert,* p. 460; and Lawrence Nees, "Reading Aldred's Colophon for the Lindisfarne Gospels," *Speculum* 78, no. 2 (April 2003): 333–77 (especially 348–49, 372).

other objects associated with St. Cuthbert, the book was considered a miracle-working relic of a saint who could turn the Devil to flight, ward off temptation, and rid supplicants of their sins.[92] The book's text, especially the apotropaic opening verses of the Gospel of John, reinforced its reputation as a sacred relic with curative powers, and its portability facilitated amuletic use.[93]

Probably the most famous book relic was the Cathach (or "Battler") of St. Columba, or Columcille, of Iona (ca. 521–97). This sacred relic constituted half of a late sixth- or early seventh-century psalter, which the saint had owned and possibly even copied.[94] Adomnán's life of St. Columba describes how the monks of Iona in the seventh century took St. Columba's white tunic and books written in his hand into the surrounding fields in order to bring spring rains and a bountiful harvest. In the eleventh century, the Cathach was enshrined and rebound in a silver-gilt jeweled shrine case at Kells. The legendary Cathach was reputed to have been undamaged by repeated immersion in water. By the thirteenth century, long after Christian armies had first used relics to achieve military victory, Irish armies marched into battle carrying the Cathach.[95] Medieval Ireland offers

92. Twelfth-century hymns and prayers to St. Cuthbert mention these powers. Thomas H. Bestul, ed., *A Durham Book of Devotions Edited from London, Society of Antiquaries, MS. 7,* Toronto Medieval Latin Texts, no. 18 (Toronto: Centre for Medieval Studies, 1987), p. 75 (no. 29, "Ad sanctum Cuthbertum oratio"): "Te pater insignis, demon expauit et ignis / Me fugiant per te Sathanas, Uenus, hostis uterque" (ll. 41–42); ibid., p. 78 ("Alia oratio"): "te suppliciter deprecor, ut me famulum tuum releues a peccatis, et impetres michi copiam diuine propitiationis" (ll. 17–18). John of Salisbury mentioned the legend. Clemens C.I. Webb, ed., *Ioannis Saresberiensis episcopi Carnotensis Polycratici sive de nugis curalium et vestigiis philosophorum libri VIII* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), vol. 1, pp. 66–67 (bk. 2, chap. 1): "Cuthbertus signifer quidam gentis nostrae in lege Domini euangelium Iohannis superponebat infirmis, et curabantur. . . . Capitula euangelii gestata uel audita uel dicta inueniuntur profuissi quamplurimis. Haec equidem et similia non modo licita sed et utilissima sunt. Alia uero non tam contempnenda quam fugienda."

93. A contemporary story in Walter Daniel's life of Ailred of Rievaulx (1110–66) offers another example. Ailred was Reginald of Durham's friend and devoted to St. Cuthbert. Among Ailred's many miracles while serving as abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Rievaulx in Yorkshire was curing a dying young monk with a copy of the Gospel of John and the relics of saints placed on the monk's chest. While Ailred had fetched the Gospel book from his oratory, the abbot had carried the book around on his person for many years, so it was as portable as the Stonyhurst Gospel. F. M. Powicke, ed., *The Life of Ailred of Rievaulx by Walter Daniel* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1950), pp. 43–44 (no. 36): "Cucurrut itaque tristis et gemebundus magister ad oratiolum suum et inde assumens reliquias quorundam sanctorum et textum euangelii Johannis quod super se portauerit annis multis, indutus cilicio ad nudum tulit omnia et ad pectus infirmi astrinxit et cum lacrimis proloquens dixit, 'Dilecte fili, sanet te Dei filius.' Et confestim dolor omnis conquieuit." The *Vita Ailredi,* p. 58 (no. 51), elsewhere lists the Gospel of John as one of the abbot's few personal possessions, along with a glossed Psalter and a copy of St. Augustine's *Confessions.*

94. For a recent study of the manuscript, now incomplete, containing all or parts of Psalms 30–105, see Michael Herity and Aidan Breem, *The "Cathach" of Colum Cille: An Introduction* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2002).

95. Concerning sacred relics and warfare, see Nicole Herrmann-Mascard, *Les reliques des saints: Formation coutumière d'un droit* (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1975), pp. 217–21. There was

other examples of sacred relics (including books) used in this way, and similar uses of scripture have been traced as late as the seventeenth century.[96] Even a written record of miraculous deeds attributable to saints and their relics could effect cures, as evidenced with St. Thomas à Becket, who in death became a legendary sacred healer of good Christians. Benedict of Peterborough (d. 1193/94) passed on the report of Abbot Peter of St. Remi at Reims about how the monk Gaufridus of Mont-Dieu, near Sedan in northern France, was cured of dropsy after being touched around his body by a written list (*carta*) of miracles attributed to St. Thomas à Becket.[97]

Monks and priests sometimes facilitated lay use of textual amulets together with holy relics and devotional images, as we learn from saints' lives. Particularly revealing is Reginald of Durham's *Libellus* of 129 miracle stories about St. Cuthbert. Completed between 1167 and 1174, the *Libellus* served to honor the local saint and advertise the miraculous powers of his shrine, near which most of the miracles took place. In one of the miracle stories we learn that Hugh

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no need to open or read the Cathach in order to assure victory. Irish forces struggling for possession of the book believed that St. Columba had prayed with arms extended. This was reminiscent of the way that Moses had raised his arms in a cross-like gesture to ensure victory over the Amalekites. According to the medieval typological reading of Exodus 17:9–13, Moses thus prefigured Christ. Meyer Schapiro, *Words and Pictures: On the Literal and the Symbolic in the Illustration of a Text* (The Hague: Mouton, 1973), p. 21.

96. J.S.P. Tatlock, "Greater Irish Saints in Lawman and in England," *Modern Philology* 43 (1945–46): 75; Andrew Kelleher, ed., "The Life of Betha Columb Chille," *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 9 (1913): 266–69, no. 178; Lester K. Little, *Benedictine Maledictions: Liturgical Cursing in Romanesque France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 169; Raghnall Ó Floinn, "Insignia Columbae I," in *Studies in the Cult of Saint Columba,* Cormac Bourke (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), pp. 150–53; A. T. Lucas, "The Social Role of Relics and Reliquaries in Ancient Ireland," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 116 (1986): 17–20. Scripture could be carried into battle offensively, defensively, or both. In battle, scriptural quotations on single sheets were more portable than whole books. In 1496, according to Jacob Burckhardt, an ascetic sent a "little hermit" or pupil into the city of Siena, carrying a pole that supported a piece of paper "with threatening text from the Bible." Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy: An Essay,* trans. S.G.C. Middlemore (London: Phaidon Press, 1955), p. 291. Around 1640, a printed Bible was carried into battle in Dover, New Hampshire. See Cressy, "Books as Totems," pp. 94–97: "In the seventeenth century we even find townsmen carrying a Bible on a pole, like a legionary standard, when they went to dispute with their reprobate neighbors. The Bible, held aloft, served as an inspirational emblem and as a weapon, even without the necessity of being opened" (p. 94).

97. *Miracula Sancti Thomae Cantuariensis auctore Benedicto, Abbate Petriburgensi,* in *Materials for the Study of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury,* ed. James Craigie Robertson, Rolls Series, no. 67 (London: Longman, 1876), vol. 2, p. 252 (bk. 4, chap. 87): "Forte ab Anglia carta miraculorum sancti Thomae ad nos devenerat, et a nobis ad fratres de Monte Dei. . . . Accepta itaque cum fide et invocatione sancti nominis carta, tetigit pedes suos, et tibias, et totum corpus suum; et in tantum convaluit, ut parvo tempore interposito ad ecclesiam et ad officia sua, non tamen ex toto curatus, rediret." Were they not kept at pilgrimage sites and shrines, registers of miracles could have served in the same way. Concerning such registers, see Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (London: J. M. Dent, 1977), pp. 102–3.

de Puiset, bishop of Durham from 1153 to 1194, employed a layman named Richard the Engineer (*Ricardus ingeniator*) around 1171 to repair or enlarge Norham Castle in Northumberland. Richard was a local landholder with close ties to Durham Cathedral. Contemporary Durham documents record his various land transactions with the Priory.[98] According to Reginald of Durham's *Libellus,* Richard regularly wore a silk sack (*loculus sericus* or *marsupium sericum*) suspended from his neck by a string. The sack was filled with several small parchment amulets (*scripta*) based on names of Christ and several Gospel extracts. The use of the word *exordium* suggests that the text may have included the amuletic opening verses from the Gospel of John. Richard used textual amulets not as a simple expression of faith as much as a device to win divine protection and resist misfortune and evil.[99]

Learning about Richard's textual amulets, an unnamed Benedictine monk from Durham decided to offer Richard superior power in the form of a sacred relic from a small illuminated manuscript about the life of St. Cuthbert. The monk wore it from his neck, as other Durham relics would have been worn. The relic was a small piece of St. Cuthbert's *pannus,* which had served as his winding-sheet (burial shroud) for more than four centuries. This relic was reputed to effect miracles and resist fire. Richard added the relic to his sack, presumably still containing the amulets, but then he lost the sack and its contents at Berwick-upon-Tweed in Northumberland. Before long, however, the silk sack was found and restored to him by a French cleric, no doubt because it contained a holy relic, a more acceptable source of sacred power. Reginald of Durham's purpose in presenting this nearly contemporary story was no doubt to show that the miraculous powers of St. Cuthbert were superior to ordinary textual amulets. Similarly, other stories in the *Libellus* attempt to show that St. Cuthbert's relics could cure the sick after those of the rival cults of St. Thomas à

98. M. G. Snape, ed., *English Episcopal Acta,* vol. 24, *Durham 1153–1195* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for The British Academy, 2002), p. 31, no. 35; p. 32, no. 36; p. 104, no. 123; pp. 104–5, no. 124; pp. 139–40, no. 165.

99. Raine, *Reginaldi monachi Dunelmensis libellus,* pp. 94–98 (chap. 47): "Nam et scripta quaedam, licet non autentica non tamen fidei canonem excedentia, more simplicium sibi adquisierat, in quibus nomina quam plura Salvatoris, et nonnulla evangelici textus exordia, de quibus spem salutit habuit, secum studiosius comportavit"; ibid., pp. 111–12 (chap. 54): "Hic frater, pro devotione nimia, quam erga Beatum Cuthbertum habuerat, libellum de Vita Beati Cuthberti secum circa collum illius pendulum sedulus circumferre moris habuerat, intra cujus asserum interiora de panno praedicto quaedam praecluserat portionis alicujus pignera veneranda." This story is mentioned in M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066–1307,* 2nd edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 334, and (without footnote or source) in Marc Drogin, *Biblioclasm: The Mythical Origins, Magic Powers, and Perishability of the Written Word* ([Totowa, N.J.]: Rowman and Littlefield, 1989), p. 41.

Becket or St. Godric of Finchdale had failed.[100] Yet in providing details drawn from contemporary life, Reginald of Durham inadvertently showed that textual amulets were in common use during the third quarter of the twelfth century. In fact, we know from other medieval sources that small, illustrated *libelli* about the life of St. Cuthbert were used as relics in Durham and vicinity.[101] The boundaries between textual amulets, sacred books, and holy relics could be quite fluid, and at times the three could be one and the same thing.

The life of St. Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), founding abbess of the Benedictine convent at Rupertsberg on the River Rhine near Mainz, provides further evidence of clerics dispensing textual amulets. Hildegard came to be so revered as a prophet, visionary, exorcist, and healer that clerics and the laity, including women of noble birth (like herself), sought her assistance. Among her miracles was a medical cure effected before 1153 by means of a textual amulet. We learn this from the miracle tales about her collected by the nuns of Rupertsberg and redacted by the monk Theoderich of Echternach (d. 1192) in the 1180s, when he was completing a narrative of Hildegard's life. Hildegard corresponded widely with popes, kings, and ordinary people who sought her aid, and in response to an appeal conveyed by messenger from a married woman (*matrona*) named Sibylla, living in Lausanne, Hildegard sent her a letter that contained an amuletic text designed to staunch blood. In the text, which had come to Hildegard in a vision, the abbess addressed the hemorrhage directly, and in Christ's name she commanded the flow of blood to cease: "In sanguine Ade orta est mors, in sanguine Christi extincta est mors. In eodem sanguine Christi impero tibi, o sanguis, ut fluxum tuum contineas."

Hildegard authored the letter but probably had it prepared in her customary way. The well-known miniatures in Lucca, Biblioteca Statale, MS 1942, depict Hildegard with her face turned heavenward, inscribing her visions on wax writing tablets. She could then dictate the final text to a trusted scribe, who would dutifully write it out on parchment.[102] Prepared in this way, Hildegard's letter would have taken the form of a small folded parchment sheet, with text on the

100. Tudor, "The Cult of St. Cuthbert," in Bonner, Rollason, and Stancliffe, *St. Cuthbert,* pp. 447–67, especially p. 459.

101. Magdalena Elizabeth Carrasco, "The Construction of Sanctity: Pictorial Hagiography and Monastic Reform in the First Illustrated Life of St. Cuthbert (Oxford, University College, MS 165)," *Studies in Iconography* 21 (2000): 49–51: "Richly decorated manuscripts associated with the cult of a saint, like the Oxford *Vita Cuthbert*i, occupy a middle ground between these two categories. As material objects, such manuscripts could partake of the supernatural power associated with traditional relics, and we know that special volumes devoted to the community's patron saint were sometimes found in or near the saint's shrine."

102. Albert Derolez and Peter Dronke, eds., *Hildegardis Bingensis Liber divinorum operum,* Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, no. 92 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), plates 6–15.

flesh side (facing inward) and the name of the addressee on the hair side (facing out). Hildegard dispatched the letter by messenger, much like the apocryphal Heavenly Letter. Her letter must have functioned as the actual amulet because it instructed Sibylla to place (*pone*) the curative words, presumably face down, over her breast and navel. Had the letter been intended only as an exemplar, Sibylla would have been told to write the words out (*scribe*), as instructions in exemplars often advised.[103] Assuming that Hildegard did not write the final letter in her own hand, the blood-staunching amulet was supposed to work by the power of consecrated words, not like a holy relic in the way that a braid of her hair supposedly worked even before her canonization.[104] Hildegard abhorred "demonic magic."[105] But she saw her amuletic letter as an effective method of long-distance healing. It was consistent with her use of prayers and herbal remedies to exorcise and heal, and with her belief in the marvelous properties of natural substances, whether used alone or in conjunction with prayers, charms, and incantations.

Beyond actual clerical preparation of textual amulets, there are widely scattered examples of sacred books being used to protect people, cure ailments, and exorcise demons. Interesting literary evidence of this practice is found in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria,* a series of some four hundred Galician-Portuguese devotional poems, written and set to music in the thirteenth century at the court

103. Monika Klaes, ed., *Vita Sanctae Hildegardis,* Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, vol. 126 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993), pp. 117*, 129*–130*, 50 (3.10). Five medieval manuscripts containing compilations of Hildegard's correspondence include the letter to Sibylla, which is considered authentic. See Lieven Van Acker and Monika Klaes-Hachmoller, eds., *Hildegardis Bingensis Epistolarium: Pars tertia CCLI–CCCXC,* Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaeualis, vol. 91 B (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), p. 95 (Epistola 338): "O Sibilla, hec tibi dico in luce ueracium uisionem: Tu est filia siluarum in turbine morborum. Deus uigilat super te, ut non detur anima tua in dispersionem. Ideo confide in Deum. Hec autem uerba circa pectus et circa umbilicum tuum pone in nomine illius, qui omnia recte dispensat: 'In sanguine Ade orta est mors, in sanguine Christi mors retenta est. In eodem sanguine Christi impero tibi, o sanguis, ut fluxum tuum contineas.'" Jean Baptiste Cardinal Pitra described the letter as a *phylacterium,* in *Analecta Sanctae Hildegardis opera spicilegio solesmensi parata,* Analecta Sacra, vol. 8 (Paris: Typis Sacri Montis Casiensis, 1882), pp. 521–23 (Epistolarum Nova Series, no. 36). For a brief discussion of the letter, see Sabina Flanagan, *Hildegard of Bingen, 1098–1179: A Visionary Life* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 171; and concerning the sources of the miracle tales, see Anna Silvas, *Jutta and Hildegard: The Biographical Sources, Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts,* vol. 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), pp. 123–24. Hildegard wrote a second letter to Sibylla of Lausanne around 1150–55. In it she offered spiritual guidance, telling her correspondent, "Confide tamen in Domino, quod te liberet *de manu gladii* inimicorum tuorum, quamuis filia tua ab eis uix eripiatur." Van Acker and Klaes-Hachmoller, *Hildegardis Bingensis Epistolarium: Pars tertia,* p. 96 (Epistola 339).

104. Klaes, *Vita Sanctae Hildegardis,* pp. 51–52 (3.11–13); Silvas, *Jutta and Hildegard,* p. 124.

105. In her visions, the Devil and the Antichrist seduced and mocked through magical arts. See Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias,* book 1, vision 3, chapter 22, in *Patrologia latina,* vol. 197, col. 410, and *Liber divinorum operum,* part 3, vision 5, chapter 32, in Derolez and Dronke, *Hildegardis Bingensis Liber divinorum operum,* pp. 454–55. Bozóky, *Charmes et prières apotropaïques,* pp. 81–82.

of King Alfonso X (*El Sabio*) of Castile and León. Cantiga 209 tells how the king fell gravely ill and was consumed with pain. Rejecting the hot cloths ordered by attending physicians, the bedridden king had his exquisitely illuminated manuscript of the *Cantigas* placed upon his body. Miniatures illustrating the *Cantigas* provide a visualization of this book's amuletic function. Priests are depicted in the act of placing the book face up over the king's heart, where its healing powers would be most effective, in accordance with medieval notions of physiology. Clerics facilitated the application of sacred word therapy, here seen as superior to available medical remedies. Since the king's book was devoted to the miracles of the Virgin Mary, who was often the intermediary in appeals for divine blessing, its healing powers might have had the aspect of a relic as well as an amulet.[106] The amuletic use of the *Cantigas* was not unique, to judge from damaged and mutilated sacred books and rolls.[107]

106. Once cured, the king was able to sit up in bed almost immediately, first reverently kissing the miracle-working book, in the manner of a devotional illustration on an "iconic page," and then putting the book down on his lap. Walter Mettmann, ed., *Afonso X, o Sábio: Cantigas de Santa Maria,* Acta Universitatis Conimbrigensis (Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra, 1961), vol. 2, pp. 274–75 (no. 209): "Como el Rey Affonso de Castela adoeçeu en Bitoria e ouv' hua tan grande, que coidaron que morresse ende, e poseron-lle de suso o livro das Cantigas de Santa Maria, e toi guarido. . . . E os fisicos mandavan-me põer panos caentes, mas nono quix fazer, mas mandei o Livro dela aduzer, e poseron-mio, a logo jouv' en paz." See John E. Keller and Richard P. Kinkade, "Iconography and Literature: Alfonso Himself in Cantiga 209," *Hispania* 66 (1983): 348–52. The discussion of illustrations is based on Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS Banco Rari (formerly II.1.2.3), and Biblioteca de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Codice T. J. See Harriet Goldberg, *Motif-Index of Medieval Spanish Folk Narratives,* Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, vol. 162 (Tempe, Ar.: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1998), p. 18 (D1500.0.2). Christian magic at the court of Alfonso el Sábio was complemented by learned magic influenced by Arabic texts. For example, see Alfonso d'Agostino, ed., *Astromagia: Ms. Reg. Lat. 1283a,* Barataria, no. 6 (Naples: Liguori, 1992). Michael Camille, "Sensations of the Page: Imaging Technologies and Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts," in *The Iconic Page in Manuscript, Print, and Digital Culture,* ed. George Bornstein and Theresa Tinkle (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, n.d.), p. 41: "In liturgical manuscripts such as missals, for example, the celebrant was required to kiss the Crucifix painted on the parchment of the *Te igitur* page, often kissing it out of existence."

107. For example, Joseph-Claude Poulin noted the abnormal wear of two miniatures in an otherwise well preserved tenth-century Gospel Book from the Benedictine monastery of Pürten, in Bavaria. Damage probably resulted from long-term physical contact with the images of saints to relieve maladies from simple headaches to demon possession. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 5250, fols. 67r, 152r. Poulin, "Entre magie et religion," pp. 137–38; Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter,* vol. 2, pp. 436–37. Robert Branner argued that popular interest in miraculous cures and exorcising demons led to the partial dismemberment of a Gothic roll probably made around 1245–55 as a model for the decoration of the French abbey church of Saint-Éloi de Noyon. One can easily imagine Noyon's monks using the St. Eligius roll as a visual relic with apotropaic, therapeutic, and exorcistic powers. While reduced to fragments, the roll was still in the abbey when it was dissolved during the French Revolution. Deliberate trimming of the roll, perhaps as early as the fifteenth century, had the effect of focusing attention on St. Eligius of Noyon's miracles. Popular iconography of the patron saint of goldsmiths and blacksmiths focused on his healing powers and on his use of pincers to grab the Devil's nose. In the seventeenth century, long after the

In short, medieval holy men and women like St. Hildegard of Bingen prepared textual amulets for individuals and occasionally used sacred books in amuletic ways. But most cases of amulet production were not so chronicled among the miraculous deeds of saints. Nameless monks, parish priests, and clerics in minor orders must have been responsible for countless unrecorded cases of amulet production. In the belief that they were doing God's work, individual clerics mediated sacred power by preparing textual amulets from written exemplars or memory, and then dispensing them to members of their own religious houses and to lay parishioners. Such clerics did not consider this activity as fostering superstition. They might even interpret it as an act of Christian devotion and generosity, worthy of divine blessing and heavenly rewards.[108]

Theological and Scholastic Opinions

From the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, the views of theologians and other scholars toward textual amulets were generally more nuanced than the broad legal proscriptions promulgated by church councils and disseminated in penitentials and confessional manuals. In part, these opinions recognized the reality of clerics preparing and dispensing textual amulets. But new cultural influences complicated theological discussions. Contact with Arabic texts in the Iberian Peninsula, southern Italy, and the crusader kingdoms had led to the proliferation of pseudo-Solomonic and astrological texts in the West.[109] The role of astrology in

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roll's original function had been forgotten, it continued to be used curatively. Robert Branner, "Le rouleau de saint Éloi," *L'information d'histoire de l'art* 12 (1967): S55–S73. In Spain, fears of the Evil Eye led to the violent mutilation of the serpent's head (eye and all) in a Garden of Eden miniature of a Romanesque Bible (Burgos, Biblioteca Provincial). Joaquín Yarza Luaces, "*Fascinum:* Reflets de la croyance au mauvais œil dans l'art médiéval hispanique," *Razo: Cahiers du Centre d'Études Médiévales de Nice,* no. 8 (1988): 113–27.

108. David Warren Sabean, *Power in the Blood: Popular Culture and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 57: "One could go along and share in the sacrament. If not, one should pray (recite the Lord's Prayer) for the sick person out of sympathy. The sense of the individual here was subjective, a person who shared in another's sorrows and who was concerned in this way for his own salvation." In later centuries, Russians who copied *Dream of the Virgin* amulets for other people supposedly earned blessings for the act of writing, and a modern English version of the Sunday Epistle reminded readers, "He that hath a copy of this letter, written in my own hand and spoken with my own mouth, and keepeth it without publishing it to others, shall not prosper, but he that publisheth it to others shall be blessed of me." Ryan, *Bathhouse at Midnight,* p. 299; Edgar J. Goodspeed, *Modern Apocrypha* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956), p. 71.

109. Astrology played an important role at the court of Frederick II of Sicily (1194–1250), where the learned astrologer Michael Scot read and translated Arabic, Hebrew, and Greek magical texts, even as he condemned sorcerers and necromancers for their association with incantations, amulets, *characteres,* and herbal ligatures. Lynn Thorndike, *Michael Scot* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965), pp. 116–21; Ernst Kantorowicz, *Frederick the Second, 1194–1250,* trans. E. O.

medieval religion and cultural life was relatively minor until the Renaissance of the twelfth century. Posing a special challenge was an invigorated form of astrology, based on Greek, Arabic, and Jewish textual traditions. Learned magic found its way into monastic libraries and influenced scholastic philosophers, though they were careful to emphasize divine agency and condemn any reliance on demonic forces for causality.[110] Astrology could be seductive by offering astral influence as an alternative or complement to a belief in sacred power and divine protection. The challenge to Christianity would have been less serious if knowledge of learned magic had been restricted to an esoteric inner circle of the spiritual and intellectual elite, as treatises like the *Picatrix,* the influential late medieval handbook of astrological magic, had urged.[111] Some churchmen and theologians were justifiably concerned that learned magic would percolate down from the intellectual elite to simple folk, contaminating their faith and offering them access to non-Christian sources of supernatural power.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, pseudo-Solomonic magic and astrology began to have an influence on textual amulets and evoked concern from some churchmen. Pre-scholastic attitudes toward magic can be seen in John of Salisbury's critique of magic and other "vanities of courtly life" in his treatise *Policraticus,* written in 1159 while serving as a secretary to Archbishop Theobold of Canterbury. In his youth, John of Salisbury had been sent to a priest to be

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Lorimer (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1957), pp. 338–59. After his defeat at Parma in 1248, opposing forces found among the possessions of Emperor Frederick II and his court at the town of Victoria "a statue supposed to have been made of Church treasures melted down, which the Emperor was said to have adored. They found experimentally that this idol healed neither the maimed nor the blind; at most it contemned the scriptures. They found magic drawings, charts of the heavens and animal circles which 'Beelzebub and Ashtaroth, the Consuls of Darkness,' the astrologers and magicians, made use of" (p. 657).

110. Paola Zambelli, *The Speculum astronomiae and Its Enigma: Astrology, Theology and Science in Albertus Magnus and his Contemporaries,* Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science, vol. 135 (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1992), pp. 39–41.

111. For example, the *Picatrix* warned readers to keep the science of talismans away from unlettered people, who could not understand its subtleties and would therefore disparage astrologers. Hellmut Ritter and Martin Plessner, *"Picatrix": Das Ziel des Weisen von Pseudo-Magrītī,* Studies of the Warburg Institute, vol. 27 (London: The Warburg Institute, 1962), pp. lxvi, 131–32 (2:11); David Pingree, ed., *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghayat al-Hakim,* Studies of the Warburg Institute, vol. 39 (London: The Warburg Institute, 1986), pp. 74–75 (2:11). In the Arabic work from which the widely circulated pseudo-Aristotelian text *Secretum secretorum* and its many vernacular versions were ultimately derived, Aristotle tells his student Alexander the Great, "I am going to impart to thee a secret of divine knowledge which has been guarded and preserved, and regarding the secrecy and inviolability of which sages and philosophers have taken mutual promises and oaths, in order that it may not fall into the hands of a weaver, horse-doctor, blacksmith, and carpenter who may cause corruption in the earth and destroy agriculture and procreation." Robert Steele, ed., *Secretum secretorum cum glossis et notulis,* in *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi,* no. 5 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), p. 258.

instructed in the Psalms, only to discover that the priest secretly practiced magic and wanted his pupils to act as mediums in onychomancy. Diviners, enchanters, conjurers, sorcerers, dream interpreters, chiromancers, magicians using talismanic figures (*imagines*), and other mediators of demonic power undermined Christianity and divine truth. John of Salisbury was especially concerned with astrology, whose practitioners, he charged, looked to the heavens not to proclaim the glory of God but to foretell a preordained future. In his view, much like St. Augustine's, astrology blindly ascribed motive power to celestial bodies while at the same time denying free will to God.[112] The theologian William of Auvergne, bishop of Paris from 1228 to 1249, condemned "idolaters" who worshipped Solomonic seals and pentacles, necromancers who summoned demons, and *experimentatores* who undertook magic experiments with bizarre rituals in an effort to create amazing creatures and wondrous marvels. Such experiments could only work by demonic agency, in that the magicians were in league with the Devil. In *De universo,* he ridiculed the magicians who used the *Liber sacer* or *sacratus* and other pseudo-Solomonic books of magic circulating in the West. He also condemned the production and use of textual amulets (*brevia*), even if the perpetrators did not use *characteres* or names of unknown deities. In his view, the veneration of physical forms (*figurae*), whether sculpted, written, painted, or carved, in expectation of working miracles and receiving divine blessing, was essentially idolatrous.[113]

In the thirteenth century, churchmen generally differentiated between the positive goals of white magic and natural magic, aiming to protect and heal, and the negative goals of black magic or necromancy, appealing to demons, often to injure other people. The learned English Franciscan Roger Bacon (1214?–94)

112. Webb, *Ioannis Saresberiensis episcopi Carnotensis Polycratici,* vol. 1, pp. 50–54 (bk. 1, chap. 12); pp. 107–13, 115–21, 164 (bk. 2, chaps. 19, 21, 28). John of Salisbury believed that the corrosive influence of magic even afflicted church prelates. John of Salisbury's letters reveal his interest in acquiring sacred relics and in the miracles effected by the relics of St. Thomas à Becket. W. J. Millor and C.N.L. Brooke, eds., *The Letters of John of Salisbury,* vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 70–71 n. 9 (letter no. 158), 802–7 (letter no. 325).

113. William of Auvergne, *De universo,* bk. 2, pt. 3, chap. 22, in *Guilielmi Alverni episcopi Parisiensis mathematici perfectissimi, eximii philosophi, ac theologi praestantissimi, opera omnia . . .* [hereinafter, *Opera*] (Paris: André Pralard, 1674), vol. 1, pp. 1059–61. William of Auvergne, *De legibus,* chap. 13, in *Opera,* vol. 1, p. 45: "Stigmata vero, & figuras adhuc etiam Christiani faciunt & deferunt, & vocant eas brevia, & in propriis corporibus, & in cartis & in rebus aliis videlicet metallis, quae omnia aut idolatria una sunt, aut idolatriae species, aut ipsius reliquiae detestandae & Christianiae religionis adversae." William of Auvergne warned his readers against pseudo-Solomonic handbooks and argued that the magical powers of textual amulets and verbal charms derived from pacts with the Devil, which could be tacit or explicit. William of Auvergne, *De legibus,* chap. 27, in *Opera,* vol. 1, p. 89: "Quare declaratum est tibi figuras et characteres hujusmodi non ex virtute sua aliqua naturali operari mirifica illa, sed ex Daemonum pacto, quo cultoribus suis per hujusmodi signa se adesse polliciti sunt."

upheld astrology as potentially compatible with faith, provided that practitioners neither conjured demons nor did anything to detract from God's glory and free will. While believing in the efficacy of words, especially a priest's solemnly uttered words in connection with the Eucharist, Bacon criticized "magical" incantations, invocations, conjurations, and *characteres* as illusions and fascinations. Magicians, charlatans, and "old women" foolishly abused *carmina et characteres,* which might have been otherwise efficacious, by trying to produce wondrous effects at whim, ignoring the free will of God and potential astrological influences, and intermixing demonic or fraudulent elements.[114]

Yet Roger Bacon did not categorically dismiss all textual amulets. Divine blessings could flow by the grace and free will of God to good Christians who spoke or wore "holy words." In the *Opus majus* (1266–67), an encyclopedic work prepared at the request of Pope Clement IV, Bacon actually praises the use

114. Lynn Thorndike, "Magic, Witchcraft, Astrology, and Alchemy," in *The Cambridge Medieval History,* ed. C. W. Previté-Orton and Z. N. Brooke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), vol. 8, p. 674. *Epistola fratris Rogerii Baconis de secretis operibus artis et naturae, et de nullitate magiae* (Appendix 1), in *Fr. Rogeri Bacon opera quaedam hactenus inedita,* ed. J. S. Brewer, The Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages [Rolls Series], no. 15 (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1859), vol. 1, p. 525: "Quid vero de carminibus, et characteribus, et hujusmodi aliis sit tenendum, considero per hunc modum"; ibid., pp. 526–27: "Characteres vero aut sunt verba figuris literatis compositi, continentes sensum orationis adinventae, vel facti ad vultus stellarum in temporibus electis. De characteribus igitur primo judicandum sicut de orationibus dictum est"; ibid. p. 528: "in Epistola de his, quae suspenduntur ad collum, sic concedit ad collum carmina et characteres, et eos in hoc casu defendit"; ibid., p. 531: "Multi igitur libri cavendi sunt propter carmina, et characteres, et orationes, et conjurationes, et sacrificia, et hujusmodi, quia pure magici sunt." Concerning the *Epistola,* see A. G. Little, "Roger Bacon's Works," in *Fratris Rogeri Bacon compendium studii theologiae,* ed. Hastings Rashdall, British Society of Franciscan Studies, vol. 3 (Aberdeen: Typis Academicis, 1911), pp. 91–92, no. 21; Irène Rosier-Catach, "Roger Bacon and Grammar," in *Roger Bacon and the Sciences: Commemorative Essays 1996,* ed. Jeremiah Hackett, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, vol. 57 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), p. 77. John Henry Bridges, ed., *The "Opus majus" of Roger Bacon* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1900), vol. 1, pp. 395–96: "Nam characteres sunt sicut imagines, et carmina sunt verba ex intentione animae rationalis prolata, virtutem coeli in ipsa pronunciatione recipientia. . . . Sed magici maledicti induxerunt summam infamiam in hac parte, quum non solum in malis abusi sunt characteribus et carminibus scriptis a sapientibus contra nociva, et pro utilibus maximis, sed adjunxerunt mendosa carmina et characteres vanos et fraudulentos quibus hominess seducuntur. Insuper daemones temptaverunt multos et tam mulieres quam daemones docuerunt multa superstitiosa, quibus omnis natio plena est. Nam ipsae vetulae ubicunque faciunt characteres et carmina et conjurations, ac ipsi magici utuntur invocationibus daemonum et conjurationibus eorum, et sacrificia eis faciunt." Theodore Otto Wedel, *The Mediaeval Attitude toward Astrology, particularly in England,* Yale Studies in English, vol. 55 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920), pp. 73–75. Burnett, "Talismans: Magic as Science?" p. 3: "The demons, however, are not compelled by these ritual bindings, but God permits them to deceive the magicians." On the distinction between science and magic, see Jeremiah Hackett, "Roger Bacon on Astronomy-Astrology," in Hackett, *Roger Bacon and the Sciences,* pp. 184–85. Zambelli, *Speculum astronomiae,* pp. 208–73.

of a textual amulet (*cedula* or *scriptura*) with two verses containing the names of the Three Kings (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar), who were often invoked in verbal charms and textual amulets from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries for protection against epilepsy or the "falling sickness" (*morbus caducus*).[115] Bacon told a story about a boy who had prepared a textual amulet for an epileptic man whom he had happened upon in the fields. The man was "cured" by wearing the textual amulet around his neck. He remained free of symptoms until his wife, motivated by illicit love for a cleric, deceived her husband into removing the amulet from his neck, ostensibly to protect it from becoming wet while he was bathing. Once the amulet had been taken away, the man's epileptic seizures resumed. But later, he was miraculously restored to health when his frightened wife, in a sudden rush of Christian piety, again bound the textual amulet to his body ("ligavit cedulam"). Bacon attributed the amulet's efficacy to God's grace, not to demons, because the boy's motive had been blameless, free of deception, and thus worthy of divine intervention and blessing. God rewarded good intentions and sincere faith. By contrast, the wife had acted under demonic influence and was motivated by the evil desire to deceive and injure.[116] Like other medieval critics of popular magic, Bacon accepted the efficacy of textual amulets that worked through divine agency. God came to the aid of good

115. The Three Kings or *magi* of Christian legend were perhaps Zoroastrian priests who came from the East to adore the Christ child (Matthew 2:1–12). Thorndike, *Michael Scot,* pp. 117–18: "The three Magi of the Bible were commonly regarded in a more favourable light than were ordinary practitioners of magic. Scot, however, while granting the word *magus* has a three-fold meaning: trickster, sorcerer, and sage (*illusor, maleficus, sapiens*), holds that the three kings were all three of these before their conversion to Christianity, after which they became 'witnesses and doctors of the Supreme King.'" Adolph Franz, *Der Magister Nikolaus Magni de Jawor: Ein Beitrag zur Literatur- und Gelehrtengeschichte des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1898), pp. 152–53. Frank Schaer, ed., *The Three Kings of Cologne; Edited from London, Lambeth Palace MS. 491,* Middle English Texts, vol. 31 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2000), p. 22: "Western interest in the Three Kings increased markedly after their supposed relics, discovered in Milan . . . were translated to Cologne in 1164 by Rainald of Dassel, Archbishop of Cologne." Christian numerology lent weight to the magical use of their names.

116. Bridges, *The "Opus majus" of Roger Bacon,* vol. 3, pp. 123–24 (pt. 3, chap. 14): "Et novi hominem qui cum fuerat puer invenit hominem in campis qui ceciderat de morbo caduco, et scripsit illos versus ac posuit circa collum ejus, et statim sanatus est; et nunquam postea ei accidit donec post multa tempora uxor ejus volens eum confundere propter amorem clerici cujusdam quem amavit fecit eum n[udari] ut saltem balnei tempore propter aquam deponeret cedulam de collo suo ne per aquam violaretur. Quo facto statim arripuit eum infirmitas in ipso balneo; quo miraculo percussa mulier iterum ligavit cedulam et curatus est. Quis eris ausum interpretari hoc in malum, et daemonibus ascribere, sicut aliqui inexperti et insipientes multa daemonibus ascripserunt quae Dei gratis aut per opus naturae et artium sublimium potestatem multoties facta sunt? Quomodo enim probavit mihi aliquis quod opus daemonis fuit istud, quoniam nec puer decipere sciebat sciebat nec volebat? Et mulier, quae decipere volebat non solum virum sed se per fornicationem dum abstulit, viso miraculo pietate mota cedulam religavit. Malo hic pie sentire ad laudem beneficiorum Dei quam ex praesumptione magna damnare quo verum est."

Christians who used amulets to treat otherwise hopeless afflictions and overcome demonic evil.[117]

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225?–74) was the most influential scholastic philosopher to write coherently about textual amulets. In the *Summa theologica,* Aquinas attempts to answer the question, "Is it wrong to wear from one's neck a textual amulet based on *verba divina?*" Aquinas condemned astrological talismans as demonic and condemned ritual practices that the church deemed "superstitious." Yet he allowed a limited role for textual amulets based on Christian texts. It was legitimate for people to wear the Pater Noster or other extracts from scripture, just as they could keep sacred relics at home and wear them on the body in hope of securing divine protection. But they had to do so in sincere Christian devotion. While Holy Writ was efficacious for protection and healing, whether read aloud or written down to be worn on the body, one must bear these words *in pectore,* just as God had commanded the Jews in connection with *tefillin* (Deuteronomy 11:18), only wearing the written representation of words as a visible sign of devotion. Aquinas allowed people to use textual amulets in order to show their pure faith and a fervent belief in God as the font of divine power and ultimate source of protection and healing. To be allowed, amuletic texts had to avoid demonic invocations, unknown names, strange words and *characteres,* and symbols other than the sign of the cross. To Aquinas (like St. Augustine), the act of conjuring spirits was taken as evidence of an explicit pact with the Devil and abandonment of the Christian faith. Aquinas emphasized that one could not expect benefit from the style of writing or method of binding.

117. While preferring medical therapies to textual amulets, some learned physicians accepted divine mercy as the only way to treat epilepsy and other incurable afflictions, or to counteract black magic in the form of textual amulets based on *characteres*. For example, Bernard de Gordon (ca. 1258–1320), professor of medicine at the Université de Montpellier, condemned textual amulets as magic and quackery. Yet in *Lilium medicine* (1303), his frustration with unsuccessful medical approaches to epilepsy led him, almost as a last resort, to report on popular remedies involving wearing textual amulets around the neck. One of the amuletic texts was based on the apotropaic names of the Three Kings, and the other was a Gospel passage concerning the casting out of a "dumb spirit" (Mark 9:17–28). Luke E. Demaitre, *Doctor Bernard de Gordon: Professor and Practitioner* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980), pp. 158–59. "Two more remedies, however, depended on incantations. That is, around the patient's neck were to be hung the verse about the three kings, cited above, and a Gospel passage that had been read by a priest over the patient's head. The seeming contradiction between Bernard's condemnation and recommendation of magical cures may in part be resolved by a closer examination of two features that are not immediately obvious, namely his implicit reservation and his sense of despair. . . . Actually, frustration and despair in his own experiences seemed to account for his listing of the *empirica*." Centuries later, the learned French royal surgeon Ambroise Paré (1517?–1590) registered his disapproval of traditional amulets worn around the neck to cure jaundice, though he found it difficult to dismiss their utility out of hand. J. F. Malgaigne, ed., *Oeuvres completes d'Ambroise Paré* (Paris: J.-B. Baillière, 1841), vol. 3, pp. 62, 64 (bk. 19, chap. 32). "I'ai veu aussi la iaunisse disparoir de la superficie du corps en une seule nuit, par le moyen d'un certain petit brevet qui fut pendu au col de l'icterique."

It did not flow automatically from the shape of the letters written on a piece of parchment. Rather, the power of sacred words was a divine blessing, freely given in response to someone's sincere faith.[118] In short, Christians were supposed to appeal directly to God or indirectly through the intercession of the Virgin Mary and helpful saints, and God had free will in responding to appeals for aid.

Aquinas provided a theological rationale, if one were needed, for the legitimate use of textual amulets under certain circumstances. Though later medieval theological opinion on the subject was not uniform, Aquinas's thinking about textual amulets influenced many theologians, among them Heinrich von Gorkum [Gorichem] (ca. 1386–1431), a German educated in Paris, and perhaps also a Franciscan. Von Gorkum railed against textual amulets (*cedula* or *brevia*) in the prologue and proposals 2 and 5 of his *Tractatus de superstitiosis quibusdam casibus,* written around 1425 while he was a professor of theology at the University of Cologne.[119] Textual amulets were unlawful, he argues, when worn in the belief that the words themselves had an innate power to protect ("Credere ipsa verba sic scripta habere eo ipso intra se virtutem universaliter preservandi"). He condemns people who believe in the mechanical efficacy of textual amulets containing *characteres* and the names of unknown deities ("Sed si per aliquam cedulam insignitam nominibus ignotis et per caracteres insolitos credat"). He also follows Aquinas in affirming other Christian remedies. One can wear holy relics and a textual amulet (*cedula*) inscribed with sacred words as acts of reverence in the hope (but not expectation or certainty) of receiving divine assistance. In his view, it is legally permissible to wear a textual amulet based on the names of the legendary Three Kings as a devotional aid ("In quibus cedulis scribere nomina trium regum et collo suspendere ob reverenciam dei et ipsorum regum et eorum fiducia sperare auxilium non est illicitum"). Specific-purpose textual

118. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae,* pt. 2, sec. 2, qu. 96, art. 4 (London: Blackfriars in conjunction with Eyre and Spottiswoode, n.d.), vol. 40, pp. 81–85. Idem, *Quaestiones disputatae et quaestiones duodecim quodlibetales* (Turin: Marietti, 1942), vol. 5, p. 235 (bk. 12, qu. 9, art. 13). Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* pt. 2, sec. 2, qu. 96, art. 4: "Videtur quod suspendere divina verba ad collum non sit illicitum. Non enim divina verba minoris sunt efficaciae cum scribuntur quam cum proferuntur." The English translation is from the Blackfriars edition (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, n.d.), vol. 40, p. 80. Concerning Aquinas and the private use of relics, see Snoek, *Medieval Piety,* p. 71.

119. There were several incunable editions of the treatise in Germany and France during the 1470s and 1480s. The author has used one in the Princeton University Library: *Incipit tractatus de sup[er]sticiosis quibusdam casibus compilatus in alma vniversitate studij Colonien[sis] per venerabilem magistrum Heinricum de Gorichem sacre Theologie p[ro]fessorem eximium* (Blaubeuren: Conrad Mancz, ca. 1477), unfoliated on six leaves, bound with other incunable works. See version in Joseph Hansen, ed., *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns und der Hexenfolgung im Mittelalter* (Bonn: Universitäts-Buchdruckerei, 1901). A. G. Weiler, *Heinrich von Gorkum (d. 1431): Seine Stellung in der Philosophie und der Theologie des Spätmittelalters* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Paul Brand, 1962), pp. 97–98, 269–73 (especially p. 271).

amulets based on the Three Kings were relatively common in the fifteenth century, though people were occasionally punished for using them.[120] Von Gorkum argues that the act of wearing sacred words around one's neck should only be a physical manifestation of sincere belief; for the words by themselves have no preventive or curative powers. Citing Guillaume de Rennes's *Glossa Guilhelmi* (ca. 1280–98), Von Gorkum states unequivocally that one cannot prevent sudden death with a textual amulet that claims, "Quicumque portaverit supra se istud breve non periclitabitur" [Whoever wears this amulet (*breve*) on their body will not die]. He feared that such beliefs were easily subverted, placing Christians in league with the Devil.[121]

Fear of heterodoxy in the late Middle Ages made inquisitors intolerant of ritual practices that had previously been dismissed as merely superstitious or idolatrous. Where the church had either accepted such practices or occasionally punished them with minor acts of penance and other penalties, preachers and inquisitors became more sensitive to the dangers of demonic magic, which threatened to undermine the fabric of Christian society. As a result, the leading inquisitional manuals tried to differentiate more clearly between black and white magic. Textual amulets were one ritual practice that had to be carefully monitored in order to prevent possible heterodoxy.

In compiling their influential manual *Malleus maleficarum,* first printed in 1486 for inquisitors and secular magistrates, the Dominicans Heinrich Institoris (Kramer) and Jakob Sprenger (general inquisitors for the dioceses of Mainz, Cologne, Trier, Salzburg, and Bremen) turned for guidance to scripture, the church fathers (especially St. Augustine), scholastic philosophers and theologians (especially St. Thomas Aquinas), an earlier inquisitorial handbook by the Catalan Dominican Nicolau Eimeric (1320–99), and other authorities. Institoris and

120. On 11 February 1405, for example, the episcopal court at Heidelberg brought charges against Werner of Freiberg, *lector* of the Augustinian monastery of Ladenburg in the diocese of Speyer, in connection with textual amulets. Werner had advised parishioners about the supposed benefits of textual amulets and prepared one based on the names of the Three Kings for protection against epilepsy or the "falling sickness" ("St. Valentins Plage") and another based on the words "Verbum caro factum est" (Gospel of John 1:14) for protection against the Devil.

121. In the treatise *De practica ejiciendi daemones,* Von Gorkum addressed the issue of when exorcism was permissible, in accordance with scripture and Christian authorities, and when it violated church teaching and law. Weiler, *Heinrich von Gorkum,* pp. 98–99, 264–66. In the *Tractatus de superstitionibus* (1405), similarly, the German theologian Nikolaus Magni de Jawor (or Jauer), a native of Prague and professor of theology at the University of Heidelberg from 1402 to 1435, closely followed Aquinas on the subject of textual amulets. Many of the approximately 120 extant manuscript copies of this influential treatise were copied in German monasteries, for the enlightenment of members of those religious communities. Franz, *Der Magister Nikolaus Magni de Jawor,* pp. 151–96 (especially pp. 183–86), 255–64. Concerning his influence, see Frank Fürbeth, *Johannes Hartlieb: Untersuchungen zu Leben und Werk,* Germanistische Forschungen, Neue Folge, vol. 64 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1992), pp. 100–108.

Sprenger wanted to know when textual amulets and verbal charms (*remedia in verbis*) were lawfully used by Christians in good devotion; when use strayed into "superstition," defined as a vain and improper observation of the Christian faith, violating prescribed forms of worship; when practices veered into witchcraft and necromancy, for which severe penalties, even excommunication and death, were appropriate; and when inquisitors themselves needed textual amulets to counter the black magic of witches. In the *Malleus maleficarum,* the inquisitor or judge was urged to wear a textual amulet comprised of the Seven Last Words of Christ, written on a sheet of parchment cut to the *mensura Christi.* The inquisitor or judge could thus protect himself against the spells of witches, who were alleged to conceal textual amulets on their bodies so effectively that suspected witches were to be disrobed, shaved, and searched in the hope of finding them.[122] Other witch hunters drew similar distinctions between permissible and forbidden uses of textual amulets.[123] But during the European witch-craze from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, inquisitors occasionally viewed traditional magic as evidence of sorcery related to preexisting pacts with the Devil, as Chapter 2 will show.

The Protestant Reformers also rejected St. Thomas Aquinas's nuanced position on textual amulets. Instead of trying to provide explanations for the perceived efficacy of some amulets, reformers embraced a more rigorous reading of the views of St. Augustine and other church fathers, and broadly condemned ritual practices associated with the Church of Rome. Martin Luther wrote with

122. Heinrich Institoris (Kramer) and Jakob Sprenger, *Malleus maleficarum von Heinrich Institoris (alias Kramer) unter Mithilfe Jakob Sprengers Aufgrund der dämonologischen Tradition Zusammengestellt,* ed. André Schnyder, Litterae: Göppinger Beiträge zur Textgeschichte, no. 113 (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1991), pp. 170–79 (pt. 2, qu. 2, chap. 6). Concerning body searches and shaving, see book 3, questions 15–16. Other witch hunters like the Dominican Jordanes de Bergamo made the same recommendation. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 230–32, 242–43.

123. For example, the Italian inquisitor Franciscus Florentinus disapproved of textual amulets, but he was somewhat more lenient in allowing uses of church-sanctioned remedies such as the Pater Noster, the sign of the cross, and invocation of the Trinity (wholly or individually). Lynn Thorndike, "Franciscus Florentinus, or Paduanus: An Inquisitor of the Fifteenth Century, and His Treatise on Astrology and Divination, Magic and Popular Superstition," in *Mélanges Mandonnet: Études d'histoire littéraire et doctrinale du Moyen Âge,* Bibliothèque Thomiste, no. 14 (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1930), pp. 365–66. Concerning his references to textual amulets and magical uses of writing, see pp. 366, 368. To combat superstition and witchcraft in Spain, Fray Martín de Castañega delineated permissible uses of scriptural quotations and other standard amuletic texts, when Catholics used them against the Devil in a spirit of pure faith and devotion, and did not add suspicious text or rituals. Martín de Castañega, *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechizerias y de la possibilidad y remedio dellas (1529),* ed. Juan Robert Muro Abad (Logroño: Gobnierno de la Rioja, Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 1994), pp. 61–62 ("Capitulo xjx. [xxj] De los conjuros licitos y catolicos para los maleficiados o hechizados").

contempt about such popular religious practices. In one of a series of German sermons preached in 1537 and 1538 concerning John 1:1–2, Luther said it was

> a frightful misuse and a piece of witchery to write the words *In principio erat verbum* on a slip of paper [*ein klein zeddelin*], in this case in a quill [*Fedderkiel*] or some other container, and hang it around one's neck or somewhere else; or to read these words as a protective charm against thunder and storm, as was customary in the papacy. Sorcerers also have the habit of misusing the names of Jesus, Mary, and the four evangelists; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; of the holy three kings; also the words *Jhesus Nazarenus Rex Judeorum* in connection with their knavery and hatemongering. The godless do this in imitation of the apostles, their disciples, and many pious bishops and saints of a later day, who performed signs and wonders if they spoke only a few words from the Gospel.

In 1543 Luther recalled that Saxon pastors and church officers were discovered in 1527–28 with magic books containing charms based on the Tetragrammaton and names of Hebrew angels and demons. Luther condemned Christian appropriation of sacred names, words, and formulas as useless magic. The practice reminded him of Jews who repeatedly intoned the Tetragrammaton in expectation of miracles. Reciting or wearing holy words without sincere faith could never win divine grace.[124] Luther's position on textual amulets resembled that of

124. *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1912), vol. 46, p. 628: "Aber ein greulicher misbrauch und zeuberen ist es auch gewesen, das man dis Euangelium Johannis 'In principio erat Verbum' auff ein klein zeddelin geschrieben, in ein Fedderkiel oder sonst eingefasset, an hals oder anders wo him henget. Item wider den Donner und Wetter lieset, wie das in Bapsthum ist gebreuchlich gewesen, wie denn auch die Zeuberer derer namen: Jhesus, Maria, der vier Euangelisten, Mattheus, Marcus, Lucas, Joannes, der heiligen dreier Könige, item der Wörter: Jhesus Nazarenus Rex Judeorum, pflegen zu misbrauchen und treibens in irer bösen büberen und buleren. Das ist daher komen, das die Gottlosen gesehen haben, das die Apostel, ire Jünger und nach inen viel fromer Bischofe und Heiligen wunder und Zeichen gethan, wenn sie nur etliche Wort aus dem Euangelio gesprochen. Da namen sie auch die Wörter und wölten als balde dergleichen Zeichen dar nach thun." The English translation is from Luther, "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John," chaps. 1–4, in *Luther's Works,* ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1957), vol. 22, pp. 106–7. Luther had long condemned Jews for using divine names (particularly the Tetragrammaton) in superstitious or magical ways, for example in "Operationes in Psalmos" (1519–21), in *Luthers Werke,* vol. 5, p. 184: "Dimanavit autem et in Christianos eorundem superstitio, ut passim iactent, scalpant, figant, gestent quattuor istas literas, sive impii sive pii sint, nihil curantes, velut Magi in literis et characteribus virtutes se habere presumentes." See also "Decem praecepta Wittenbergensi praedicta populo" (1518), in *Luthers Werke,* vol. 1, p. 431n: "Primo itaque nomen Domini polluunt superstitiosi, sortilegi et alii, de quibus supra: Secundo quidam superstitiosi ex Iudaeis, fabulantes de nomine Tetragrammaton, quanquam hoc ad primum Praeceptum pertinet." Concerning Luther, especially his anti-Jewish treatises of 1543, concerning

the church fathers, and other reformers followed his condemnation of textual amulets and affirmed St. Paul's teaching about the primacy of faith over works. Yet one must wonder whether such subtle theological critiques of amulet use had much impact on rank-and-file Christians.

Late Medieval Ritual Practices

Textual amulets had never been the sole or even predominant means of securing protection through powerful words. Also available at different times were a plethora of church-sanctioned or consecrated sources of protection such as liturgical benedictions, reliquary books, private devotional books, apotropaic prayers, and indulgences. Objects associated with priests and with the Eucharist might be thought to enjoy quasi-magical powers. For example, one of the tales of the supernatural in *Otia imperialia* (1211), compiled by the cleric and courtier Gervase of Tilbury while in the service of Emperor Otto IV of Braunschweig, reminds us that a priest's stole could be seen as a *vinculum diaboli,* which could bind the Devil's evil designs against good Christians. According to a report presented in 1324 or 1325 to the Avignon pope John XXII, Jean Gobi, the Dominican prior of Alès, armed himself with the body of Christ in the form of the consecrated host, which was the embodiment of sacred power and could serve in the popular imagination as a powerful shield against demons, plague, and other misfortunes visited upon good Christians. Jean Gobi had concealed the host on his person before confronting the ghost of Gui de Corvo and thus expected to enjoy divine protection and help in discerning spirits.[125]

Consecrated objects available for purchase at pilgrimage sites could be used amuletically. At Canterbury, pilgrims eagerly purchased miniature ampoules (*ampullae*) containing holy water in the hope of enjoying the miraculous healing powers of St. Thomas à Becket as *medicus*. Pilgrimage badges cast or stamped from base metals (especially lead and tin), occasionally blessed at the shrine like a relic, were fastened to the pilgrim's scrip or hat before returning home, in part for protection along the way. At Santiago de Compostela and at other sites,

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Jews and word magic, see R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder: Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 131–35.

125. See Henri Bresc, "Culture folklorique et theologie: Le revenant de Beaucaire (1211)," *Razo: Cahiers du Centre d'Études Médiévales de Nice,* no. 8 (1988), pp. 65–74, for a discussion and translation of "De mortuo qui apparet virgini" of *Otia imperialia* (bk., 3, chap. 103), in *Scriptores rerum Brunsvicensium,* ed. G. W. Leibniz (Hannover: Nicolas Foerster, 1707), vol. 1, pp. 994–99. Concerning Jean Gobi, see Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Les revenants: Les vivants et les morts dans la société médiévale* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1994), pp. 175–78. For other magical uses of the consecrated host, see Stephen O. Glosecki, *Shamanism and Old English Poetry* (New York: Garland, 1989), p. 92, and Wilson, *Magical Universe,* p. 463.

pilgrims could purchase sacred souvenirs like bells, pictures and statues of saints, religious trinkets, and metal amulets to ward off the Evil Eye. Some pilgrim's badges were made of parchment and paper, facilitating amuletic use, and others were occasionally fastened to textual amulets and books of hours.[126] Different in function were commercially produced votive (*ex voto*) offerings of anatomical models in lead, wax, and other common materials, which were left in a church in hope of healing a particular limb, organ, or other body part. This ritual practice can still be observed in some churches to this day.

By the late Middle Ages, the laity could select from an abundance of complementary sources of spiritual protection. These included but were not restricted to textual amulets. We see this most vividly in an English ghost story that a Cistercian monk at Byland Abbey in North Yorkshire learned from local folk and recorded around 1400 (London, British Library, Royal MS 15.A.xx). Set during the reign of King Richard II (1378–99), the story concerns a ghost who prevents a village tailor named Snowball from returning home to Ampleforth. In the popular imagination, ghosts could be the spirits of the deceased souls, who turned to living people for aid to alleviate their own sufferings in Purgatory. In the Byland story, the ghost assumes the form of a dog and afterward takes on the guises of other animals as well. Snowball uses different rituals and objects to ward off evil. Initially, he crosses himself and holds up a sword hilt, which was cross-shaped and therefore could be seen as apotropaic. He also invokes God's name and tries in vain to command the ghost in the name of the Trinity and the Five Wounds of Christ. The tailor is unable to pass the road from Gilling to Ampleforth, in part because he had not heard mass that day or the apotropaic opening verses of the Gospel of John. For protection against evil spirits, the ghost advises Snowball to carry the four Gospels and the words *Ihesus Nazarenus,* probably the full Triumphal Inscription or simply INRI, which can be found in amuletic lists of divine names.

Snowball is only able to pass the road after promising the ghost a church certificate of absolution, probably in the form of an ecclesiastical indulgence,

126. Found in England and the Low Countries, several Canterbury metal *ampullae* of the late twelfth century, cast by local makers in the shape of a pouch with suspension loops to permit carrying, had inscriptions touting St. Thomas à Becket's role as "OPTIMUS EGRORVM MEDICVS GIT TOMA B[ONORVM]." Brian Spencer, "Canterbury Pilgrim Souvenirs Found in the Low Countries," in *1200 laatmiddeleeuwse insignes uit openbare en particuliere collecties,* ed. H.J.E. van Beuningen, A.M. Koldeweij, and Dory Kicken, Rotterdam Papers, no. 12, Heilig en Profaan, no. 2 (Cothen: Stichting Middeleeuwse Religieuze en Profane Insignes, 2001), p. 107. Esther Cohen, "*In haec signa:* Pilgrim-Badge Trade in Southern France," *Journal of Medieval History* 2, no. 3 (September 1976), pp. 193–214. Cohen notes that pilgrims believed in the protective power of badges (pp. 194, 211–12 n. 4): "No pilgrim would return home without first having purchased a badge. The same badge, worn on the return journey, ensured its bearer protection from warring armies and other threats of violence." Cohen, "*In haec signa,*" p. 195.

which he is able to obtain from local priests for five shillings and then bury in the deceased's grave. Recent archaeological excavations in England have shown that the more affluent people of this era were sometimes buried with papal indulgences, which served as "tickets to Heaven."[127] Snowball also has the friars of York say masses in his behalf. Preparing for a return visit to the ghost in order to report on his successful efforts, the tailor seeks a neighbor's company, and as an inducement offers one of his textual amulets (*partem de scriptis*), which he is carrying for protection against nocturnal terrors.[128] On his return trip, Snowball is armed with the Gospels and several textual amulets (*alia sacra verba*).[129] In addition, he draws a magic circle on the ground, and within the circle makes the sign of the cross by placing, at cardinal points along the perimeter, four *monilia* (probably reliquaries), also bearing the apotropaic Triumphal Inscription. At the end of the story, Snowball, who is probably unlettered, is urged by another ghost to wear his most effective textual amulet (*optima scripta*) on his head while sleeping in order to counteract an unspecified illness. It is possible that the priests who supplied the certificate had also supplied his textual amulets. This ghost story from Byland Abbey shows that textual sources of spiritual protection were readily available and that local clerics were actively involved in dispensing these complementary sources.

Also available to late medieval people were devotional objects not enjoying formal priestly consecration, from fine jewelry handcrafted by skilled artisans to cheap trinkets churned out in urban workshops and hawked by illiterate street

127. Recent excavations in the cemetery of the medieval hospital of St. Mary Spital in London have uncovered the lead seals of papal indulgences from the era of the Avignon papacy. The seals had been placed in the coffins of four people buried in the wealthy section of the Spitalfields cemetery. See "Hopeful Dead Clutching Their Tickets to Heaven," in *British Archaeology* 67 (October 2002): "News."

128. M. R. James, "Twelve Medieval Ghost-Stories," *English Historical Review* 37, no. 147 (1922): 417–18: "Si volueris mecum venire, eamus, et dabo tibi partem de scriptis meis aue porto super me propter timores nocturnos. . . . Quibus dictis venit ad locum constitutum et fecit magnum circulum crucis, et habuit super se quatuor evangelia et alia sacra verba, et stetit in medio circuli ponens quatuor monilia et modum crucis in fimbriis eiusdem circuli, in quibus monilibus inscripta erant verba salutifera scilicet Ihesus Nazarenus etc. et expectauit adventum spiritus eiusdem." The Byland manuscript and Snowball story is discussed by Schmitt, *Les revenants,* pp. 168–73. Andrew Joynes, ed., *Medieval Ghost Stories: An Anthology of Miracles, Marvels and Prodigies* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2001), pp. 121–23; John Shinners, ed., *Medieval Popular Religion, 1000–1500: A Reader* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 1997), pp. 230–33. Shinners translates *scripta* as talismans and *monilia* as scapulars.

129. Coincidentally, St. Thomas Aquinas used the terms *verba divina* or *verba sacra* to refer to textual amulets comprised of extracts from scripture and worn around the neck or otherwise bound to the body. The relevant passages are in *Summa Theologiae,* pt. 2, sec. 2, qu. 96, art. 4. See also Roy J. Deferrari and Sister M. Inviolata Barry, *A Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1948), pp. 1004, 1143.

peddlers.[130] People could associate such objects with spiritual protection and use them amuletically. Examples made of metal, shell, and other durable substances (unlike parchment and paper amulets) have survived in moist soils of Western Europe and have been excavated. Artistic representations of people using popular devotional objects tend to confirm the literary and archaeological evidence. We know that Christians sought protection and healing in precious and semiprecious stones prescribed in lapidaries. Magic gems like pieces of coral served as amulets to protect children against evil spirits and the Evil Eye, while doubling as a teething ring, for which reason late medieval panel paintings and prints depict the Christ child wearing a coral amulet from his neck.

Christians had long worn crosses or crucifixes around the neck for protection. By the end of the Middle Ages, small pendant crosses and rings inscribed with divine names, brief scriptural quotations, apotropaic symbols, and magical formulas were quite common, to judge from archaeological evidence.[131] The Middleham Jewel, a lozenge-shaped English gold and sapphire-jeweled pendant capsule (ca. 1475–85), excavated near Middleham Castle and a path to the Premonstratensian abbey of Coverham (York, Yorkshire Museum), combines Christian imagery, a Tau cross, the inscription "Ecce agnus dei qui tollis peccata mundi miserere nobis tetragrammaton ananyzapta," and a small compartment that probably once held relics to provide amuletic protection against demons and disease. A gold Tau cross–shaped pendant capsule (ca. 1485) found at Winteringham, Lincolnshire (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cloisters Collection, 1900.283) probably functioned in much the same way.[132] Other late

130. Bozóky, "Les moyens de la protection privée," pp. 179–85; *Jewellery Through 7000 Years,* p. 221; Diana Scarisbrick, *Jewellery in Britain, 1066–1837: A Documentary, Social, Literary and Artistic Survey* (Norwich: Michael Russell, 1994), pp. 106–10; Manganaro, "Documenti magici della Sicilia"; A. M. Pachinger, "Über Krankheitspatrone auf Medaillen," *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 3 (December 1909): 227–68, plates 3a–4; Jan Baptist Bedaux, "Laatmiddeleeuwse sexuele amuletten: een sociobiologische benadering," in *Annus quadriga mundi: opstellen over middeleeuwse kunst opgedragen aan Prof. Dr. Anna C. Esmeijer,* ed. Jan Baptist Bedaux (Zutphen: Walburg, 1989), pp. 16–30, which argues that sexual insignia and pilgrims' badges were used as amulets in fifteenth-century Zeeland.

131. Manuscripts may complement archaeological evidence. For example, in a design in Villard de Honnecourt's renowned sketchbook, dating from the second quarter of the thirteenth century (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS 19093), the artist wrote an inscription consisting of several divine names interspersed with crosses ("✠ IHC ✠ XPC ✠ AGLA ✠ HEL. IOTHE") surrounding a monumental crucifix in which Christ is flanked by the Virgin Mary and St. John the Evangelist. On the same folio, a later hand (post-1300) sketched designs for two pendants, one with the same Crucifixion scene. It is difficult to know if any of these objects were actually executed. But divine names such as AGLA were common fare in textual amulets and pendants with apotropaic inscriptions. Theodore Bowie, ed., *The Sketchbook of Villard de Honnecourt* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959), pp. 30–31, plate 10.

132. Timothy Husband, "The Winteringham Tau Cross and the *Ignis Sacer,*" *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 27 (1992): 19–35; Peter Murray Jones and Lea T. Olsan, "Middleham Jewel: Ritual,

medieval English objects include a silver ring discovered at Kingweston, Somerset, with an inscription including the word *ananizapta,*[133] and a metal amulet depicting the head of Christ in a pentagon on the obverse and a magic square with permutations of the divine name Yahweh on the reverse (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, no. 1920.358). Of course, Tau crosses and shapes such as lozenges, circles, and pentagons were thought to enhance the efficacy of apotropaic words and images.

Occasionally, bits of writing or images were inserted into compartments of jewelry. Other religious articles include *Agnus Dei* pendants (commonly disks made from the wax of consecrated candles but sometimes made from more durable materials), representing the Lamb of God as Redeemer on the obverse and saints on the reverse; charm brooches and leaden talismans against poison and migraine headaches, which could be inscribed with divine names, brief prayers, apotropaic inscriptions, talismanic formulas, and religious imagery; effigies and statuettes of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the Three Kings; St. Christopher's medals for travelers; medallions depicting other helpful saints like St. Sebastian; and hand amulets whose lightly touching thumb and index finger was a physical gesture against evil. The availability of consecrated objects and commercially produced devotional objects helps explain the apparent proliferation of textual amulets in the late medieval West.

In conclusion, Christianity was born in an ancient world awash in textual amulets and related ritual and magical practices that influenced early Christians in the eastern Mediterranean and spread westward with expansion of the faith and conversion of Roman, Germanic, and Celtic populations. The Latin fathers viewed some types of textual amulets as survivals of pagan superstition, and church councils and law conflated amulet use with other deadly sins of idolatry. Ecclesiastical disapproval of textual amulets also found expression in cautionary sermons and moralistic tales aimed at discouraging forbidden textual elements and commerce in sacred power. These strictures suggest that textual amulets existed to some extent throughout the Middle Ages despite sporadic efforts to curtail their use. Local diversity in religious observance and imperfect penitential enforcement created an environment in which textual amulets could be quietly dispensed and used. Clerical literacy virtually guaranteed the church (broadly defined) a central role in the history of textual amulets, as we learn from medieval

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Power, and Devotion," *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 31 (2000): 249–90 (especially 287–90); John Cherry, "Healing Through Faith: The Continuation of Medieval Attitudes to Jewellery into the Renaissance," *Renaissance Studies: Journal of the Society for Renaissance Studies* 15, no. 2 (March 2001): 154–71.

133. W. Sparrow Simpson, "On a Seventeenth Century Roll Containing Prayers and Magical Signs," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 40 (1884): 312.

narrative accounts. Christian holy men and women occasionally found reasons to leverage sacred power through textual amulets. Charismatic saints, parish priests, and other clerics were wont to dispense textual amulets on the basis of professional judgment, just as physicians today confidently write out medical prescriptions. As a means of pastoral care, many clerics armed good Christians (no less socially variegated than clerical producers) with powerful words to protect them against the ever present swarm of demons and evil spirits.

Theological opposition to textual amulets was inconsistent and evolved from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries to meet new challenges posed by the rise of learned magic, heterodoxy, and lay spirituality. St. Thomas Aquinas provided a rationale, if one were needed, for the legitimate use of some types of textual amulets. In this view, these amulets did not work by the intrinsic power of words, but Christians could use them as emblems of faith and devotion, in the hope (but not certainty) of enjoying God's protection. Admittedly, subtle scholastic arguments were beyond the comprehension of most Christians, who turned to textual amulets and other sources of divine protection in a dangerous but increasingly literate world and expected divine protection in a fairly mechanical way, much as St. Jude's *Novena* still promises today.[134] By the end of the Middle Ages, textual amulets were no longer a pagan survival but rather a widespread practice that flourished at the heart of Christian society.

134. St. Jude's *Novena* promises miraculous benefits to Christians who pray to the patron saint of hopeless causes. Pray nine times daily for nine successive days, instructions for the use of the *Novena* explain, and by the ninth day your prayer will be answered because it never fails.

2
The Magical Efficacy of Words

In order to understand textual amulets as a ritual practice, we must focus on the words and other textual elements that supposedly gave amulets their magical efficacy. Brief texts could be used singly like verbal charms and liturgical blessings, or combined in unique mixtures for greater effect, giving amulets an oddly agglutinative character. A seemingly random assortment of diverse textual elements, some borrowed from other cultures and languages, has contributed to the superficial appearance of amulets as jumbled folk compositions, curious but not necessarily worthy of serious study. To the extent that it has existed, scholarly interest in textual amulets has rarely been comprehensive or longitudinal. Past research has focused on particular periods, chiefly late antiquity, with its bounty of magical papyri and *lamellae;* and the fifteenth century, with extant examples of illuminated amulet rolls and other textual amulets in vernacular languages. Scholars have focused on particular amuletic texts and genres such as the Heavenly Letter, Measure of Christ, and *Arma Christi,* often to the exclusion of other textual elements with which they were commonly bundled. These approaches have obscured the history of textual amulets as a whole.

In this chapter, we will survey the principal textual elements in amulets from papyrus to printing. To this end, we will use theological, moralistic, literary, and other sources offering insight into the intellectual content of textual amulets that have not survived. Amuletic texts in magical compendia and collections are also fruitful sources of evidence. We will consider the role of oral tradition and memory and the growing availability of written exemplars. While Christianity provided the basic vocabulary for amulets in the common tradition of magic, diverse texts of ancient and medieval origin, including works of ritual and demonic magic, gave textual amulets renewed vitality. We will try to show how, when, why, and where each textual element was used to achieve particular ends; how the parts contributed to the whole and were combined to enhance efficacy.

Written Exemplars

Beyond comprehensive ancient handbooks such as the Roman physician Marcellus Empiricus of Bordeaux's *De medicamentis,* magical papyri from Roman and Byzantine Egypt offer evidence of book-like compendia of verbal charms, amuletic texts, and pharmacological or medicinal recipes available for local use. There is little physical evidence in the West of equally comprehensive collections during the predominantly oral culture of the early medieval centuries, though some religious houses had access to ancient handbooks, and monastic scribes might make reference copies of verbal charms and amuletic texts, including Christianized pagan elements of Germanic and Celtic origin. Monastic manuscripts are a rich source of ecclesiastical benedictions, conjurations, exorcisms, incantations, litanies of saints, and other liturgical forms that would eventually be incorporated into late medieval amulets. Blank space in manuscripts copied in monastic scriptoria offered a convenient place for monastic dabblers in magic to write down brief texts that could serve as future exemplars for verbal charms and textual amulets. Despite official church prohibitions against clerical involvement in magic, Western monks copied amulet and charm texts into manuscript volumes for future reference and copying. Brief magical texts were inconspicuously written in blank margins and on final leaves of monastic manuscripts until the end of the Middle Ages. Evidence of monastic copying of verbal charms and amuletic texts from the ninth to fifteenth centuries survives in manuscripts from English, French, German, and Austrian religious houses.[1] The survival of Latin

1. For Anglo-Saxon manuscripts including magical texts in Old English and Latin, see Neil Ripley Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), and Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*. Probably in the fourteenth century, someone copied a version of the amuletic text based on the names of the Three Kings (offering protection against *morbus caducus* for those who carry their names on the body) into a Westminster Abbey medical miscellany of the eleventh or twelfth century (Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.7.37, fol. 139r). There are innumerable examples on the Continent. For example, a ninth-century manuscript of the Pauline Epistles (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 10440), possibly from the Benedictine monastery at Luxeuil, includes a conjuration charm against evil demons blamed for severe weather ("Contra grandinem et tempestates"). Various monastic manuscripts included the SATOR AREPO magic square, an amuletic textual element of ancient origin. Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter,* vol. 2, pp. 94–95; S. B., "Un sermon sur la superstition," col. 219; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS lat. 6416 (fol. 1r), tenth or eleventh century; Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. lat. 1904, fol. 53v; Zurich, Zentralbibliothek, MS Aug. 127, p. 1, eleventh century; Admont, Benediktinerstifts Bibliothek, MS 106, fol. 147v, twelfth century. Concerning twelfth-century monastic manuscripts from Limoges, Moissac, and Corbie that include amuletic texts, see d'Alverny, "Survivance de la magie antique," pp. 157–61. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, a monk copied two recipes (both involving the ritualistic preparation of textual amulets in blood) into the final leaves of a manuscript from the abbey of Saint-Martial of Limoges (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 3713). Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, "Considérations relatives à une formule d'amulette magique," *Revue des études latines* 34 (1956):

charms in medieval manuscripts provides a mere hint of the magic practiced in cloistered settings.[2]

Anglo-Saxon England offers particularly valuable evidence of the place (albeit limited) of textual amulets in a predominantly oral culture. We have already discussed the Venerable Bede's reference to a textual amulet based on loosing spells in the semi-pagan world of the Anglo-Saxons. Collections of magico-medical charms, conjurations, herbal remedies, and recipes came in time to provide occasional exemplars for the preparation of textual amulets. Anglo-Saxon leechbooks of the tenth and eleventh centuries were derived from many sources, including earlier manuscripts and unidentified collections now lost. Leechbooks were medical handbooks intended for practicing physicians and melded Christian scripture and liturgy with traditional magic and local folk cures, as well as classical learning from the Mediterranean world in the form of Roman, Byzantine, or late antique texts in Latin by authorities such as Pliny the Elder and Marcellus Empiricus of Bordeaux, or Latin translations of original Greek texts such as that of Alexander of Thralles. Among the extant leechbooks, M. L. Cameron has noted, "*Leechbook III* appears to be least contaminated by Mediterranean medical ideas, so that in it we come as close as we can get to ancient Northern European medicine."[3] Two leechbooks surviving in late Anglo-Saxon manuscripts—the *Lacnunga* (London, British Library, Harley MS 585) and Bald's Leechbook (London, British Library, Royal MS 12.D.xvii)—show more ancient influences and advocate the use of textual amulets.

47–48. A manuscript miscellany from the Benedictine abbey of Admont, Austria (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Lyell 50) includes two thirteenth-century verbal charms or amuletic texts: (1) "✠ Esyppus ✠ Speusippus ✠ Melesyppus ✠ Caspar ✠ Melchior ✠ Balthazar" (fol. 63v); and (2) "In nomine patris ✠ filii ✠ et spiritus sancti protectio huic N. famulo dei ✠" (on a strip of parchment used in the fifteenth-century binding). Albinia de la Mare, *Catalogue of the Collection of Medieval Manuscripts Bequeathed to the Bodleian Library Oxford by James P.R. Lyell* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 136. What appears to be a magical charm of some sort (fol. 25r) was added to a fourteenth-century South German manuscript, which is largely comprised of standard exorcism formulas; the manuscript belonged to the Benedictine monastery at Alpirsbach, Baden-Württemberg, in the sixteenth century. Laura Light, *MSS Lat 3-179,* vol. 1 of *Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Houghton Library, Harvard University,* Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, vol. 145 (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1995), pp. 187–90, plate 35.

2. These occasionally went far beyond the scriptorial magic practice of adding written curses to protect books from theft, mutilation, and other harm. Certain Benedictine curses in Romanesque France, sometimes confirmed by registering the names of excommunicated people, effectively excluded Christians from the community of the blessed and delivered them unprotected into the Devil's hands. Little, *Benedictine Maledictions,* pp. 190, 196; Patrick Henriet, *La parole et la prière au Moyen Âge: Le verbe efficace dans l'hagiographie monastique des XIe et XIIe siècles* (Brussels: De Boeck Université, 2000), p. 10.

3. M. L. Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine,* Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, vol. 7 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 35.

Scholars are not sure who compiled the Anglo-Saxon leechbooks—monastic *medici,* parish priests, village shamans, or secular leeches (medical practitioners) with clerical training. Clerics were able to incorporate Christian liturgy into leechbooks and adapt verbal charms of pagan origin. Clerical training would have made it possible for professional and semiprofessional leeches, even if they were not *medici* in religious houses, to attain sufficient Latin literacy to read the texts. Anglo-Saxon leechbooks assigned a role for "mass priests" in order to make magical remedies work.[4] Only leeches who were clerics could say mass. However, bilingual texts in Latin and the vernacular (Old English or Irish) could facilitate access by lay physicians; for example, the *Lacnunga* includes the *lorica* of St. Gildas (ca. 560–70) in Latin with Old English interlinear glosses, offering divine protection against all foes.[5]

Most of the Anglo-Saxon charms preserved in manuscripts of the late tenth to mid eleventh centuries were clearly intended for oral delivery or performance. Among the prayers, invocations, divine names, and magic formulas to be recited or chanted over sick people, with or without the use of material remedies such as herbs or gems, there are a number of apotropaic texts that were supposed to be copied on writing supports that could then be applied directly to the body or used together with other remedies.[6] In less than a fifth of cases was the

4. Pettit, *Anglo-Saxon Remedies,* vol. 1, pp. xxvii–xxix, 133–62; Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine,* pp. 19–24, 65–73; Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine,* pp. 16–21; Grendon, "Anglo-Saxon Charms," pp. 172–73 (A13). L.M.C. Weston summarizes arguments on the origins of *Lacnunga* and Bald's Leechbook in "Women's Medicine, Women's Magic: The Old English Metrical Childbirth Charms," *Modern Philology* 92, no. 1 (August 1994): 279–80. Concerning shamans, see Glosecki, *Shamanism and Old English Poetry,* pp. 6–9.

5. Pettit, *Anglo-Saxon Remedies,* vol. 1, pp. 40–56 (no. lxv), 157.

6. The literature on Anglo-Saxon verbal charms and amuletic texts is substantial. Older publications with texts include Thomas Oswald Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England,* 3 vols., Rolls Series, no. 35 (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864–66); Grendon, "Anglo-Saxon Charms"; and Godfrid Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1948), including extracts from the *Lacnunga* and Bald's Leechbook. These older editions are not always accurate, so Edward Pettit's recent edition of the *Lacnunga* (*Anglo-Saxon Remedies*) is a welcome addition to the literature. Unpublished critical editions include Marilyn Deegan, "A Critical Edition of MS. B.L. Royal 12.D.XVII: Bald's 'Leechbook' vols. 1 and 2" (Ph.D. diss., University of Manchester, 1991), and Barbara Olds, "The Anglo-Saxon Leechbook III: A Critical Edition and Translation" (Ph.D. diss., University of Denver, 1984). The author is grateful to Karen Louise Jolly for bring these references to his attention. See also J. F. Payne, *English Medicine in the Anglo-Saxon Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1904), pp. 114–15; Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine;* Wilfred Bonser, *The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study in History, Psychology and Folklore* (London: Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, 1963); Meaney, *Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones,* pp. 15–23; and Faye Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 46–48. Hunt, *Popular Medicine,* p. 78, notes that "the evidence of the medieval charms shows clearly how the Church, recognizing the deeply rooted belief in their power, assimilated them to orthodox faith by the simple expedient of of substituting Christian for pagan names and prescribing the recitation of the Pater Noster, Ave Maria, etc. innumerable times."

reader expressly instructed to write out words and symbols of an apotropaic or curative nature. Material magic could take the form of inscribing a few sacred names, Christian symbols, and cryptic words on stones, wafers, plates, and other objects, which could then be worn from the neck or eaten or written directly on the body.

The *Lacnunga* includes one recipe for the preparation of a textual amulet on parchment, amid many verbal charms, incantations, prayers, and blessings offering help with childbirth, aches and pains, and livestock problems. To cure diarrhea, the *Lacnunga* instructed its readers to write out an amulet roll based on the Heavenly Letter (*pistol*), which an angel had brought to Rome to alleviate suffering. The textual amulet was to be written on a strip of parchment that had first been measured around the afflicted person's head. A strip of parchment fitted in this way to enhance efficacy might have had a length of about fifty centimeters. The afflicted person would then wear it around the neck. The text is a potpourri of magic words, names, and formulas of Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and possibly Celtic origin.[7] Other Anglo-Saxon collections may also refer to textual amulets. For example, parchment probably served as writing support for the macaronic magic spell that someone wishing to journey to his king, lord, or public assembly was supposed to carry along in order to guarantee the traveler a friendly and gracious reception.[8] Anglo-Saxon influences can be traced in English practices after the Norman Conquest. Echoes of these amuletic texts are found centuries later in English charm collections, household miscellanies, recipe books, and medical manuals (discussed in Chapter 4), which include similar instructions for the preparation of single-purpose textual amulets based on simple magic formulas.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, English monasteries continued to use textual amulets to help heal the sick and the afflicted. For example, Durham Cathedral's monastic infirmary did so in caring for the monks and occasionally for laity in the town and outlying area.[9] An English monastic miscellany of the late twelfth century (Durham Cathedral Chapter Library, Hunter MS 100)

7. Pettit, *Anglo-Saxon Remedies,* vol. 1, pp. 110–11 (no. clx). For a discussion of verbal charms, prayers, and incantations in the *Lacnunga,* see Pettit, pp. xxix–xxx.

8. Grendon, "Anglo-Saxon Charms," pp. 105–237 (especially, nos. A2, A13, A24, D7–12, E6–7); Cockayne, *Leechdoms,* vol. 3, p. 67; Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic,* pp. 274–75 (no. 35); and Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine,* p. 189 n. 168. For the "Christian periapt" against dwarfs, see Grattan and Singer, pp. 61, 158–59 (nos. 87–88), and Meaney, *Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones,* pp. 21–22. Pettit, *Anglo-Saxon Remedies,* improves upon editions by Cockayne and Grendon from the *Lacnunga.*

9. As early as ca. 700, the anonymous life of St. Cuthbert told how a paralyzed boy was brought by wagon from another monastery "ad medicos edoctos cenobii nostri" (i.e. Lindisfarne). Sick people visited Iona for medical treatment. Colgrave, *Two Lives of St. Cuthbert,* pp. 136, 340.

includes what is essentially a booklet, which originally was probably used as a separate manuscript, containing herbal remedies and other medical treatments drawn from Anglo-Saxon and ancient sources.[10] Found in this booklet are instructions for the preparation of textual amulets (fols. 117r, 118r), which were to be worn around the necks of the sick. Such healing amulets were to be used in combination with standard Christian prayers, blessings, verbal formulas, and signs of the cross. Two of the texts in Hunter MS 100 give instructions for the preparation of fever amulets, one of which was to be written on a lead cross; a third gives instructions for the preparation of a blood-staunching amulet, which is to be written on a leaf given to a patient; and a fourth describes a textual amulet intended to cure horses suffering from worms. Rhyming magic words would suggest that many of the amuletic texts began as verbal charms recited to the patient.[11] This manuscript was in the library of Durham Priory at least until the Dissolution of the monasteries, though late medieval cautionary warnings (*caue* and *error*) written in the margins next to the relevant amuletic texts perhaps reflect changing clerical attitudes toward traditional magic.

10. For brief descriptions of Hunter MS 100, see Thomas Rudd, *Codicum manuscriptorum Ecclesiae Cathedralis Dunelmensis Catalogus Classicus* (Durham: F. Humble, 1925), pp. 396–98; Fritz Saxl and Hans Meier, *Verzeichnis astrologischer und mythologischer illustrierter Handschriften des lateinischen Mittelalters,* ed. Harry Bober, vol. 3, *Handschriften in englischen Bibliotheken* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1953), pt. 1, pp. 441–47; and R.A.B. Mynors, *Durham Cathedral Manuscripts to the End of the Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Printed by Oxford University Press for the Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral, 1939), pp. 49–50 (no. 57), plates 35–36. The booklet begins on what is now fol. 85r, formerly the initial leaf, and includes extracts from various texts (fols. 85r–101v), followed by herbal remedies, verbal charms, amuletic texts, and medical drawings (fols. 102r–120v).

11. Durham Cathedral Chapter Library, Hunter MS 100, fol. 117r: "*Contra febres*. Hon. con. non. ton. ron. yon. zon. at. Heli ihesus. on. ihesus. christus. ihesus. Grama. ihesus. ton. ihesus. christus. ihesus. sat. ihesus. seth. ihesus. christus. ihesus. *Scribatur istud in cruce plumbea et suspendatur in collo patientis*. Ardeo. sentio. fugio. Dextera. d. f. y. d. d. e. m. d. d. fy. " Ibid., fol. 118r: "*Ad restringuendum sanguinis de venariaris effluentis*. In nomine patris et filii et spiritu sancti. Sta. sta. stagnum. fluxus sanguinis. sicut stetit iordan in quo iohannes ihesum christum baptizauit. Kyrieleison. amen. Pater noster. Ecce crucem. d. f. p. a. u. l. d. t. i. r. d. in nomine domini. *Ad instruum sanguinis. Scribat in folio et detur patienti hec.* Sicut uere credimus quod beata uirgo maria peperit dominum infantem uerum et hominem sic tu uena retine tuum sanguinem in nomine patris. Stomen. Kaloc. Stomen. Meta Fonn." Ibid., fol. 118r: "*Contra uermen*. Imprimis faciens signum crucis in loco ubi maius uitium paret dicens. christus uincit. christus regnat. christus imperat. et postea dices per anima Magni martyris christi et sancti simeonis quoreundem christum in suis uluis portauit, et per animabus omnibus fidelium defunctorum ut ille dices liberet et sanet hunc equum ab hoc uitio et infirmitate. Pater noster. In nomine patris et filii et spirutu sancti. Postea in fronte fac signum crucis et dices ter pater noster circumeundo et benedicendo equum. *Contra febres*. In nomine patris et filii et spiritu sancti. Telon. Tecula. Tilolob. Ticori. Tilo. Laton. Patron. Tilud. Amen. Ron.be Furtacht. i talmon. Ronbea. Beathacrocor. Laruithitt. Domini est salus. Salus tua domine sit semper mecum. Amen. Sancta trinitas sana me ab hostibus corporis et anime mee. Ihesus nazarenus rex iudeorum hec scriberentur et in collo ligarentur." Concerning the possible inclusion of Irish words in the last charm, see Pettit, *Anglo-Saxon Remedies,* vol. 1, p. xxx n. 13.

Equally usable by monks providing medical care is an English manuscript of ecclesiastical origin, dating from the end of the eleventh or beginning of the twelfth century (London, British Library, Sloane MS 475).[12] This small codex includes what was originally a medical miscellany of about a hundred folios, written in a late Carolingian script and containing some amuletic texts, verbal charms, herbal remedies, and other magico-medical procedures that offered protection against demons and dealing with childbirth and women's health issues (fols. 133r–142v). Instructions call for writing *characteres* on flexible supports that are to be worn on the body. The *characteres* include magical script as well as cryptic series of ordinary letters of the Latin alphabet. Some must be runic in origin, like cryptic words in amuletic texts recommended by leechbooks.[13] One recipe calls for the *characteres* to be written with the left hand ("in manu sinistra," fol. 137v). There are also recipes (fols. 133v–135r) for the preparation of inscribed tin sheets (*lamellae stanni*) to help women conceive, a series of twelve *characteres* offering protection against demons and evil (fol. 137r–v), and an amulet of virgin parchment (fol. 136v) bound around a parturient woman's thigh above the right knee in order to hasten delivery ("Vt cito pariat femina. scribe in carta pura et liga super dextrum genu"). Monastic manuscripts similar in purpose to Hunter MS 100 and Sloane MS 475 and equally portable survive on the Continent. The Mülinen Rotulus (Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Codex 803), for example, is a medical roll compiled in the late eleventh or early twelfth century, most likely at an Alsatian monastery. It contains magico-medical charms and amuletic texts, some including *characteres* and Old High German glosses. Written on both sides of a sixteen-membrane roll measuring 631.0 × 13.0 cm, the Mülinen Rotulus was probably compiled from oral and written sources. Monks used it to minister to the needs of rural folk who sought assistance for illness, childbirth, and demonic possession.[14]

12. London, British Library, Sloane MS 475, is a composite manuscript comprised of two small codices bound together. The first part of the composite manuscript dates from the twelfth century (fols. 1r–132v); the second part, in which we are interested, is slightly earlier, perhaps late eleventh century (fols. 133r–231v), but also includes a few folios of French text in a fourteenth-century hand (fols. 209v–210r). Also in the second part are Galen's *Epistola de febribus* and a fragment of St. Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*. The British Library's checklist (partially printed and handwritten) of Sloane manuscripts dates this portion of the manuscript to the tenth or eleventh century and uses the title *Tractatus in quo incantamenta contra morbos plurima* for the text on fols. 133r–142v. Sloane MS 475 was in the library of the British bibliophile Dr. Francis Bernard (1627–98) before being acquired by Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753). For a brief description of Sloane MS 475, see Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts,* p. 84, no. 498.1. Gneuss dates the manuscript to the end of the eleventh or beginning of the twelfth century. Hunt, *Popular Medicine,* p. 82, transcribes two Anglo-Norman French charms in a section of the manuscript (fols. 85v–124v).

13. Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine,* p. 133.

14. Lucille B. Pinto, "Medical Science and Superstition: A Report on a Unique Medical Scroll of the Eleventh-Twelfth Century," *Manuscripta* 17, no. 1 (March 1973): 12–21: "The Mülinen rotulus

Written collections of verbal charms, amuletic texts, and magical recipes were relatively uncommon beyond monastic libraries until the thirteenth century, by which time the rise of universities contributed to an increase in the ranks of lay professional readers with sufficient Latin proficiency and access to relevant texts. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, increased lay literacy and vernacular translations made this material more readily available to the nobility, upper bourgeoisie, and other laymen with a modicum of education.[15] Learned compendia were one of the sources of amuletic text and procedures found in household collections and casual notes kept by individuals for reference. Latin, Middle English, and Anglo-Norman French collections kept by fifteenth-century medical practitioners show the influence of academic authorities.[16] Late medieval handbooks and collections with apotropaic texts for written and oral use were very common. Much of our knowledge of amuletic texts comes from late medieval sources, especially lay didactic and devotional collections, herbals, collections of pharmacological and culinary recipes, medical compendia, household miscellanies, commonplace books, "books of secrets," and privately circulated compilations of magic texts, though rarely in alchemical and astrological miscellanies.[17]

Practitioners of the magical arts could extract brief texts from handbooks or fill small stitched notebooks with versions of charms, conjurations, magic circles and *characteres,* names of powerful angels, and other practical texts. Larger magic collections were informally repackaged for personal use in what the French call *carnets des secrets*.[18] The laity copied Latin, vernacular, and occasionally

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is the most extensive of the older examples of this curious amalgam of medical tradition, empiricism, and superstition. It stands at the beginning of a tradition that was gradually taken over by the laity. By the end of the Middle Ages there were many such collections in Latin and in the vernacular" (20).

15. According to the *Semita recta,* an early fourteenth-century Latin alchemical work misattributed to Albertus Magnus, the alchemist's audience included "praedivites litteratos, Abbates, Praepositos, Canonicos, Physicos, et illitteratos." Michela Pereira, "Alchemy and the Use of Vernacular Languages in the Late Middle Ages," *Speculum* 74, no. 2 (April 1999): 338–39.

16. Peter Murray Jones, "Thomas Fayreford: An English Fifteenth-Century Medical Practitioner," in *Medicine from the Black Death to the French Disease,* ed. Roger French, Jon Arrizabalaga, Andrew Cunningham, and Luis García-Ballester (Aldershot: Ashgate, n.d.), p. 156.

17. See the macaronic medical charms and recipes listed in Linne R. Mooney, *The Index of Middle English Prose: Handlist XI: Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995), pp. 153–66. Examples of later manuscripts including amuletic texts and verbal charms are reproduced in Hansmann and Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Amulett und Talisman,* p. 129, figs. 338–40. Parkes, "Literacy of the Laity," pp. 568–69: "The majority of manuscripts of middle-class interest are in fact compilations for the whole family: 'libraries,' as it were, of texts for edification and profit, or edification and delight. . . . Thus between two covers we find a range of reading-matter to satisfy most of the practical and intellectual requirements of a 15th-century middle-class family."

18. Concerning the preparation of *livrets, cahiers,* and *carnets* of practical magic from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, often derived from printed *grimoires,* see Claude Seignolle, *Les*

macaronic versions of amuletic texts and verbal charms onto flyleaves, pastedowns, margins, and other unused writing surfaces in books of hours, prayer books, and other privately owned manuscripts. From such copies, charms could either have been read aloud or written down as separate textual amulets, often aided by instructions for their preparation.[19] Collections of exemplars for textual amulets functioned like documentary formularies or registers from which exemplified or engrossed copies could be prepared for everyday use. Individual textual amulets also served as exemplars for the creation of other amulets.

In addition to copying from exemplars, amulet producers could also draw on personal memory (however imperfect) in the form of a mental notebook of apotropaic texts, which might have been read in written sources, learned by rote, or heard from clerics, family, and friends. Amulet producers like St. Francis of Assisi recalled bits of text from memory, as we shall see in Chapter 4, while St. Hildegard of Bingen's visions guided her composition. Influences from oral traditions are evident in textual amulets, which might contain the Seven Last Words of Christ, *historiolae* with oral dialogue, invocations of divine names and saints, and other textual elements originally spoken or performed. Binding a textual amulet to one's body served a memorial function by reminding the bearer, even without opening the amulet, to recite particular common prayers. Even when copied from written exemplars, the preparation of textual amulets probably involved some vocalization, which helped focus the copyist's mind and reinforce memory. Orality facilitated amulet preparation and reading in another way because the significance of powerful words and formulas, divine names, and saints did not have to be explained to amulet users, who would have already known them from common prayers and liturgy. Brief scriptural quotations could release the sacred power of passages written out in full, or they could function as

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évangiles du diable selon la croyance populaire: Le Grand et le Petit Albert, ed. François Lacassin (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1998), pp. 275–77.

19. Francesco Novati published several fifteenth-century texts in "Antichi scongiuri," in *Miscellanea Ceriani: Raccolta di scritti orginali per onorare la memoria di Mr. Antonio Maria Ceriani, prefetto della Biblioteca Ambrosiana* (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1910), pp. 71–86. A few unpublished examples from British libraries may suffice: a French manuscript, early fourteenth century (London, British Library, Harley MS 273, fols. 112v, 212v–215v) with occasional charms and incantations for particular purposes; a collection of medical recipes, fourteenth century (Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.6.29), including occasional charms (for example, fol. 77r); an English collection of Latin charms and incantations, sixteenth century (Cambridge University Library, MS Ll.1.12); and prayers and litanies copied in an manuscript (Liverpool, Merseyside County Museums, MS 12001) described in Neil Ripley Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries,* 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969–2002), vol. 2, p. 217. Eleanor Sinclair Rohde, *The Old English Herbals* (London: Longmans, Green, 1922), pp. 31–41; Sarah Larratt Keefer, "Margin as Archive: The Liturgical Marginalia of a Manuscript of the Old English Bede," *Traditio* 51 (1996): 147–77; Rossell Hope Robbins, "Medical Manuscripts in Middle English," *Speculum* 45 (1970): 393–415; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* pp. 178–79.

historiolae offering examples of divine healing deeply embedded in Christian memory.[20] Amuletic texts could be abridged by substituting brief quotations for the whole or by recalling the rest of the text from memory. Amulet users could recall brief bits of text from memory, prompted by visual cues in the form of explanatory rubrics and embedded instructions requiring recitation. People could also instruct a designated reader to recite a common prayer or other textual element for another person. In short, oral and written traditions are both evident in textual amulets.

From Scripture to Amulet

Quotations or readings from scripture were among the standard elements in textual amulets from antiquity until the end of the Middle Ages. Brief quotations embodying the word of God and the promise of divine protection could function as life-saving textual shields and powerful weapons against demons. In the sixth century, Cassiodorus reminded the monastic scribes of Vivarium that the act of copying scripture would spread Christ's words and thus wound the Devil, in effect destroying the demonic power that had been unleashed upon Christ during the Passion.[21] Not surprisingly, early Christians sought amuletic protection either from whole books of the Bible or extracts from the Gospels. In the late antique world, Christian amulets on papyrus, parchment, untanned leather, ostraka, and *lamellae* often included brief quotations from scripture. A good example is a fourth- or fifth-century fever amulet with twenty lines of Greek text, hurriedly and indifferently scrawled on a piece of papyrus measuring 13.0 × 15.5 cm, which was then folded down for insertion into a suspension cylinder (Princeton University Library, P. Princeton 107). Included in this papyrus amulet are extracts from Psalms (89:1–2)[22] and the Lord's Prayer (Matthew

20. David Frankfurter, "Narrating Power," in Meyer and Mirecki, *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power,* p. 465: "The 'power' inherent in sacred scripture could be tapped simply by writing gospel incipits. However, more often there was an analogical relationship between the contents of, say, a psalm or a saying of Jesus, and the apotropaic or curative function for which the amulet was intended. The psalm or scriptural quotation, therefore, worked not only by its magical writing, but also as a *historiola,* invoking a specific power that was performed and guaranteed *in illo tempore*. So not only through *historiolae* but also through talismanic iconography and scripture quotations a 'myth' might convey power to present human situations."

21. R.A.B. Mynors, ed., *Cassiodori Senatoris Institutiones* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), pp. 75–75 (bk. 1, chap. 30): "tot enim vulnera illicitas calamo atramento quo pugnare. tot enim vulnera Satanas accipit, quot antiquarius Domini verba describit . . . arundine currente verba caelestia describuntur, ut, unde diabolus caput Domini in passione fecit percuti, inde eius calliditas possit extingui."

22. The author uses Vulgate numbering to cite Psalms. The edition used was *Bibla sacra iuxta Vulgatam Clementinam,* 9th edition, ed. Albertus Colunga Laurentius Turrado, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, no. 14 (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1994).

6:9–13), both extremely common in Christian magical papyri, as well as a brief quotation from Isaiah (6:3). Egregious misquotations and spelling errors suggest that the quotations were not copied verbatim from a written exemplar but rather recalled from memory.[23] Quotations from Psalm 89 were probably common in early Christian textual amulets because its opening verses ("Domine refugium factus es nobis") praise God as a refuge or dwelling, then go on to enumerate evils from which an omnipotent God will protect people worthy of divine favor.

Other magical papyri for Christians quote psalms that invoke God's protection against evil and violence, with similar inattention to the exact text. More complex magical papyri combined extracts from various psalms with bits of the Gospels.[24] Quotations from Psalm 19, seeking protection from the name of God ("Protegat te nomen Dei Iacob"), appear in a papyrus amulet from Old Cairo (Fustat), dating from the fifth or sixth century. The amulet's text also includes the opening verses of the Gospel of John (misquoted or paraphrased) with a sign of the cross, conjurations of seven angels, and *characteres*.[25] Coptic clerics in Roman and Byzantine Egypt provided textual amulets and other magical services, which helps account for two extant sixth- or seventh-century ostrakon amulets based on Psalms from Medinet-Habu, possibly the monastery of St. Phoibammon, near Thebes.[26] Psalms obviously played a role of central importance in medieval devotional life. Preaching to his monks during Lent, when Christians celebrated Christ's resistance to the Devil's temptations (Matthew 4:1–11), St. Caesarius of Arles said that psalms were potent weapons against the

23. Edmund Harris Kase, Jr., ed., *Papyri in the Princeton University Collections* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1936), vol. 2, pp. 102–3, no. 107. "The Lord's Prayer is commonly quoted in Christian magical papyri, either in whole or in part, but nowhere, it seems, as incoherently as here." Van Haelst, *Catalogue,* pp. 310, no. 967. Kase described the amulet as being Gnostic, but this is disputed in Daniel and Maltomini, *Supplementum magicum,* vol. 1, p. 78. The Beinecke Library, Yale University, has an early Byzantine papyrus amulet (14.9 × 9.4 cm) of the Lord's Prayer in Greek (P.CtYBR 4600).

24. Paul Collart, "Un papyrus Reinach inédit: Psaume 140 sur une amulette," *Aegyptus: Rivista italiana di egittologia e di papirologia* 13 (1933): 208–12; Spier, "Medieval Byzantine Magic Amulets," 30.

25. Daniel and Maltomini, *Supplementum magicum,* vol. 1, pp. 105–12, no. 36. The papyrologist Karl Preisendanz transcribed this 19.1 × 10.2 cm papyrus amulet (P. Heid. inv. Lat. 5), which was later lost during World War II.

26. These Coptic clerics functioned in ways probably not unlike Coptic Christian *debtera* in modern-day Ethiopia. Rudolf Kriss and Hubert Kriss-Heinrich, *Volkskundliche Anteile in Kult und Legende äthiopischer Heiliger* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975), p. 127; Frankfurter, "Ritual Expertise in Roman Egypt," in Schäfer and Kippenberg, *Envisioning Magic,* p. 129. Allen Wikgren, "Two Ostraca Fragments of the Septuaginta Psalter," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 5 (1946): 181–84; Van Haelst, *Catalogue,* p. 64, no. 122; p. 67, no. 132.

Devil and therefore should be learned by heart, recited, and contemplated as central to the Divine Office.[27]

Yet psalms were somewhat less prominent in medieval amulets, where they seem to have confined to brief quotations, than in early Christian papyri. Late medieval collections of verbal charms and amuletic texts occasionally provide instructions about the preparation of amulets based on particular psalms. For example, a fourteenth-century English miscellany containing the Middle English romance *King Horn* (ca. 1250) and other works advised its readers to write out Psalms 63 ("Exaudi deus orationem meam cum deprecor"), 72 ("Quam bonus israel deus"), and 73 ("Ut quid deus repulisti in finem"), then wear them on their arms as textual amulets (*philacteria*) in order to combat temptation and treat particular ailments (London, British Library, Harley MS 2253, fols.136r–v). A 1508 German magical text advised writing out Psalm 58 ("Eripe me de inimicis meis deus meus") along with five *characteres* on a piece of virgin parchment (to assure ritual purity), which was worn from the neck night and day for protection (London, British Library, Additional MS 35333, fol. 99r).[28] According to Francesco Maria Guazzo's *Compendium maleficarum* (1608), an *amuleto sacro* containing the apotropaic opening words of the Gospel of John and extracts from Psalms had been used in the Moravian bishopric of Olmütz to cure a demoniac.[29] The anonymous compiler of an Italian text of *salmi-brevi* or *salmi-talismani* juxtaposed psalms with talismanic seals considered to be effective against particular dangers and afflictions. Only first lines were given, probably assuming that the user would know the rest by heart. Vernacular instructions explained what rituals and incantations were needed to achieve particular benefits, such as warding off demons and preventing temptations of the flesh.[30]

27. Morin, *Sancti Caesarii episcopi Arelatensis opera omnia,* vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 903–6: "Psalmi vero arma sunt servorum dei; qui tenet psalmos, adversarium non timet; de quo adversario dominus dicit: adversarius vester diabolus est" (sermon 238:2).

28. In December 1842, Francis Palgrave summarized the relevant section of the manuscript (formerly Phillipps no. 21538): "A collection of Medicaments and Charms, partly written in cypher, transcribed as appears, from an Epistle professing to have been indicted by King Synusiastes Melanius Triandricus to his friend Jaymiel—transcript made Oct. 1508."

29. Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum,* ed. Luciano Tamburini (Turin: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1992), p. 368 (bk. 3, chap. 14, sec. 11): "È constituito da scritte pie, o amuleti sacri, legati al collo quale simbolo apostolico: le prime parole del Vangelo di san Giovanni, o i versetti de qualche salmo. Sono in uso dai tempi piú remoti, ma Manuel da Costa scrive che ai nostri giorni, a Olmütz, fu scaciato cosí un demone da un ossesso."

30. Aurelio Rigoli, *Magia e etnostoria* (Turin: Editore Boringhieri, 1978), pp. 18–48, figs. 1–23 ("Tipologia dei Salmi/talismani"). The manuscript dates from the eighteenth century but reflects earlier practices.

The scriptural quotation most frequently encountered in textual amulets was the apotropaic opening verses of the Gospel of John (1:1–14), constituting most of the book's hymn-like prologue (1:1–18), which most likely originated separately from the rest of the Gospel. These fourteen verses strongly emphasized the creative power and immutable truth of the word of God as embodied in Christ. It is probably significant that in Christian iconography John was the Evangelist most closely associated with Christ. Perhaps the apocryphal Acts of John helped promote his reputation for healing through the power of God. For whatever reason, early Christians embraced these verses as protective or therapeutic and began to use them, first in Greek and later in Latin, to ward off demons, evil, and misfortune.[31] Even the entire Gospel of John could be used in an amuletic way. St. Augustine condemned the popular practice of placing or binding the Gospel of John on the bodies of people suffering from headaches, fever, and other afflictions.[32] A small codex of the Gospel of John (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 10439), written in uncial script on pages measuring 7.2 × 5.6 cm, was most likely used as a textual amulet. Signaling this manuscript's apotropaic value was a cross on the first verso, adorned with the Greek letters *alpha* and *omega*. Probably made in Italy during the fifth or sixth century, the manuscript was later preserved in an eleventh-century reliquary at Chartres Cathedral.[33]

In the Christian West, the Gospel of John—whether the full written text, brief readings, or recited quotations—enjoyed magical status.[34] Medieval tales of the

31. Frank Kermode, "John," in *The Literary Guide to the Bible,* ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 441–45. Edmond Le Blant, "Le premier chapitre de Saint Jean et la croyance à ses vertus secrètes," *Revue archéologique,* 3rd series, 25 (1894): 8–13; Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science During the First Thirteen Centuries of Our Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1923), vol. 2, pp. 720–30, 754–55; Marquès-Rivière, *Amulettes,* pp. 151–63; Walter Berschin, *Griechisch-lateinisches Mittelalter von Hieronymus zu Nikolaus von Kues* (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1980), p. 34; Hansmann and Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Amulett und Talisman,* p. 144; Simpson, "On a Seventeenth Century Roll," p. 327.

32. St. Augustine, *Tractatus in Joannis Evangelium* 7.12, in *Patrologia latina,* vol. 35, col 1443; St. Augustine, *Epistolae* 55.20, in *Patrologia latina,* vol. 33, col. 222. See discussion in Henry Maguire, "Magic and the Christian Image," in *Byzantine Magic,* p. 65. Marina Montesano, *"Supra acqua et supra ad vento": "Superstizioni," maleficia e incantamenta nei predicatori francescani osservanti (Italia, sec. XV),* Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, Nuovi Studi Storici, no. 46 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano, 1999), pp. 55–56.

33. Concerning the small-format codex of the Gospel of John in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, see E. A. Lowe, ed., *Codices latini antiquiores: A Palaeographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts prior to the Ninth Century, Part V, France: Paris* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), no. 600; Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography,* p. 24. Some extant Gospel rolls from Byzantine Egypt served as amulets. See Eric G. Turner, *Typology of the Early Codex* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), table 16 (pp. 102–85). Concerning other small codices of the Gospel of John, see Nees, "Reading Aldred's Colophon," p. 348 and n. 49.

34. Beyond the Christian West, some people saw magical efficacy in opening verses of the Gospel of John. Some Arabic amulets used the Greek words Ἐν ἀρχή ἦν ὁ λογος to treat demon-possessed

Gospel's apotropaic and exorcistic powers were common. St. Hugh of Lincoln was said to have miraculously driven the Devil from a village in late 1198 or early 1199 by reciting the Gospel's opening verses.[35] In the thirteenth century the Cistercian Caesarius of Heisterbach claimed that the same passage, when recited by a priest in Lübeck over the lay brother Theodoric of Soest, fortified him against the Devil.[36] In the late Middle Ages, two Gospel quotations from the Vulgate, "In principio erat verbum" (John 1:1) and "Et verbum caro factum est" (John 1:14), were popularly believed to offer divine protection against demons.[37] Textual amulets based on the Gospel of John were believed to be effective counter-magic against witches.[38] The identical extract commonly opened the Gospel lessons in fifteenth-century French and Netherlandish books of hours, often illustrated by a miniature of St. John on Patmos, where according to legend he was triumphant over the Devil's attempt to steal his inkwell and thus prevent the writing of either the Gospel or Revelation.[39] The opening verses of

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Christians. Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The Mediaeval Islamic Underworld: The Banu Sasan in Arabic Society and Literature* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), p. 128.

35. Decima L. Douie and Dom Hugh Farmer, eds., *The Life of St. Hugh of Lincoln* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1961), vol. 2, pp. 125–26.

36. Joseph Strange, ed., *Caesarii Heisterbacensis monachi ordinis Cisterciensis dialogus miraculorum* (Cologne: J. M. Heberle, 1851), p. 310 (bk. 5, chap. 27): "Vocatus est sacerdos, qui initium Evangelii Johannis super eum legit, aliisque orationibus contra impetum diaboli illum munivit."

37. José María Mohedano Hernández, ed., *El espéculo de los legos: texto inédito del siglo XV* (Madrid: CSIC, 1951), p. 417, no. 530; Goldberg, *Motif-Index of Medieval Spanish Folk Narratives,* p. 20 (D1745.1.1). D'Arcy Power observed, "Friar Odoric of Pordenone, who was in Northern China about 1320 when the Yang-tsi floods caused the devastation which some think started the Black Death, says . . . 'I saw such numbers of corpses as no one without seeing it could deem credible. And at one side of the valley, in the very rock, I beheld as it were the face of a man very great and terrible, so very terrible indeed that for my exceeding great fear my spirit seemed to die in me. Wherefore I made the sign of the Cross, and began continually to repeat *verbum caro factum,* but I dared not at all come nigh that face, but kept seven or eight paces from it.'" D'Arcy Power, ed., *Treatises of Fistula in Ano, Hæmorrhoids, and Clysters of John Arderne from an Early Fifteenth-Century Manuscript Translation,* Early English Text Society, Original Series, no. 139 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1910), p. 135.

38. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* p. 187: "Another Nottingham sorcerer named Groves in the early seventeenth century used to sell his clients copies of St. John's Gospel as a preservative against witchcraft." Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study* (New York: Harper & Row, [1970]), pp. 103–4.

39. James H. Marrow, *The Hours of Simon de Varie,* Getty Museum Monographs on Illuminated Manuscripts (Malibu: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1994), p. 28; Roger S. Wieck, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (New York: George Braziller, 1988), p. 158: "The first Gospel lesson, from John, acts as a preamble for the entire Book of Hours. Its theme is mankind's need of redemption and God's willingness to provide it." Other passages from the Gospel of John were used in the banderoles. Alison R. Flett, "The Significance of Text Scrolls: Towards a Descriptive Terminology," in *Medieval Texts and Images: Studies of Manuscripts from the Middle Ages,* ed. Margaret M. Manion and Bernard J. Muir (Melbourne: Harwood Academic Publishers, n.d.), pp. 50–52.

the Gospel of John could serve as the reading for Christmas Day or be recited at the end of daily mass. Those who crossed themselves while hearing this Gospel reading in Latin believed that they were thus fortified and would be immune from harm all day.[40]

William Tyndale (1492?–1536), the English translator of scripture, condemned textual amulets, verbal charms, and blessings based on the Gospel of John, as well as the itinerant friars (*limiters*) and others who served them up to the laity:

> "And such is that some hang a piece of St. John's gospel about their necks," Tyndale observed. "And such is to bear the names of God, with crosses between each name. Such is the saying of gospels unto women in child-bed. Such is the limiter's saying of *In principio erat verbum,* from house to house. Such is the saying of gospels in the field, in the procession-week, that it should grow better . . . how is it possible that the people can worship images, relics, ceremonies and sacraments, save superstitiously.[41]

Tyndale would have been disappointed to know that such practices would continue for centuries.

Christ and Common Prayers

Textual elements related to Christ fortified extant amulets of the thirteenth to early sixteenth centuries, as we will see in Chapters 4 and 5. Often used were Christ's own words, such as the Seven Last Words of Christ (especially "Consummatum est") and the Greek letters *alpha* and *omega*. It is difficult to believe that his words would not have been included as well in earlier centuries, considering the wondrous power of his *sacra verba* to transform bread mystically into flesh and wine into blood.[42] Similarly, Gospel accounts about Christ performing

40. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* pp. 114, 215–16, 281.

41. William Tyndale, *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue, the Supper of the Lord after the True Meaning of John VI and 1 Cor. XI and Wm. Tracy's Testament Expounded,* ed. Henry Walter, Parker Society Works of the Fathers and Early Writers of the Reformed Church, vol. 44 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1850), pp. 61–62. Tyndale's *Answer* (Antwerp, 1531) was written in response to Thomas More's *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* (London, 1529).

42. In the *Aurora,* a popular paraphrase of the Bible in verse written by the French cleric Petrus Riga (ca. 1140–1209) at the Abbey of St. Denis in Reims, Gospel accounts of the Last Supper emphasize the essential virtue of Christ's *sacra verba* ("This is my body" and "This is my blood"). Paul E. Beichner, ed., *Aurora Petri Rigae Biblia versificata,* Publications in Mediaeval Studies, no. 19 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965), vol. 2, pp. 514–15, ll. 2325–34: "Sic sine Carne Sacra Christi uel Sanguine Sancto / Plebs non sanatur nec sciatur ei. / 'Ecce meum Corpus hoc est; Sanguis meus hic est,' / Dum profert, miram uim sacra uerba ferunt. / Verborum uirtus agit ut

miracles and receiving divine protection appear frequently in extant amulets. For example, the passage "Ihesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat" (Luke 4:30), recalls how Christ, "passing through the midst of them went his way," with God's protection, narrowly avoiding his enemies and traveling safely on to Capernaum in the Galilee to continue his ministry.[43] Merchants, soldiers, and wayfarers were wont to wear these words while traveling, convinced that by doing so they too would be blessed with divine protection. Liturgical formulas celebrating Christ's power, such as "✠ christus vincit ✠ christus regnat ✠ christus imperat," were used in late medieval amulets, as they had been centuries earlier in apotropaic inscriptions during the Crusades. Textual amulets incorporated liturgical formulas, appeals for divine blessing, and fundamental prayers because it was natural for the faithful to wear powerful words heard in church and known by heart.[44]

It is unclear when the most common of prayers (Pater Noster, Ave Maria, Credo, and Gloria Patri) began to be incorporated into textual amulets. For the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Old English poem *Solomon and Saturn* offers early evidence of the apotropaic and potentially amuletic value of Christ's own words in the Pater Noster. King Solomon, transformed in this verse dialogue into a Christian magician, explains to Saturn, the embodiment of pagan knowledge, that this fundamental prayer, enjoying the highest reputation among Christ's utterances, could offer protection almost like a *lorica* or textual shield against the "Devil's Fire." Each letter of the Pater Noster would aggressively combat the Devil in a different way.[45] Thomas D. Hill has speculated that this

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transumptio fiat; / Panis cum uino fit Caro fitque Cruor. / Dum Dominus profert hec uerba duo sacra, panis / Fit Corpus, uinam Sanguis ad illa duo. / Et uerbis illis tunc uim concessit eandem / Vt sic posteritas uerba per illa sacret." Concerning Petrus Riga and his influences, see James H. Morey, "Peter Comestor, Biblical Paraphrase, and the Medieval Popular Bible," *Speculum* 68, no. 1 (January 1993): 20.

43. Inscribed jewelry also used this quotation to protect travelers against thieves and misfortune. Erich Steingräber, *Antique Jewelry* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957), p. 49; Ronald W. Lightbown, *Mediaeval European Jewellery* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1992), p. 99.

44. If familiarity from regular prayer and worship were not sufficient to prompt memory, the spread of basic education and practical literacy helped because common prayers and similar texts were also the staple of contemporary hornbooks and primers, catechisms, writing exercises, and ephemeral educational tools written and printed on broadsheets and in small booklets. In fifteenth-century Italy, for example, primers designed to teach reading and other basic learning to school children generally opened with a sacred name and handwritten cross, followed by fundamental prayers such as the Ave Maria and Pater Noster, and even the beginning of the Gospel of John. Paul E. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300–1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 142–61. Concerning the educational value of common prayers in English catechisms, see Ian Green, *The Christian's ABC: Catechism and Catechizing in England c. 1530–1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 479–507.

45. For an edition of metrical version of *Solomon and Saturn,* which survives in fragments in two Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, see Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems,* The

Christian poem was "a poetic gloss on a Pater noster amulet, an inscription in runes or insular script which some Anglo-Saxon carried on his or her person. The poem would thus specify the force of each letter in the Pater noster for the bearer of the amulet, who could spell out the Pater noster letter by letter on the text which he carried."[46] One of few extant manuscripts of *Solomon and Saturn,* incomplete with only part of Poem I, is in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 41, an eleventh-century manuscript given to Exeter Cathedral by Bishop Leofric (d. 1072). It is significant to our discussion that this manuscript also contains Old English and Latin charms, *loricae,* the SATOR AREPO formula with prayers, and several homilies related to the Archangel Michael, protector of the faithful and a heavenly warrior against demons. Supernatural protection is obviously the common theme of *Solomon and Saturn* and of these other texts.[47]

The Pater Noster was the most efficacious of prayers and could be used amuletically because it contained the seven petitions that Christ had taught his disciples in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:9–13).[48] Late medieval textual amulets often included the words "Pater Noster" as a prompt, assuming that anyone who could read those two words would be able to recite the entire prayer from memory. Only fifty words long in the Vulgate, the Pater Noster could be recited from memory or written down as a personal shield against demons. In the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, textual amulets that included references

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Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, no. 6 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), pp. 31–48, and R. J. Menner, *The Poetical Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn,* MLA Monograph Series, no. 13 (New York: MLA, 1941), pp. 80–86. Peter Dendle, *Satan Unbound: The Devil in Old English Narrative Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), pp. 15–18: "A sort of *lorica,* the poem exhibits a charm-like, apotropaic quality—like the *Pater noster* itself—and was perhaps envisioned as an effective defense against demons and impure impulses" (p. 15).

46. Thomas D. Hill, "Tormenting the Devil with Boiling Drops: An Apotropaic Motif in the Old English *Solomon and Saturn I* and Old Norse-Icelandic Literature," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 92, no. 2 (April 1993): 157. Hill has explained the poem's reference to tormenting the Devil with boiling drops of blood as an example of a "Germanic reading of Christian-Latin imagery" (pp. 157–66).

47. The Old English translation of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* is the principal text. For descriptions of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 41, see Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts,* pp. 43–45; Raymond J. S. Grant, ed., *Three Homilies from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41: The Assumption, St. Michael and the Passion* (Ottawa: The Tecumseh Press, 1982), pp. 1–9; Richard F. Johnson, "Archangel in the Margins: St. Michael in the Homilies of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41," *Traditio* 53 (1998): 63–91 (especially 65–70). There are editions of the various charms in Cockayne, *Leechdoms;* Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic;* and Dobbie, *Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems.*

48. Dionysius the Carthusian, *Contra vitia superstitionum,* vol. 4 of *Opera minora* (vol. 36 of *Doctoris ecstatici D. Dionysii Carthusiani opera omnia*) (Tournai: Typis Carthusiae S. M. de Pratis, 1907), p. 221 (art. 9): "Nec aliqua oratio efficacior est Oratione dominica, scilicet Pater noster, quam ipsem et Christus edocuit." For a general introduction to the common prayers, see Herbert Thurston, *Familiar Prayers: Their Origin and History,* ed. Paul Grosjean (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, n.d.).

to other common prayers might have had a secondary devotional function by prompting people to recite the prayers. Medieval writers recommended combining common prayers for greater effect. In the thirteenth century, the Cistercian monk Caesarius of Heisterbach categorized the Ave Maria, Benedicite, and sign of the cross as *medicina,* in the sense of a divine remedy to protect the faithful in their daily struggles against the Devil;[49] and Jacques de Vitry instructed children to say the Pater Noster and make a sign of the cross before eating in order to prevent gluttony, and before sleeping in order to resist demons and prevent sudden death.[50] In the fifteenth century, Johannes Herolt made use of earlier *exempla* in which a gold inscription of the Ave Maria acted as a demon repellent; and a Middle English translation of Étienne de Besançon's *Alphabetum narrationum* asserted that reciting the Ave Maria with devotion offered a day of protection from the Devil ("and what day as he said þat Ave, I never power on hym, nor not mot hafe").[51] Common prayers could be simplified or paraphrased in vernacular languages, and they could be combined with other textual elements related to Christ.

Extant amulets often contain embedded vernacular instructions calling on users to recite particular prayers in multiples of three, five, or some other sacred number. In magic, as in devotional rituals, repetition was a common element and a potential key to enhanced efficacy. Amulet users did not always recite common prayers in Latin. In the fourteenth-century didactic work *Seelentrost,* a woman confessed that she said the Lord's Prayer in German because she could not learn it in Latin.[52] Christian prayer was supposed to be an act of supplication, not a

49. Strange, *Caesarii Heisterbacensis,* p. 332 (bk. 5, chap. 47): "Vides nunc qualiter Deus omnipotens contra diversas daemonum infestationes diversas creaverit medicinas? Alios a nobis compescit antidoto confessionis, alios verbis Dominicae annunciationis, scilicet, Ave Maria, quosdam per verbum Benedicite, multos per signum crucis." A Latin charm of 1475 called on Christ's cross and passion for healing. Forbes, *Midwife and the Witch,* p. 89 n. 11: "Domini sint medicina mei pia crux et passio Christi." In commenting on St. Augustine, Hugh of St. Victor described Christ (and Christian wisdom in the form of the book) as medicine or supreme remedy. Ivan Illich, *In the Vineyard of the Text: A Commentary on Hugh's Didascalicon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 10.

50. Jean Baptiste Cardinal Pitra, ed., *Analecta novissima spicilegii solesmensis. Altera continuatio* (n.p.: Typis Tusculum, 1988), pp. 439–42 (sermon 73).

51. Johannes Herolt, *Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary,* trans. C. C. Swinton Bland (London: George Rutledge and Sons, 1928), pp. 98–99, 140 (no. 70); Mary Macleon Banks, ed., *An Alphabet of Tales: An English 15th Century Translation of the Alphabetum Narrationum of Étienne de Besançon. From Additional MS. 25,719 of the British Museum,* Early English Text Society, Original Series, no. 1236 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1904), pp. 53–54 (chap. 71, "Ave Maria dictum deuote liberat hominem de potestate diaboli").

52. Margarete Schmitt, ed., *Der grosse Seelentrost: Ein niederdeutsches Erbauungsbuch des 14. Jahrhunderts,* Niederdeutsche Studien, vol. 5 (Cologne: Bohlau, 1959), 156, 1; Frederic C. Tubach, *Index exemplorum: A Handbook of Medieval Religious Tales,* FF Communications, no. 204 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1969), p. 280, no. 3616.

mechanical process, and therefore the church and the intellectual elite looked with intense disfavor on certain popular forms of prayer. In the twelfth century, Peter the Chanter (ca. 1130–97) claimed that only clerics could pray effectively because they could read the prayers, while unlettered knights and peasants were *idiota,* who sometimes recited the Pater Noster hundreds of times, in a mechanical way, without any real understanding of the words.[53] But such practices would endure through the end of the Middle Ages. Keith Thomas has observed, "Confessors required penitents to repeat a stated number of Paternosters, Aves and Creeds, thereby fostering the notion that the recitation of prayers in a foreign tongue had a mechanical efficacy."[54] Repeated names were combined with prayers for intercession and petitions such as "ora pro nobis" or "miserere nobis." Supplicants either appealed directly to Christ for divine aid or indirectly by petitioning a litany of saints to pray for them and intercede in their behalf. Intimacy with God facilitated intercession. Regularly invoked were the Virgin, evangelists and apostles, a host of angels and archangels (the messengers of God), and countless saints (including "local saints"), martyrs, and confessors.[55]

When textual amulets called for the recitation of prayers from memory, it was probably well understood that the supplicant needed to make the appropriate devotional gestures. Generally, one could pray standing or kneeling, with arms outstretched in the form of a cross or raised heavenward. One could also clasp hands or join palms with fingers raised but not locked.[56] Evidence of the apotropaic value of properly recited prayers dates back to the early Middle Ages. In his epistle to Archbishop Egbert of York (d. 766), the Venerable Bede said that the faithful should repeat the Pater Noster and Credo on bended knees as part of a regimen of constant supplication in order to "arm themselves as with a kind of spiritual antidote against the poison which the devil with malicious cunning casteth before them by day and night."[57] Common prayers were intermingled

53. Richard C. Trexler, *The Christian at Prayer: An Illustrated Prayer Manual Attributed to Peter the Chanter (d. 1197),* Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, vol. 44 (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1987), pp. 25–26, 185–86.

54. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* p. 41.

55. Petitioning for divine aid, a practice originating early in church history, often assumed the form of litanies or supplicatory prayers. As Michael Lapidge notes in connection with Anglo-Saxon liturgy, "The litany of the saints was not precisely fixed in form and wording, but was flexible and could be adapted to fit various liturgical circumstances . . . if the litany was said as an act of private devotion, it might be expanded or abbreviated to suit the inclination of the individual suppliant." Michael Lapidge, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Litanies of the Saints,* Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. 106 (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1991), pp. 1–2.

56. Louis Gougaud, *Dévotions et pratiques ascétiques du moyen âge,* Collection "Pax," vol. 21 (Paris: Abbaye de Maredsous, 1925), p. 2.

57. Bede, *Epistola ad Ecgberctum Antistitem,* in *Baedae opera historica,* vol. 2, pp. 456: "et hoc se quasi antidoto spirituali contra diaboli venena quae illis interdiu vel noctu astu maligno obicere

with instructions about making signs of the cross, presumably made on oneself, or over another person, or traced in the air. In the *Ancrene Riwle,* an early thirteenth-century Middle English guide for anchoresses, after saying the Pater Noster and Credo, anchorites were instructed, "And after with three croices in the forhede with the Þombe. *christus vincit. christus regnat. christus imperat.* and than with a large croice."[58]

In extant amulets (as in Christian liturgy), handwritten crosses, sometimes used with forms of punctuation, served as visual shorthand, prompting the faithful to make the appropriate physical gestures.[59] It is likely that crosses had been used similarly in earlier textual amulets as well because this most Christian of symbols had long been believed to have apotropaic powers. Early Christians had tried to protect their homes against demons by marking doors with crosses and the name of Christ.[60] In the *Cathemerinon* hymns, the Latin Christian poet Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348–410?) viewed the devotional gesture of making a sign of the cross on one's forehead or over the heart as having apotropaic power against all that was the wicked and demonic.[61] Small crucifixes were worn from the neck to protect against adversity and dangers, as St. Gregory of Nyssa (331?–96) described in the life of St. Macrina (d. 379).[62] St. Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 387) and other early Christian writers saw crosses as powerful sources of personal protection against demons and necromancy.[63] In the Byzantine world,

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posset, praemuniant. Orationem vero Dominicam saepius decantari ipsa etiam nos consuetudo sedulae deprecationis ac genuum flexionis docuit." Margery Kempe wrote in *Her Method of Prayer* that she always began to pray in church by "kneeling before the Sacrament" to worship the Trinity, Virgin Mary, and Twelve Apostles. W. Butler-Bowdon, ed., *The Book of Margery Kempe, 1436* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1936), p. 370.

58. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* p. 271; Arne Zettersten, ed., *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwle: Magdalen College, Cambridge MS. Pepys 2498,* Early English Text Society, Original Series, vol. 274 (London: Published for the Early English Text Society by the Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 14. See the discussion of this passage in Thurston, *Familiar Prayers,* p. 9.

59. A handwritten cross could be used as an abbreviation for the word *crux* or just as punctuation. Alfons A. Barb, "St. Zacharias the Prophet and Martyr: A Study in Charms and Incantations," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 11 (1948): 38; Malcolm B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1992), pp. 57, 301, 306.

60. Vakaloudi, "Δεισιδαιμονία and the Role of the Apotropaic Magic Amulets," p. 188.

61. *Hymnus ante sonum,* no. 6, ll. 131–36, in *Aurelii Prudentii Clementis V.C. opera omnia . . .* (London: A. J. Valpy, 1824), vol. 1, p. 104: "Frontem locumque cordis / Crucis figura signet. / Crux pellit omne crimen, / Fugiunt crucem tenebrae: / Tali dicata signo / Mens fluctuare nescit."

62. Bartelink, "Φυλακτήριον-phylacterium," pp. 25, 41; Münsterer, *Amulettkreuze und Kreuzamulette,* p. 13. It was a small reliquary cross containing a piece of the "true cross."

63. Peter Dinzelbacher, "Der Kampf der Heiligen mit den Dämonen," in *Santi e demoni nell'alto medioevo occidentale (secoli V–XI),* Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, no. 36, 7–13 April 1988 (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1989), vol. 2, pp. 677–79.

a cross that was worn around the neck could function both as a devotional symbol and apotropaic device.[64]

There is substantial evidence in the medieval West of the dual devotional-amuletic uses of the cross. Some Anglo-Saxon charms called for the use of signs of the cross in an amuletic way.[65] In Central Europe, stone crosses were erected with church approval to ward off witches, demons, and evil spirits.[66] In the twelfth century, Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny, described demons turning to flight before the sign of the cross.[67] In Christian legend, Christ supposedly armed himself with a large cross and scripture before going into battle against the Devil, as we can see interpreted visually in a thirteenth-century *Bible moralisée* (Vienna, Österreiche Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindobonensis 2554).[68] Frequent references in the *Legenda aurea* show the popularity of this belief. God shaped the cross as a shield against the Devil, who could not abide this powerful symbol of the Passion, according to the Middle English *Dispute between Mary and the Cross*.[69] Apotropaic use of crosses was so widespread in the Middle Ages that we can find them in most surviving textual amulets. There are graphic

64. André Grabar, "Amulettes byzantines du moyen âge," in *Mélanges d'histoire des religions offerts à Henri-Charles Puech* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974), p. 532: "En dehors de ces *phylacteria* de type bien défini, les petits objects en métal qu'on portait au cou en qualité d'apotropées etaient surtour des crois, au sujet desquelles il est souvent difficile de dire ce qui sépare le grand symbole de la religion chrétienne d'un object chargé d'une fonction prophylactique. D'une de ces crois à l'autre, selon la pièce et le porteur, les mêmes petits pièces cruciformes se rangeient parmi les uns ou les autres (ou étaient les deux à la fois)."

65. Cockayne, *Leechdoms,* vol. 1, pp. 393–94; Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine,* p. 70.

66. Kurt Müller-Veltin, *Mittelrheinische Steinkreuze aus Basaltlava,* Jahrbuch, Rheinischer Verein für Denkmalpflege und Landschaftsschutz, 1976/77 (Neuss: Gesellschaft für Buchdruckerei, 1980), p. 77. Stephen O. Glosecki describes the role of the cross in *The Dream of the Rood* as "a salubrious talisman, 'strong medicine' to the Anglo-Saxons." Glosecki, *Shamanism and Old English Poetry,* p. 92.

67. Dyonisia Bouthillier, ed., *Petri Cluniacensis abbatis de miraculis libri duo,* Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis, vol. 83 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1987), p. 132 (bk. 2, chap. 20): "Quomodo demones signo crucis a se fugaverit et de infatigabili eius ad Deum intentione. . . . Qui quidem crucis signo a me facto pauefacti, statim disparuerunt, pessimas tamen intolerandi fetoris reliquias, recedentes reliquerunt."

68. *Bible moralisée: Codex Vindobonensis 2554, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek,* commentary and translation by Gerald B. Guest, Manuscripts in Miniature, no. 2 (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 1995), p. 112: "Jesus Christ came to fight the devil with His cross and struck him with a stone which was the living word of the Gospel, and knocked him down and robbed him of his strength and power." In a miniature on fol. 38v (a), Christ is depicted holding a cross in his right hand and an open codex ("ce fu la vive parole de levangile") in his left.

69. Richard Morris, ed., *The Legends of the Holy Rood: Symbols of the Passion and Cross-Poems in Old English of the Eleventh, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries,* Early English Text Society, Original Series, vol. 46 (London: N. Trübner, 1871), p. 204, ll. 232–33: "Þe cros seyde, to make Þe deuyll dredy, / God schope me schelde schame to schelde."

representations of crosses (including Latin and Tau crosses), text configured in cruciform, praises of the cross, series of crosses arrayed in numbers deemed sacred, and still other crosses interspersed between divine names, words, and magic formulas. Some extant textual amulets included Crucifixion scenes or were inserted into crucifixes, as we will see.

The Abgar Legend and Heavenly Letters

Belief in the quasi-magical power of Christ's words to protect and heal also contributed to the vitality and long history of the Heavenly Letter, which is among the most ancient amuletic texts. The Heavenly Letter was an apocryphal letter from Christ to King Abgar V (4 B.C.E.–50 C.E.) of Edessa (Urfa), in southern Turkey. The historical Abgar was the toparch or ruler of Osrhoëne in northwestern Mesopotamia, though in Christian legend he is sometimes incorrectly described as the king of Armenia. The earliest extant description of the Heavenly Letter is found in the *Historia ecclesiastica* of the church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (d. 340?), who claimed that he read the original letters, from Abgar to Christ and Christ's answer in the public archives at Edessa and translated them from Syriac to Greek. In fact, the letters were probably written in Syriac during the third century. According to Eusebius's account, King Abgar wrote to Christ asking for help because of Christ's reputation for effecting miraculous cures with words and touch, healing lepers, casting out demons, and raising the dead. Delivered by the messenger Ananias (or Hannan), Eusebius continues, Abgar's letter offered Christ safety from the hostility of Jews and other foes. Responding in a letter entrusted to Ananias for delivery, Christ blessed Abgar for believing in him and promised to send one of the disciples on a mission to heal the ailing toparch and protect the city of Edessa against its enemies. In Christian legend, the apostle was St. Thaddeus (traditionally identified as St. Jude) or Addaï (one of the seventy-two disciples). Christ's letter supposedly cured Abgar of grave illness, helped him resist Persian invasion, and led him to convert his kingdom to Christianity.[70] A Latin translation of Eusebius's *Historia ecclesiastica* by Tyrannius Rufinus of Aquileia (345?–410) made this account accessible in the West.[71]

70. Gustave Bardy, ed., *Eusèbe de Césarée: Histoire ecclésiastique, Livres I–IV,* Sources Chrétiennes (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1952), vol. 1, pp. 41–45 (bk. 1, chap. 13.6–22).

71. Concerning the Abgar legend, see Bühler, "Prayers and Charms," pp. 270–78; K.C.A. Matthes, *Die Edessenische Abgarsage auf ihre Fortbildung untersucht* (Leipzig, 1882); Louis Gougaud, "La prière dite de Charlemagne et les pièces apocryphes apparentées," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*. 20 (1924): 211–38; Adolf Jacoby, "Heilige Längenmasse: Eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte der Amulette," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde*. 29 (1929): 1–17; Paul Devos, "Égérie à Édesse: S. Thomas l'Apôtre: Le roi Abgar," *Analecta Bollandiana*. 85 (1967): 392–93; Stephen G. Nichols,

Perhaps lending credibility to the apocryphal letter was a collective memory of "celestial letters," a textual phenomenon that had existed for thousands of years in the ancient Near East, where the gods ostensibly endowed such letters with magical powers. Centuries of oral and textual embellishment transformed Christ's apocryphal letter and its modest promises into a powerful, all-purpose amuletic text. The first Western account of the Heavenly Letter being copied for personal use in a textual amulet is found in the *Peregrinatio Aetheriae* or *Itinerarium Egeriae,* a journal kept by a Christian woman named Egeria (also Etheria or Aetheria), probably an abbess or nun from the province of Galicia in northwestern Spain, during her three-year pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Near the end of her pilgrimage to the Christian holy places, which has been dated to the years 381–84 or some time between 394 and 404, Egeria journeyed to Edessa, the seat of Abgar's realm, to visit the tomb of the Apostle Thomas. In the course of reciting prayers and blessings to Egeria, the bishop of Edessa read the two Syriac letters (*epistolae*) aloud. Then he had the two letters transcribed and gave Egeria handwritten copies to take home, in effect giving her Christ's "letter of protection" for the long and perilous journey home.[72] Egeria's actions were not unlike those of other Christians whose discovery and translation of sacred relics were thought to offer them protection while traveling.[73] But unlike other Christian pilgrims who took relics in whole or part, Egeria took only copies. The originals remained in the archives at Edessa, where they served as a renewable resource of divine power. Their reputed apotropaic powers could be tapped repeatedly by being read aloud or copied for people to wear on their bodies. Western sources claimed that Christ's letter, which believers considered a holy relic, was read

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Jr., "The Interaction of Life and Literature in the *Peregrinationes ad loca sancta* and the *Chansons de geste,*" *Speculum* 44, no. 1 (1969): 59–62; Cora E. Lutz, *Essays on Manuscripts and Rare Books* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1975), pp. 57–62, 152–53; Irma Karaulashvili, "The Date of the *Epistula Abgari*," *Apocrypha: Revue internationale des littératures apocryphes* 13 (2002): 85–111.

72. Otto Prinz, ed., *Itinerarium Egeriae (Peregrinatio Aetheriae),* Sammlung Vulgärlateinischer Texte (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1960), pp. 22–25 (especially p. 25): "Illud etiam satis mihi grato fuit, ut epistolas ipsas siue Aggari ad Dominicum siue Domini ad Aggarum, quas nobis ibi legerat sanctus episcopus, acciperem michi ab ipso sancto. Et licet in patria exemplaria ipsarum haberem, tamen gratius mihi uisum est, ut et ibi eas de ipso acciperem, ne quid fortisan minus ad nos in patria peruenisset; nam uere amplius est, quod hic accepi. Unde si Deus noster Iesus iusserit et uenero in patria, legitis uos, dominae animae meae." For a discussion of the text's approximate date of composition and the identity of its author, see *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage,* translated and annotated by George E. Gingras, Ancient Christian Writers, no. 38 (New York: Newman Press, 1970), pp. 1–17. Cora E. Lutz, "The Apocryphal Abgarus," in *Essays on Manuscripts and Rare Books* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1975), p. 58: "The Bishop of Edessa graciously gave her copies of the letters as mementos of her visit and as a powerful talisman for her protection, though strangely enough she remarks that she had a copy of them back in her homeland."

73. Brown, *Cult of the Saints,* p. 94.

aloud from Edessa's citadel or affixed to the city gates, as Egeria noted, in order to pacify Persian invaders and other pagan foe or to turn them to flight.[74]

The Heavenly Letter steadily grew in popularity as an amuletic text and is preserved in magical handbooks and separate textual amulets. Three magical texts based on King Abgar's apocryphal letter to Christ and on the response, offering protection and healing, are found in a Coptic papyrus codex of sixteen folios (Leiden, Asastasi no. 9), and in several extant Greek and Coptic papyrus amulets of the sixth and seventh centuries. At the same time, the Heavenly Letter was also included in the liturgy of the Syrian church, probably resulting in its condemnation as apocrypha in the *Decretum Gelasianum* (495 C.E.).[75] Greek, Armenian, and even Arabic chronicles recorded the Abgar Legend and lent historical credibility to the Heavenly Letter, despite official church condemnation. During its long history, the apocryphal letter came to be described as the so-called *Himmelsbrief* or *prière de Charlemagne,* which a heavenly messenger (sometimes the Archangel Michael or even St. George) had sent to Charlemagne to offer divine protection and ensure military victory over the Saracens at Roncesvalles in 785. In another version, Pope Leo III (795–816) gave the Heavenly Letter to the Emperor Charlemagne. In the Cabalistic grimoire known as *Enchiridion Leonis Papae,* which circulated in chapbooks from the eighteenth century, Charlemagne thanked the pope in an equally apocryphal letter, ostensibly prepared by Alcuin (who in reality was firmly opposed to the use of textual amulets), for a *libellus* in which the Heavenly Letter and other textual elements combined to empower and protect the emperor from all evil.[76] Whoever carried or wore the Heavenly

74. This aspect of the Abgar legend was recounted in a twelfth-century epic poem about the First Crusade, the *Historia vie hierosolimitane*. See C. W. Grocock, ed., *The Historia vie Hierosolimitane of Gilo of Paris and a Second Anonymous Author,* Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 134–35 (bk. 6, ll. 32–37): "Haec ibi temporibus permansit epistola multis /Atque ea ab aduersis tutauit menia cunctis, / Nam si barbaricus furor illuc adueniebat, / Baptisatus eam puer alta in arce legebat, / Moxque uel in pacem gens ex feritate redibat / Aut terrore fugam diuino tacta petebat." A similar tale is found in the *Legenda aurea* and the *Gesta romanorum*. See Theodor Graesse, ed., *Jacobi a Voragine legenda aurea vulgo historia lombardica dicta,* 3rd edition (Bratislava: Wilhelm Koebner, 1890), p. 30; also see Österley, *Gesta romanorum,* p. 532 (chap. 154, "De celesti patria"), which offers Gervase of Tilbury's *Otia imperialia* (1211) as its source: "Narrat Gervasius, quod in Edissa civitate ob presentiam sancte imaginis Christi nullus hereticus vivere potest, nullus paganus, nullus idolorum cultor, nullus Judeus, sed nec locum illum barbari possunt invadere. Si quando exercitus obvenit hostilis, stans super portam civitatis innocens puerculus epistolam legit, et sic eadem die, qua legitur, aut placantur barbari aut fugiunt effeminate." Bozóky, *Charmes et prières apotropaïques,* p. 50.

75. Meyer and Smith, *Ancient Christian Magic,* pp. 319–22; Van Haelst, *Catalogue,* pp. 217–18 (nos. 612–14). Concerning its early condemnation, see Lutz, "Apocryphal Abgarus-Jesus Epistles," p. 60.

76. The *Enchiridion Leonis Papae serenissimo imperatori Carlo Magno* was printed in Rome, first in 1740 and then again in 1848. François Ribadeau Dumas, *Grimoires et rituels magiques* (Paris: Éditions Pierre Belfond, 1972), pp. 45–93. On the circulation of "chapbook grimoires," see

Letter on their body, according to the *Enchiridion Leonis Papae,* would enjoy the same benefits ("Haec est epistola Sancti Salvatoris quam quilibet homo secum ferre potest"). Assigning authorship to God or some other spiritual authority and a delivery role to mythological or historical figures was common in amuletic texts and verbal charms.[77]

In different versions of the Heavenly Letter, Christ's letter was preserved in Edessa, or discovered at the Tomb of the Holy Sepulcher, or laid by an angel upon the altar of St. Peter in Rome, or was suspended above the ground when Christ was baptized in the River Jordan. In some versions of the Abgar Legend that developed initially in the Byzantine world, the Abgar letter was associated or confounded with the Mandylion; that is, the Holy Towel (*hagion mandylion*) or Holy Face not painted by human hands (*acheiropoietos*). In these versions, when King Abgar sent the messenger Ananias to Christ in Jerusalem seeking a cure for a grave illness (probably leprosy), Christ praised the ailing king, who believed in him without seeing him. Unable to travel to Edessa himself, Christ offered help by sending the Mandylion (a portrait of Christ) to King Abgar, usually dispatched along with the apotropaic letter that Eusebius first described. The original portrait and letter qualified as relics, sources of divine protection and miraculous healing.[78]

Owen Davies, "French Charmers and their Healing Charms," in Roper, *Charms and Charming in Europe,* pp. 94–95.

77. Ernst von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder: Untersuchungen zur Christlichen Legende,* Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, vol. 18 (Neue Folge, vol. 3) (Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs, 1899), pp. 203*–249*; Bühler, "Prayers and Charms," pp. 270–78; Deonna, "À l'Escalade de 1602," pp. 87–89. Bühler noted significant variations "from text to text, even from version to version of the same text, according to the date of writing and nationality of the scribe or patron who commissioned the amulet" (p. 271). For a discussion of the Charlemagne letter and prayers, see Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* pp. 273–79. The Charlemagne prayer was even included in the occasional fifteenth-century book of hours, such as Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, MS 237. Virginia Reinburg, "Prayer and the Book of Hours," in Wieck, *Time Sanctified,* p. 40. Vaguely associated with the Abgar legend in England was a brief Anglo-Norman French prose portrait of Christ, based on an apocryphal letter (beginning "Trovee est en auncien estoire de Rome de Jesu Crist"), which the procurator of Judea supposedly sent to the Roman Senate under the Emperor Tiberius. Dean, *Anglo-Norman Literature,* p. 269, no. 488. Douglas Gray, "Notes on Some Middle English Charms," in *Chaucer and Middle English Studies in Honour of Rossell Hope Robbins,* ed. Beryl Rowland (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1974), pp. 58–59. Pope Leo was said to have sent a textual *crux Christi* to Charlemagne.

78. Depending on the version of the Abgar Legend, the Mandylion was either the portrait created by the impression of Christ's face in a towel or an icon painted by the messenger Ananias. The Mandylion of Orthodox Christian tradition is paralleled in the West by the legend of St. Veronica's Veil (the Vernicle or Sudarium). Apotropaic benefits came from looking at the Mandylion or copies of it. Concerning the Mandylion, see John Rupert Martin, *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), pp. 110–11; Konrad Onasch, *Icons* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1963), pp. 347–48, 398–99; Gaston Duchet-Suchaux and Michel Pastoureau, *The Bible and the Saints* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), pp. 226–27; and Ryan, *Bathhouse at Midnight,* p. 294.

The Byzantine translation of the Mandylion from Edessa to Constantinople in 944 probably increased the status of the Abgar Legend and relics in the Greek East and Latin West, especially from the period of the Crusades. Christ's letter and Mandylion both figure in the text and cycle of thirty-six miniatures of a Byzantine amulet roll, which was probably made in Constantinople around 1374. There are views of Christ handing his roll-format letter containing the Seven Seals along with the Mandylion to King Abgar's messenger Ananias (University of Chicago Library, MS 125 [BS 1903f]; New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, M499).[79] Both relics are also depicted in a unique Western cycle of twenty-two miniatures on the Abgar Legend, which survives in a Latin manuscript executed in Rome in the second half of the thirteenth century and based on Greek and Armenian sources (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 2688). Miniatures in this manuscript depict the apocryphal epistles of King Abgar and Christ as rectangular folded letters with an address panel, much like official and private letters at the time.[80]

79. The Abgar roll, only 9.5 cm wide, includes several Greek texts whose apotropaic qualities were enhanced by its portability when fully rolled, and then probably inserted into a fabric sack or leather case. The first 175.6 cm of the roll, which is at the University of Chicago, includes Gospel sequences (Mark 1:1–8, Luke 1:1–7, John 1:1–17, and Matthew 6:9–13), the Nicene Creed, and Psalm 68. The remaining 335.0 cm, which is in New York at The Pierpont Morgan Library, begins with Psalm 91 but is chiefly comprised of a Greek version of the Abgar legend. The Seven Seals read "IC XC ΨX E Y P Δ." Sirarpie Der Nersessian, "La légende d'Abgar d'après un rouleau illustré de la bibliothèque Pierpont Morgan à New York," *Actes du IVe Congrès International des Études Byzantine, Sofia, Septembre 1935,* published in *Bulletin de l'Institut Archéologique Bulgare,* 2nd series, 10 (1936): 98–106; Kenneth W. Clark, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Greek New Testament Manuscripts in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, n.d.), pp. 226–27; Gary Vikan, ed., *Illuminated Greek Manuscripts from American Collections: An Exhibition in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann* (Princeton: Princeton University Art Museum, 1973), pp. 194–95; Karaulashvili, "The Date of the *Epistula Abgari,*" pp. 94–95. The Abgar roll was reunited in a 2004 exhibition in New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. See description in Helen C. Evans, ed., *Byzantium: Faith and Power, 1261–1557* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

80. Concerning the manuscript, see Isa Ragusa, "The Iconography of the Abgar Cycle in Paris MS. Latin 2688 and Its Relationship to Byzantine Cycles," *Miniatura*. 2 (1989): 35–55, plates 2–4. *Catalogue général des manuscrits latins* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1940), vol. 2, p. 580, dates the manuscript incorrectly to the fifteenth century. The text begins on fol. 64v: "Exemplum epistole quam misit rex abgarus ad christum et responsio eius christi per epistolam. et ystoria de sudario domini. Abgarus rex ciuitatis edesse casme filius." In the miniature on fol. 68r, an enthroned King Abgar hands his letter (with the word *Rex* on the address panel) to a courtier; on fol. 70v, King Abgar's bearded, red-cloaked messenger hands a letter (labeled *Ihesu*) to Christ, while a painter tries unsuccessfully to paint the image of Christ; and on fol. 75r, Christ hands the Mandylion to one apostle, while another apostle hands Christ letter (labeled *Rex*) to the bearded, red-cloaked messenger. The Paris manuscript refers to the Mandylion by the Latin word *sudarium*. In addition to Greek textual sources, this version of the Abgar legend used the Armenian history by Moses of Chorene. For an edition of the Paris text, with commentary, see Dobschütz, "Eine lateinisch-armenische Fassung der Abgarlegende," in *Christusbilder,* pp. 141**–156**. The author is grateful to Irma Karaulashvili for bringing this manuscript to his attention.

Ecclesiastical authorities from Charlemagne's *Admonitio generalis* (789) to Hugh of St. Victor (1096?–1141) condemned the Heavenly Letter.[81] Yet it remained in circulation because it was believed to be authentic. What possible harm could there be, many clerics may have wondered, if Christ's own words were used to protect the faithful against the Devil and pagan hordes? Brief versions of the Heavenly Letter, based on a section of the Latin Eusebius, circulated in the British Isles as the *Epistola Salvatoris*.[82] The oldest of these, with Old English glosses, found in an Anglo-Saxon prayer book, goes beyond the Latin Eusebius version by adding that whoever had a copy of the Heavenly Letter on their person would travel in peace (London, British Library, Royal MS 2.A.xx). The oldest parts of this manuscript were written in Mercia in the second half of the eighth or first quarter of the ninth century; it was later in the library of Worcester Cathedral. A version of the *Epistola Salvatoris* without this addendum is found in a prayer book dating from the first half of the eleventh century (London, British Library, Cotton Galba, MS A.xiv). This manuscript may have been from Winchester and was probably used at St. Mary's Convent.[83]

In the eleventh-century Irish *Liber hymnorum* (Dublin, Trinity College Library), the Heavenly Letter's value as a textual amulet is clearly articulated, as in Royal MS 2.A.xx, by an additional explanation that one could travel safely

81. Aron Gurevitch, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception,* trans. János M. Bak and Paul A. Hollingsworth, Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture, no. 14 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 67. Hugh of St. Victor, *Eruditio didascalica,* in *Patrologia latina,* vol. 176, col. 788. In book 4, chapter 15 ("Quae sint apocryphae scripturae"), Hugh of St. Victor treats the Abgar letter as an apocryphal work ("Epistola Jesu ad Abgarum apocrypha"), to be condemned as being, like phylacteries, of demonic origin ("Philacteria omnia quae non ab angelo, ut illi confingunt, sed magis a daemone conscripta sunt apocrypha").

82. The *Epistola Salvatoris* in these manuscripts bears some similarity to the fourth section of the oldest Latin version. See, in Dobschütz, *Christusbilder,* p. 133**, the passage beginning "Beatus es, qui in me credisti, cum ipse me non videris."

83. For London, British Library, Royal MS 2.A.xx, see Frederick Edward Warren, ed., *The Antiphonary of Bangor: An Early Irish Manuscript in the Ambrosian Library at Milan,* Henry Bradshaw Society Publications, nos. 4, 10 (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1893–1995), vol. 2, pp. 97–99. The Heavenly Letter begins on fol. 12v. See also A. B. Kuypers, ed., *The Prayer Book of Aedeluald the Bishop: Commonly Called the Book of Cerne* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902), pp. 205–6. For London, British Library, Cotton Galba MS A.xiv, see Bernard James Muir, ed., *A Pre-Conquest English Prayer-Book: BL MSS Cotton Galba A.xiv and Nero A.ii* (*ff. 3–13*), Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. 103 (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press for the Henry Bradshaw Society, 1988), p. 47, no. 18. For descriptions of these two manuscripts, see Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts,* pp. 198–201 (no. 157), 317–18 (no. 248); Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts,* pp. 64 (no. 333), 79 (no. 450). Concerning the *Epistola Salvatoris* in Anglo-Saxon England, see Frederick M. Biggs, Thomas D. Hill, and Paul E. Szarmach, eds., *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture: A Trial Version* (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1990), p. 38.

with a copy of the *epistola* worn on one's body for protection.[84] Around the year 1000, Ælfric Grammaticus, abbot of Eynsham (ca. 955–1020), prepared Old English verses *De Abgaro rege,* based on the Latin Eusebius. According to this Anglo-Saxon version, the messenger St. Thaddeus delivered the Heavenly Letter (*gewrit*) to Abgar and cured him by proxy with Christ's healing words and touch, without having to be treated by leeches or herbal remedies. Copies of Ælfric's text survive in English monastic manuscripts.[85]

The Heavenly Letter spread geographically to all corners of the medieval West, eventually becoming common in late medieval amulets, and eventually it was transported to the New World. Over the centuries, the text underwent significant permutation, elaboration, and translation. The result of this process was a proliferation of Latin and vernacular versions, which grew ever more capacious in their broad promises of protection. According to the English version quoted by Reginald Scot in 1584:

> And the angell said, that what man or woman beareth this writing [i.e. the Heavenly Letter] about them with good deuotion, and saith everie daie three *Pater nosters,* three *Aues,* and one *Creede,* shall not that daie be overcome of his enimies, either bodilie or ghostlie; neither shall be robbed or slaine of theeves, pestilence, thunder, or lightening; neither shall be hurt with fier or water, nor combred with spirits, neither shall have displeasure of lords or ladies; he shall not be condemned with false witnesse, nor taken with fairies, or anie maner of axes, not yet with the falling euill. Also, if a woman be in trauell, laie this writing upon hir bellie, she shall haue easie deliverance, and the child right shape and christendome, and the mother purification of holy church. . . . The epistle of S. *Savior,* which pope *Leo* sent to king *Charles,* saieng, that whosoever carrieth the same about him, or in what daie so euer he shall read it, or shall see it, he shall not be killed with anie iron toole, nor be burned with fier, nor be drowned with water, neither anie evill man or other creature maie hurt him.[86]

84. J. H. Bernard and Robert Atkinson, eds., *The Irish Liber hymnorum,* Henry Bradshaw Society Publications, vols. 13–14 (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1898), vol. 1, pp. xviii, 94–95; vol. 2, pp. 30, 173–74. "Si quis hanc epistolam secum habuerit securus ambulet in pace." For other monastic examples, see Lutz, "Apocryphal Abgarus-Jesus Epistles," pp. 60–61.

85. Dobschütz, *Christusbilder,* p. 219*, no. 74. George Stephens, *Tvende Old-Engelske Digte med Oversaettelser* (Copenhagen: Schultz, 1853), pp. 15–21 (I. Abgarus-Legenden paa Old-Engelsk). Concerning Ælfric's translations, see F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England,* Oxford History of England, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 451–54.

86. Scot, *Discouerie of Witchcraft,* pp. 232–33 (bk. 12, chap. 9).

Widely divergent levels of presentation matched the textual variability of the Heavenly Letter. The Abgar letter could be so neatly copied and luxuriously illuminated by professional book artisans that one might not even think of particular copies as amulets. People of high social status were known to own elegant productions. Versions of the Heavenly Letter, combined with other apotropaic texts, were occasionally added to illuminated books of hours such as Bodleian Library MS Lat. Liturg. F9 (31537), which was executed around 1406 for Katherine of France, the Valois princess who in 1420 married King Henry V of England (1413–22).[87] By contrast, crudely fashioned copies of the Heavenly Letter, sometimes combined with other textual elements, multiplied among common folk, who readily believed that the letters fell to them directly from heaven. In 1451, according to the Augustinian canon and Windesheim, Germany, chronicler Johann Busch (1399–1479), a woman (the wife or daughter of a soldier) in the Saxon town of Halle was observed during confession wearing from her neck a small pouch (*parva bursa*) containing a small parchment amulet (*scedula*) with a version of the Heavenly Letter and other textual elements offering protection against a host of life-threatening calamities. Copied without refinement and folded up to fit into the pouch, the woman's amulet was condemned, confiscated, and burned by the priest as the Devil's work and inimical to the Christian faith.[88] Despite occasional church condemnation, textual amulets based on the Heavenly Letter remained popular and continued to circulate for centuries, sometimes offering general protection without even mentioning the tale of Christ and Abgar.[89]

87. In this version (fols. 82r–83r), Christ writes to King Abgar, "Deinde tibi que mitto. Item mittam tibi epistolam manu mea scriptam ut ubicumque fueris et eam semper te portaveris saluus eris a grandine, a flumine, a tonitruo et omni periculo et nemo inimicorum tuorum dominabitur tibi, et insidias diaboli non timebris." Also included in these folios are devotions to Christ's cross and the Tau cross ("hoc signum crucis super se que dixit dominus angelo super quem videris hoc signum meum Thau . . . Christus est medicina qui salvat ab omni ruina. In se sperantes hoc signum Thau portantes"), and there is a common travel charm ("Iesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat"). For a brief description, see Falconer Madan et al., *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford,* 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895–1922), vol. 6, pt. 1, pp. 65–68 (no. 31537). Madan describes two fifteenth-century English books of hours that include versions of the Heavenly Letter: no. 2857, in vol. 2, pt. 1, p. 542 (no. 2857), and vol. 3, p. 499 (no. 15799).

88. Johann Busch, *Liber de reformatione monasteriorum,* bk. 2, chap. 19, in *Des Augustinerpropstes Ioannes Busch Chronicon Windeshemense und Liber de reformatione monasteriorum,* ed. Karl Grube, Geschichtsquellen der Provinz Sachsen und Ungrenzender Gebiete, vol. 19 (Halle: Otto Hendel, 1886), pp. 699–700. For a discussion, see Albrecht Dieterich, "Weitere Beobachtungen zu den Himmelsbriefen," in *Kleine Schriften* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1911), p. 247: "Deinde scedula continebat: 'Christus vincit, Christus regnat' et nomina apostolorum trium regumque Balthasar, Melchior, Caspar, et diversos characteres et multas cruces inter nomina prefata et literas plures alphabeti et iterum nomina sanctorum et characteres et plures coniurationes intermixtas et similia ignota nomina, que iam non recordor."

89. Even oral use was possible, as with early uses of Christ's apocryphal letter to Abgar. While traveling through the Western Isles of Scotland in the latter half of the nineteenth century collecting

Beyond the Abgar Legend, there were other amuletic heavenly letters. While unrelated in origin to the apocryphal letter from Christ to King Abgar, the so-called Sunday Epistle (*Carta dominica*), ostensibly written by Christ, spread widely and was sometimes confounded with its better-known cousin. This apocryphal letter seems to have originated in the Christian East in the sixth century and circulated throughout the West, perhaps beginning in northern Spain or southern France. In various versions, the Sunday Epistle had either been written personally by Christ or had fallen from Heaven to Constantinople, Jerusalem, Rome, or some other place. In one version, the Sunday Epistle fell to earth into the hands of Vincentius, a sixth-century bishop of Ibiza (Ebusa), Balearic Islands. In an Old Irish version dating as early as the ninth century, Christ's handwritten letter (*epistil*) was sent from heaven and placed on the altar of St. Peter in Rome. The Sunday Epistle admonished the faithful to observe the Sabbath and attend church and threatened transgressors with plague, misfortune, and eternal damnation.

The Old Irish version (*Cáin Domnaig*) advised, "Any cleric who shall not read it aloud conscientiously to the peoples and nations of the world shall not attain Heaven, but shall be in hell forever. Whosoever shall read it aloud, and shall write it, and shall fulfill it after hearing it, he shall not only have prosperity in this world, but the kingdom of the other world for ever yonder." Conall MacCoelmaine, a contemporary of St. Columba, was credited with copying the original in Rome so that it could be disseminated in Ireland. Worn on the body, the Sunday Epistle could either serve a memorial function (like Jewish phylacteries), reminding people to observe the law, or an amuletic function (like the Heavenly Letter), offering Christians protection against the dire consequences of transgression. Old English versions of the Sunday Epistle, or *Sunnandæges Spell,* survive in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. Latin and vernacular versions spread as far as Iceland, where the Norse poem *Leidar-visan* (ca. 1200) claimed that it had first been written down in golden letters to help the people of Jerusalem. By the end of the fifteenth century, the Sunday Epistle was being used in broadside

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Celtic charms, spells, incantations, and prayers for protection and healing, the folklorist Alexander Carmichael translated a Gaelic "charm of protection" recited by a local woman named Catherine MacNeill. She imperfectly remembered a few promises of what had been the Heavenly Letter. "The man around whom the charm shall go shall not be killed in battle nor drowned in sea. The charm is a blessed thing. . . . The man around whom the charm should go recited Credo and Pater Noster and the Prayer of Mary Mother. It was necessary that the man around whom the charm should go should have a right heart and good thoughts and a clean spirit." Alexander Carmichael, *Carmina gadelica: Hymns and Incantations* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1928), vol. 3, p. 95. Carmichael found that most of the reciters were poor rural folk, about two-thirds men, including crofters, cottiers, cattle herders, and members of their families. This calculation is based on the 154 people listed in *Carmina gadelica,* originally published in 1900. Carmichael, *Carmina gadelica,* vol. 2, pp. 374–81.

amulets. Printing extended the useful life of both the Heavenly Letter and Sunday Epistle by centuries.[90]

Narrative Charms

Narrative charms or *historiolae,* not unrelated to the Abgar Legend and the apocryphal texts it spawned, were brief anecdotes about sacred, legendary, or mythic personages who had suffered in ways that foreshadowed the sufferings of a present-day person. While a narrative charm could be recited orally for the benefit of that person, it could also be used in a textual amulet. People turned to such narratives, which metaphorically erased barriers of time between past and present, in hope of reaping the benefits of supernatural protection and healing, like a particular mythological personage. Deeply rooted in oral culture, narrative charms often included dialogue and preceded conjurations that an intermediary (for example, a parish priest or healer) would address to demons or other malevolent forces for the benefit of the afflicted person. When properly invoked, the sacred models and precedents contained in these stories were thought to offer hope of an almost-magical replication of past miracles and supernatural cures. One would be protected or healed just as someone else had been. While there had been magical *historiola* in ancient rituals, the earliest evidence of narrative charms in the Middle Ages dates from the ninth or tenth centuries, when Latin *historiolae* begin to survive in manuscripts.[91] From the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, narrative charms circulated widely in secular manuscripts and textual amulets, prompting some late medieval critics to condemn them as worthless

90. W. R. Halliday, "A Note upon the Sunday Epistle and the Letter of Pope Leo," *Speculum* 2 (1927): 73–78; Robert Priebsch, *Letter from Heaven on the Observance of the Lord's Day* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1936), pp. 1–37; Goodspeed, *Modern Apocrypha,* pp. 70–75; W. R. Jones, "The Heavenly Letter in Medieval England," *Medievalia et humanistica: Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Culture,* n.s., no. 6 (1975): 163–78 (especially 164, 173); Biggs, Hill, and Szarmach, *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture,* pp. 39–40. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts,* lists various Old English versions in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, including Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 419 (description in Ker, pp. 115–19). J. G. O'Keefe, "Cáin Domnaig," *Ériu: The Journal of the School of Irish Learning, Dublin* 2 (1905): 189–214. The English translation of article 19 is by O'Keefe (203). The Sunday Epistle was translated into many languages, including English and Modern Greek.

91. David Frankfurter, "Narrating Power: The Theory and Practice of the Magical *Historiola* in Ritual Spells," in Meyer and Mirecki, *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power,* pp. 457–76. Frankfurter notes (p. 457), "When one 'narrates' or utters a spell, the words uttered draw power into the world and towards (or against) an object in the world. . . . But I intend 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 the world." Edina Bozóky, "Mythic Mediation in Healing Incantations," in *Health, Disease and Healing in Medieval Culture,* ed. Sheila D. Campbell, Bert S. Hall, and David Klausner (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), pp. 84–92.

folly. The authors of the *Malleus maleficarum* showed their disdain by pointing to the uselessness of a silly jingle that proclaimed, "The Blessed Virgin crossed the River Jordan, and St. Stephen met her, and they fell into conversation."[92]

Like other noncanonical texts, narrative charms were unstandardized. They spread in innumerable versions through the imprecise mechanisms of oral transmission and scribal copying.[93] We can see endless permutations with a class of narrative-style fever charm based on an apocryphal story about St. Peter sitting outside Jerusalem's Latin Gate.[94] In its many versions, Christ invariably begins by asking St. Peter about his affliction. Learning that St. Peter is wracked by fever, Christ uses his healing touch to cure him. St. Peter then asks Christ to allow other people to benefit from divine grace by turning the narrative charm into a textual amulet by wearing *verba scripta* on their bodies. Christ responds affirmatively. Like the Heavenly Letter, this charm was ideal for use in textual amulets because it contained what were said to be Christ's own words. Similar Latin and vernacular versions of the fever charm can be found in a wide array of physical contexts.

Another version of this fever charm survives on the inside back limp-vellum wrapper of a fourteenth-century legal miscellany, possibly Bolognese (Princeton University Library, Princeton MS 25), where a jurist or law student named Pietro had copied it with the heading *contra febrem* in a rectangular text space of about 4.5 × 9.5 cm, perhaps replicating the dimensions of the textual amulet that served as an exemplar; or it may have been set down from memory in a space whose dimensions were similar to those of a small textual amulet. Amuletic

92. Institoris and Sprenger, *Malleus maleficarum,* p. 172 (pt. 2, qu. 2, chap. 6): "sic enim quedam vetule in suis carminibus vtuntur rigmaticando, beata virgo iordanem transiuit et tunc sanctus stephanus ei obuiauit, eam interrogauit et multas alias fatuitates."

93. Jack Goody observed that in Christianity and Islam, the religious canon "ensures that the word of God or his associates can be transmitted unchanged over the generations; the word is preserved in the canonical text, which is faithfully copied in a manner that encourages the art of calligraphy rather than the process of creation. Indeed, canonization forbids tampering with the text—that is left to the commentaries. The scribe does not invent the words, he puts his art into the form rather than the content." Jack Goody, *The Power of the Written Tradition,* Smithsonian Series in Ethnographic Inquiry (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), p. 121. Virginia Reinburg, "Popular Prayers in Late Medieval and Reformation France" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1985), p. 320: "But some of these prayer-texts seem written from memory, by people not trained in scribal skills. Possibly devotees learned legends and remedies from friends, neighbors, kin. Printing may be added to the treasury of orally circulated prayers, and spread them further than they might have traveled by oral networks alone. Pastors, healers, and midwives might have recited or suggested formulas that lay people remembered and inscribed in their Books of Hours."

94. Alfons A. Barb argued that this charm "can be traced back ultimately to the prayer of Seth the son of Adam, at the gates of Paradise, in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus (Descent into Hades, chaps. 3–4)." See Alfons A. Barb, "Animula Vagula Blandula: Notes on Jingles, Nursery Rhymes and Charms with an Excursus on Noththe's Sisters," *Folk-Lore* 61 (March 1950): 19–20 n. 11.

benefits were for Pietro and a woman named Alasia, perhaps his wife.[95] There is also a Latin version found among Occitan-Limousin amuletic texts and verbal charms in a fourteenth-century French medical miscellany (Princeton University Library, Garrett MS 80).[96] This fever amulet proliferated along with other magic texts to help pregnant women and to treat the "bloody flux" and other common afflictions. Latin and vernacular versions of narrative charms survive in innumerable English, German, Italian, and other secular manuscripts, especially in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[97]

Divine Names

Ancient religions had often sought supernatural assistance through theurgic appeals by name to the gods, helpful deities, beneficent spirits, angels, and demons. As S. J. Tambiah has noted, "The Greek doctrine of *logos* postulated

95. Princeton University Library, Princeton MS 25: The text reads as follows: "contra febrem ✠ In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti amen. ante portam Iherusalem jacebat petrus. et aliis supervenit dominus et ait illi. quid jaces hic petre. et respondens petrus dixit domine. de mala febre passus sum. ait illi surge parce dimittet te febris. et continuo surexit. et secutus est eum. et ait illi nunc oro domine ut quicumque vel quodcumque haec scripta super se portauerit febris ei nocere non possit. ait illi dominus. fiat tibi sicut petisti. amen ✠ christus uincit ✠ christus regnat ✠ christus imperat his febris cotidianis biduanis tercianis quartanis ut exeatur ab hoc famulo dei petro uel famula dei alasia. amen." The words "Conservere me" are written adjacent to this amuletic text in a nearly contemporary hand identified elsewhere on the wrapper as that of a certain "Marchus Gatus." Similarly, Seymour De Ricci and W. J. Wilson, *Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada* (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1940), vol. 2, p. 1152, describe a sixteenth-century addition on end leaves (removed from an Italian book), then in the library of Alfred Brown, M.D. (Omaha, Nebraska): "Charm, in Latin, contra pestem sive carbunculum (Recordare Domine Testamenti tui)." Vel. (XVIth c.), 2 ff. (13 × 10 cm), apparently end-leaves from a larger ms., on the verso: Illustrissimo Signore Pione Col^{mo}."

96. The Occitan portion of Garrett MS 80 has the incipit "Aquest libre es bons per aver sanitat del cors." For a discussion of such Occitan manuscripts and an edition of the medical recipe portion containing the Latin text, with corrections and punctuation added, see Maria Sofia Corradini Bozzi, ed., *Ricettari medico-farmaceutici medievali nella Francia meridionale,* Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere "La Colombaria," Studi, no. 159 (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1997), pp. 14–18, 133–81. "Breu per febre: Dominus dixit ad Symon Petrus quod hic iasset. Petrus dixit ei: 'Domine quia plenus sum de febribus.' Dominus illum tangebat et Petrus sanus fiebat. Dominus inde ambulat et Petrus sequebatur. Dominus ad eum dixit: 'Quod vis ad me Petre. Petrus dixit illi Qui habuerit ista verba aut portaverit scripta non debet fevre abere.' Dominus dixit ei: 'Petre fiat tibi sicut vis'" (p. 139).

97. For example, Thomas Wright and James Orchard Halliwell, ed., *Reliquiae antiquae: Scraps from Ancient Manuscripts Illustrating chiefly Early English Literature and the English Language* (London: William Pickering, 1841), vol. 2, p. 315; Robbins, "Medical Manuscripts in Middle English," pp. 405; Barb, "St. Zacharias," pp. 53–56; Francesco Novati, "Antichi scongiuri," in *Miscellanea Ceriani,* pp. 82–83; Bozóky, *Charmes et prières apotropaïques,* p. 38, no. 19. Considering the number of late medieval translated charms, it is interesting to note that Pliny the Elder believed charms became ineffective once translated. Ryan, *Bathhouse at Midnight,* p. 170.

that the soul or essence of things resided in their names."[98] Yet members of a particular religious group might not agree on whether powerful names, spoken or written in a sacred language, had magical efficacy by themselves alone or as a result of divine or supernatural agency. Jews, Christians, and pagans in the late antique world embraced the protective power of divine names, as we can see in the wealth of papyrus and *lamella* amulets from Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean. Religious and magical practitioners with knowledge of the secret name of God could thus enjoy direct access to divine power. In an effort to counter charges by the pagan Celsus that Christians used divine names in a magical way, Origen (ca. 185–ca. 254) adduced arguments based on New Testament accounts of healing and exorcism in Christ's name.[99] In the ancient and medieval worlds, theological debates about the power of sacred names did little to quell a popular belief that they could effectively summon God, even when worn rather than spoken, and thus lead to divine intercession in one's behalf.

Chronicles, *chansons de geste,* and other types of courtly literature in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries contain occasional references to the amuletic use of divine names. Vernacular authors offered lay audiences many examples of warriors in a mythological or quasi-historical context using textual amulets to obtain divine protection, personal courage, and military victory. Still generally unlettered, the knightly classes believed that the power of sacred words, either spoken or written, could prevent sudden death in battle and guarantee good fortune in mortal combat against the heathen foe. Successive waves of noble warriors with "knightly piety" (*Ritterfrömmigkeit*) took the cross and received ecclesiastical blessing in liturgical ceremonies, sometimes praying to God and the saints in the presence of sacred relics, before departing on the long voyage to the Holy Land, where they rode into battle wearing crosses and expecting divine protection against the infidel. Beyond such rituals, crusaders sought divine protection by ecclesiastical blessing of their swords, which were obviously cross-shaped and therefore potentially apotropaic, or by having their swords and shields inscribed with Christ's name or other divine names, liturgical formulas, concealed invocations, and even nonsense words. Textual amulets offered an extra layer of divine protection against the dangers of warfare and travel.[100]

98. S. J. Tambiah, "The Magical Power of Words," *Man: The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 3, no. 2 (June 1968): 182–84.

99. Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World,* p. 95; Janowitz, *Icons of Power,* pp. 34–41, 123–28.

100. Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter,* vol. 2, pp. 300–307; Adolphe Jacques Dickman, *Le rôle du surnaturel dans les chansons de geste* (Iowa City: State University of Iowa, 1926), pp. 140–46, 194–98; W. L. Wardale, "Some Fifteenth-Century Charms from German MSS in the British Museum," *Modern Language Review* 33, no. 3 (July 1938): 388–90; R. Ewart Oakeshott, *The Archaeology of Weapons: Arms and Armour from Prehistory to the Age of Chivalry* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1960), pp. 204–6, 212–23; Reinburg, "Popular Prayers," pp. 287–92; Maurice

During the Third Crusade (1189–92), according to two nearly contemporary accounts, an English crusader in the army of King Richard I ("Lionheart") at the siege of Acre (1191) wore a textual amulet for protection against the crossbow bolts and darts of Saladin's soldiers. Though covered by a hauberk of chain mail, the crusader wore around his neck a simple textual amulet, identified as a *breve* or *schedula,* containing an unspecified name of God. According to the story, the amulet protected him from a bolt fired directly at his breast.[101] Since the archbishop of Canterbury and other English churchmen were present, it is quite likely that a cleric was responsible for preparing amulets or giving them to the crusaders. This was certainly the case in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century French *trouvère* works about the Crusades. In the *Conquête de Jerusalem,* the knight Thomas de Marne uses a textual amulet (*brief*),[102] and in the *Épisode des crétifs,* a fourteenth-century continuation, the abbot of Fécamp gave a textual amulet (*brief*) to the crusader Baudouin de Beauvais, who wore it around his neck for protection against sudden death in battle.[103] Beyond the Crusades, we learn

Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 51, 56–57; Jonathan Riley-Smith, "The Politics of War: France and the Holy Land," in *The Book of Kings: Art, War, and the Morgan Library's Medieval Picture Bible,* ed. William Noel and Daniel Weiss (London: Third Millennium Publishing, 2002), pp. 76–79; William Chester Jordan, "The Rituals of War: Departure for Crusade in Thirteenth-Century France," in ibid., pp. 99–105. "Of word among the men of Armes," John Gower wrote in *Confessio amantis,* "Ben woundes heeled with the charmes, / Wher lacketh other medicine." *Confessio amantis,* bk. 7, ll. 1567–69, in *The Complete Works of John Gower,* ed. G. C. Macaulay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), vol. 3, p. 274.

101. William Stubbs, ed., *Itinerarium peregrinorum et gesta regis Ricardi; auctore ut videtur, Ricardo, canonico Sanctae Trinitatis Londoniensis,* Rolls Series, no. 38 (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864), vol. 1, pp. 99–100 (bk. 1, chap. 48): "Hunc igitur suspicientem, subito a summitate muri, Turco transmittente spiculum balistae vi maxima contortum percussit in pectore, ita quod omnia praedicta penetrans, videlicet, capitis ferream armaturam et etiam loricam cum perpuncto, demum ad quoddam breve, quod gestabat, appensum collo et in pectus demissum. . . . Nomen quippe Dei sanctum dicebatur vir ille gestare collo appensum insertum schedulae, ferro impenetrabile." Ambroise (fl. ca. 1196), a poet or *jongleur* of Norman origin, recounted the same story about the Crusader's textual amulet (*brief*). Gaston Paris, ed., *L'estoire de la guerre sainte, histoire en vers de la troisième croisade (1190–1192) par Ambroise* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1897), ll. 3575–80: "Li serjant ot al col un brief, Merci Deu, quil garda de grief, Kar li non Deu escrit i erent; Ço virent cil qui illoc erent Que quant li quarels i tucha Qu'il resorti e resbucha." Concerning this derivative work and its author, see John L. La Monte's introduction to *The Crusade of Richard Lion-Heart by Ambroise,* trans. Merton Jerome Hubert, Records of Civilization, Sources and Studies, no. 34 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), pp. 3–27. Concerning the siege of Acre, see Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A Short History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 113–16.

102. Célestin Hippeau, ed., *La conquête de Jerusalem faisant suite à la Chanson d'Antioche composé par le pelerin Richard et renouvelée par Graindor de Douai au XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Auguste Aubry, 1868), p. 157 ("chant quatrième," pt. 32, l. 3950): "Li bers Thomas de Marne ot .I. brief moult vaillant."

103. Célestin Hippeau, ed., *La chanson du Chevalier au Cygne et de Godefroid de Bouillon* (Paris: Auguste Aubry, 1877), vol. 2, p. 231 (sec. v, in "Épisode des Crétifs"): "I. brief li a doné por

in other vernacular works, knights used textual amulets. In a twelfth-century Old French *chanson de geste,* the protagonist *Aiol* acquired a parchment amulet on which the name of Christ was written ("Li non de Ieus Crist i sont tout vrai").[104] Other works mention knights using textual amulets to protect against foes and ensure victory but do not specify whether the apotropaic text was common *nomen sacrum* or the YHS monogram.[105] Christ's name sufficed, even if used alone. The *Tabula exemplorum,* compiled in Paris around 1277, relates that a monk, having learned about the miracles worked in Christ's name, successfully treated a fever by using his finger to trace the name Jesus in some water and then drank the water like medicine.[106]

In textual amulets, divine names were often arrayed in lists, discrete texts with regular sequences of names laid out in numerologically significant sets. Textual

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grant devocion: / 'Bauduins, dist li abes, de cest brief te fas don' / Bauduin de Biauvail fut chevalers membrés; / En sa main tint le brief qui li dona l'abés. / Puis li dist dolcement: 'Gardés ne l'obliés, / Par devant vostre col à vo pis le pendés; / Grant mestier vos aura, se créance i avés; / Tant com l'arés sor vos, ja mort ne recevrés."

104. Wendelin Foerster, ed., *Aiol et Mirabel und Élie de Saint Gille: Zwei altfranzösische Heldengedichte* (Heilbronn: Henninger, 1876–82), p. 14, ll. 450–69.

105. Among thirteenth-century works, Jean le Nevelon's *La venjance Alixandre* describes how Alior, the fifteen-year-old son of Alexander the Great and Queen Candace, needed a textual amulet (*brief*) before attempting to conquer the city of Rocheflor and avenge acts of treachery against his father. Edward Billings Ham, ed., *Jehan le Nevelon: La venjance Alixandre,* Elliott Monographs in the Romance Languages and Literatures, no. 27 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1931), p. 32, ll. 627–28: "Candace les commande a Dieu le creator, / Un brief done a son fuiz qui ert de grant valor." Textual amulets were useful against demons in Wirnt von Grafenberg's Arthurian romance *Wigalois.* In this work, a priest bound a textual amulet to the Christian knight's sword to protect him against Roaz of Glois's diabolical magic and to strengthen his courage in battle. J.M.N. Kapteyn, ed., *Wigalois der Ritter mit dem Rade,* Rheinische Beiträge und Hülfsbucher zur germanischen Philologie und Volkskunde, vol. 9 (Bonn: Fritz Klopp, 1926), vol. 1, p. 185, ll. 4427–29; p. 309, ll. 7334–37: "der priester stricte im umb sin swert einen brief der gap im versten muot; vür elliu zouber was er guot." See brief discussion in Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages,* pp. 112–13, and Danielle Buschinger, "Magie et merveilleux chrétien dans de *Wigalois* de Wirnt von Gravenberg," *Magie et illusion au moyen âge,* Centre Universitaire d'Études et de Recherches Médiévales d'Aix, Senefiance, no. 42 (Aix-en-Provence: CUER MA Université de Provence, 1999), pp. 81–88. Such amulets are not to be confused with *Schwertbriefe,* a late medieval German term that refers to amulets offering protection against sudden death by fire, flood, and sword. Karin Baumann, *Aberglaube für Laien: Zur Programmatik und Überlieferung spätmittelalterlicher Superstitionenkritik,* Quellen und Forschungen zur Europäischen Ethnologie, no. 6 (Würzburg: Könighausen & Neumann, 1989), vol. 1, pp. 444–46. One need not fear death while wearing a textual amulet (*bref*), the queen tells Sire Grinbert in an early version of the *Roman de Renart.* Ernest Martin, ed., *Le roman de Renart* (Strassburg: K. J. Trübner, 1882), vol. 1, p. 54, ll. 1917–20: "Si vos aport ici un bref, / Nus n'a poür de mort si gref, / S'il l'avoir par bone creance, / Que ja de mort oüust dotance."

106. J. T. Welter, ed., *La Tabula exemplorum secundum ordinem alphabeti: Recueil d'exempla compilé en France à la fin du XIIIe siècle,* Tabula Exemplorum, no. 3 (Paris: Occitania, 1926), p. 84, no. 309: "Xristi nomen. Nota dicitur de quodam fratre quod multa mirabilia de virtute nominis Christi audiens, cum accessio febris cum affligeret, hoc nomen Jesus scripsit in aqua et eam bibit et statim febris cum reliquit. Hoc autem contingit in Ybernia."

amulets of the thirteenth to early sixteenth centuries, as we shall see in Chapters 4 and 5, brought together different lists of divine and angelic names—Christian, Hebrew, and Solomonic—to reinforce the magical efficacy of the divine name and to protect the amulet user with overwhelming numbers. Divine names were not just multiplied infinitely but assembled in significant numbers. The most common number of divine names in Christian and Cabalistic sources was seventy-two, just as the preferred number in Arabic amulets was ninety-nine. The importance attached to the number seventy-two dates well back to the Babylonian sexagesimal system and astronomy, finding its way into Jewish, Classical, Byzantine Greek, and early Christian traditions (the number of Christ's disciples was seventy-two, though sometimes only seventy). The seventy-two names of God are encountered from an early period and also found in Jewish magic texts.[107] W. F. Ryan has observed, "The seventy(-two) names of God are certainly linked with other uses of seventy and seventy-two in magico-medical contexts such as the seventy-two veins, joints, or sinews, and the seventy-two illnesses, which occur in Greek and Slavonic spells and false prayers."[108] According to the thirteenth-century Provençal *Roman de Flamenca,* Guillaume de Nevers knelt before a church altar to recite a prayer, "learned from a holy anchorite, with God's seventy-two names, each one spoken in Hebrew speech, in Greek and in the Latin tongue." The author continues, "This prayer has power to make man strong in love of God, unfaltering in doing every virtuous thing. He who believes and says it right, he will find favor in God's sight. A man who puts full faith in it or bears it with him fairly writ needs no calamity beware." Guillaume de Nevers combined divine names with prayers to Christ, the Virgin, and a litany of saints. But just to be sure, he said the Pater Noster two or three times and found "words of happy augury" in his Psalter.[109]

107. Wardale, "Some Fifteenth-Century Charms," pp. 386–87; Gershom Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah,* ed. R. I. Zwi Werblowsky and trans. Allan Arkush, Bollingen Series, vol. 93 (Princeton: Princeton University Press and Jewish Publication Society, 1973), pp. 77–78, 110–11.

108. Ryan, *Bathhouse at Midnight,* p. 295.

109. Paul Meyer, ed., *Le roman de Flamenca,* 2nd edition, Bibliothèque Française du Moyen Âge, vol. 8 (Paris: Librairie Émile Bouillon, 1901), pp. 85–86, ll. 2279–91: "Et una orason petita, que l'ensenet us san[z] hermita, Qu'els dels LXXII, noms Deu Si con om los dis en ebreu Et en latin et en grezesc; Cist orazon ten omen fresc A Dieu amar e corajos, Consi fassa tot jorn que pros; Ab Dom[n]ideu troba merce Totz hom que la dis e la cre, E ja non fara mala fi Nuls homs que de bon cor s'i fi O sobre si la port escricha." The English translation is from *The Romance of Flamenca: A Provençal Poem of the Thirteenth Century,* ed. Marion E. Porter, with English verse translation by Merton Jerome Hubert (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), pp. 142–43. Similarly, in the French *fabliau* titled *Du segretain, moine,* critical of society's foibles, Ydoine gives her husband Guillaume (*le changéor*) a textual amulet based on the name of God in order to protect against the Devil. A monk serving as sacristan of a certain abbey of St. Mary had fallen in love with Ydoine and was sufficiently literate to prepare this textual amulet. Étienne Barbazan, ed., *Fabliaux et contes des poètes françois de XI, XII, XIII, XIV et XVe siècles, tirés des meilleurs auteurs,* new edition (Paris:

In the textual potpourri of extant amulets, the most potent divine names were those transliterated from Hebrew and Greek; for example, *Adonai, Emmanuel,* and *Messias* from Hebrew; *Tetragrammaton,* the Greek word for the Hebrew ineffable name of God, which was beyond human comprehension; *Hagios, On, Sother,* and *Theos* from Greek; *Deus* and *Dominus* from Latin; divine attributes used as names, such as *omnipotens* and *eternus;* words uttered by Christ, such as *alpha et omega;* and common Latin words used in a Christian sense, such as *verbum, vita,* and *via.*[110] Divine names could refer to God the Father, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, and even the Virgin Mary.[111] Particular divine names could have been spelled out in full or as standard abbreviations for *nomina sacra.* They could also be rendered as one or more majuscule letters to produce a greater effect or as formulas such as the Tetragrammaton-related IAO (the Gnostic combination of the Greek letters *iota, alpha,* and *omega,* which together may have related to the ineffable name YHWH), generally followed by *Sabaoth* (meaning the Lord of Hosts), and the AGLA acronym (the letters often interspersed with crosses), which was a formula based on the initials of a Hebrew benediction "Atta gibbor leolam adonai," meaning "Thou art mighty forever Lord."[112] Even the Triumphal Inscription (INRI) appears in amuletic text. Divine or angelic names rendered as letter series are much in evidence in textual amulets influenced by Solomonic magic. Invocations of the Trinity ("In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, Amen"), popularly believed to keep the Devil away, were common in textual amulets.

In the ancient world, divine names had been borrowed from other religions and cultures to enhance power.[113] Medieval amulets tended to rely on sacralized

B. Warée, 1808), vol. 1, p. 259, ll. 516–19: "Ydoine li bailla un brief / Où li non Diex furent escrit / Et il molt volentiers le prist, /Quar molt durement s'i fia."

110. Paul Meyer, "Un bref superstitieux du XIIIe siècle en vers français," *Bulletin de la Société des Anciens Textes Français* 16 (1890): 73; Paul Meyer, "Notice de quelques manuscrits de la collection Libri, à Florence," *Romania* 14 (1885): 528, no. 10; Sidney J. H. Herrtage, ed., *Catholicon Anglicum: An English-Latin Wordbook, Dated 1483,* Camden Society, new series, vol. 30 (Oxford: Camden Society, 1882), pp. 160–61; Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites,* pp. 133–40, 268–69. For a discussion of the use of the name Adonai in a Christian amuletic text, see Alban Dold, "Ein christliches Amulett," *Jahrbuch für Liturgienwissenschaft* 10 (1930): 161.

111. Amuletic lists of divine names for the Virgin Mary were uncommon. Under the rubric *Questi sono li nomi della Gloriosa Vergine Maria,* an Italian broadside amulet of the second half of the seventeenth century includes a list of sixty names interspersed with crosses. Gilly and van Heertum, *Magia, alchimia, scienza,* vol. 1, p. 111 (Venice, ASV, Sant Uffizio, b. 120).

112. Budge, *Amulets and Talismans,* p. 203; Theodore Schire, *Hebrew Amulets: Their Decipherment and Interpretation* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 17–19, 91–94, 121.

113. This practice had ancient antecedents and can be documented in other cultures. Persian, Aramaic, and other Eastern names had been used in ancient Greek magical papyri. Exotic names were mysterious and thus potentially powerful. Similarly, Greek and Hebrew names and formulas were found in each other's amulets and in those of the Muslim world. Latin divine names and words

languages (Hebrew, Greek, and Latin) to add force to lists of divine names. To retain magical efficacy, Hebrew and Greek names were romanized rather than translated. In particular, the romanized form of Hebrew names had enjoyed special status since the patristic era. Origen believed that Hebrew was the primal language and that divine names in prayers were effective in the original Hebrew, properly pronounced, but lost potency in translation.[114] Medieval and Renaissance thinkers believed in the monogenetic theory of Hebrew as the voice of God and the original human language, in which Adam spoke in order to name the creatures in the Garden of Eden. Hebrew enjoyed what Beryl Smalley once described as "mystical properties" and "a magic preeminence."[115] A popular belief in the language's healing powers might even lead to the mutilation of Hebrew books.[116] Moreover, Christian suspicions about the historical involvement of

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transliterated into Greek are among the ninety-nine terms in a Greek macaronic magic text that a southern Italian physician named Johannes, son of Aaron, copied into a manuscript in the fifteenth century (University of Bologna, Codex 3632). Greek transliterations in this manuscript include παραδίσω for the Latin *paradiso* and δόμηνε for *domine*. *Textes grecs inédits relatifs à l'histoire des religions,* vol. 1 of *Anecdota atheniensia,* ed. Armand Delatte (Liège: H. Vaillant-Carmanne, 1927), p. 589. Delatte includes the text among *recettes magiques* but refers to it as *precatio latina.* Concerning Greek transliterations of Latin apotropaic phrases, see Fritz Pradel, ed., *Griechische und süditalienische Gebete, Beschwörungen und Rezepte des Mittelalters* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1907), pp. 254–55.

114. Janowitz, *Icons of Power,* p. 37; Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages,* pp. 39–40.

115. Wayne M. Senner, "Theories and Myths on the Origins of Writing: A Historical Overview," in Senner, *The Origins of Writing,* pp. 14–16; Henriet, *La parole et la prière,* pp. 8–9; Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), p. 362: "The Hebrew language had a magic pre-eminence over others. Hebrew was the mother of tongues and would be the current speech in heaven, even though the blessed would be able to speak all languages. Greek must have seemed to have little sanctity compared with the alpha and omega of speech. Joined to his realist conception of words, this veneration for the mystical properties of Hebrew persuaded the medieval Hebraist that his studies were taking him to the crux of the matter." Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim argued that Hebrew writing was the most sacred and efficacious in natural magic because it represented the voice of God. *Henrici Cornelii Agrippae ab Nettesheym de occulta philosophia libri III* (Paris: Ex officina I. Dupuys, 1597), chap. 74.

116. Mark Zier draws such a conclusion based on annotations in a small Hebrew Psalter, which was first used by English Jews before the Expulsion in 1290 and later in the library of Bury St. Edmunds (Oxford, Bodleian MS Laud. Or. 174). One or more users of the manuscript scraped away text and cut small circles in the folios. The manuscript has Latin annotations, albeit in a French hand of the thirteenth century, demonstrating a medical interest in astrology, the meaning of Hebrew names of God, and the relationship of Hebrew psalms to particular ailments. Mark Zier, "The Healing Power of the Hebrew Tongue: An Example from Late Thirteenth-Century England," in Campbell, Hall, and Klausner, *Health, Disease and Healing in Medieval Culture,* pp. 103–18. Zier concludes (p. 105), "the little table of directions on the first folio gives us a good idea of what [Bacon] might have done with it if he had seen it. Roger Bacon would perhaps have been a bit too sophisticated simply to cut it up to use for charms, yet in his metaphysics of the power of the intention of the rational soul, he would likely have approved of the practice that has been scraped from the page."

Jews in magic may have contributed to the perceived efficacy of Hebrew divine names and formulas. The legendary association of King Solomon with Jewish magic probably reinforced popular suspicions.[117]

Mutual suspicion between Christians and Jews often focused on the Tetragrammaton. Jews occasionally used the ineffable name magically in hope of producing miraculous events, and references to the Tetragrammaton are quite common in Christian amulets as well. But Jews and Christians were wont to blame each other for abuse of the ineffable name. According to a medieval Jewish legend that may possibly date back to the seventh century, Christ surreptitiously entered the Temple at Jerusalem and there learned the Tetragrammaton from the carefully guarded "stone of foundation" upon which the ineffable name of God was inscribed. Christ copied it on a piece of parchment, more as an aide-mémoire than an amulet, which he first embedded in his flesh while uttering the name in order to feel no pain. After forgetting the Tetragrammaton, Christ removed the parchment in order to recommit the ineffable name to memory, and once this was accomplished, he was again able to work his miracles.[118] Centuries later, the Franciscan preacher St. Bernardino of Siena (1380–1444), who was tireless in his fiery attacks against perceived enemies of the Christian faith, including textual amulets and other aspects of popular religion, charged in a sermon that the Jews had falsely accused Christ of acquiring the power to work miracles only after learning the Tetragrammaton.[119] Religious invective masked

117. Though Muslims authored many pseudo-Solomonic texts and served as intermediaries in the dissemination of magic texts of Jewish origin, opponents of ritual and ceremonial magic never doubted that Jews in the Devil's service bore ultimate responsibility for the *Key of Solomon* and similar works. Already in the Hellenistic period, Solomon had acquired a reputation as a "wise man," who worked miracles and vanquished demons. The source of his legendary power over the spirit world, animal kingdom, and forces of nature was a magic seal ring inscribed with the Holy Name, which he had received from the Archangel Michael. Solomon evolves in Jewish, early Christian, Byzantine, and Muslim tradition to a powerful magician who could exorcise demons and control supernatural forces largely through his magic seal. Extant early Byzantine amulets of the fifth to seventh centuries depict Solomon as the Holy Rider, driving a spear through the she-devil Lilith. Adolf Jacoby, "Die Zauberbücher vom Mittelalter bis zur Neuzeit: Ihre Sammlung und Bearbeitung," *Mitteilungen der schlesischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde* 31–32 (1931): 212–13.

118. Moses Gaster, "The Legend of the Grail," in *Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, Mediaeval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha and Samaritan Archaeology* (London: Maggs Brothers, 1925–28), vol. 2, pp. 901–2. An early account of the Tetragrammaton being used to work miracles is found in a story about Aaron ben Samuel Ha-Nasi of Baghdad (ca. 870) found in the eleventh-century *Chronicle of Ahimaaz*. See Jacob R. Marcus, ed., *The Jew in the Medieval World: A Source Book, 315–1791* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 243: "Seeing his affliction and his bitter weeping, they wrote the Holy Name that was written in the Sanctuary; they made an incision in the flesh of my right arm, and inserted the Name where the flesh had been cut."

119. Piero Bargellini, ed., *San Bernardino da Siena: Le prediche volgari* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1936), p. 523 (sermon 24): "La tua oppinione è come fu auella dei giuderi, pessima e gattiva; che discevano ch'e' miracoli che faceva Christo, fu perché elli andando una volta nel tempio nel quale e'era scritto

the common Christian and Jewish reliance on the apotropaic power of divine names. But while textual amulets often incorporated lists of Hebrew names, there is no reason to believe that Christians had borrowed them directly from Jews.[120]

Belief in the efficacy of divine names became so widespread that even late medieval clerics who professed uncompromising opposition to the use of textual amulets were fascinated by the power of divine names, which were ironically a standard textual element. In 1427, for example, when St. Bernardino of Siena preached in Italian to crowds assembled at the Piazza del Campo and in the Piazza S. Francesco, he predicted that the first blows of God's wrath would fall on prideful sinners involved with textual amulets (*brevi*) and divination.[121] St. Bernardino condemned whosoever prepared, promoted, carried, bought, sold, or believed in textual amulets. While preaching in Siena, Florence, and other northern Italian cities, he destroyed magic implements (including amulets) and other "vanities" in public bonfires. Yet since 1424, paradoxically, he had been preaching about the efficacy of the Holy Name of Jesus as a potent weapon against demons, plague, and other misfortunes. When delivering his fiery sermons, he held up a square tablet on which was inscribed the sacred YHS monogram, standing for "Yhesus" or "Yhesus hominum salvator," encircled by a sunburst. In effect, the latter transformed the Holy Name into a magical seal, which St. Bernardino urged crowds to venerate as protection against divine wrath. We know (and surely he must have known) that divine names, including the YHS monogram, had long been standard fare in textual amulets. But he offered it alone, as an emblem of divine power, and not as one among the many divine names found in amuletic texts,.[122]

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un nome che non si poteva nomine ne sapere; e tenevano intorno a questo nome di molti cani che guardassero quello luogo, acciò che quello non fusse né imparato né letto né scritto né tolto per niuno modo, e dicevano che chi l'avveva, arebbe potuto fare ogni gran fatto. E dissero che Cristo v'era ito in quel luogo con grande malizia, e che elli ebbe questo nome, e che si sdruci la coscia e missevelo dentro; e poi tornandosi a case, elli nel cavò fuore, e che non quello elli faceva quelli grandi fatti che elli fece." For a discussion of St. Bernardino of Siena and popular religion, see Pier Giuseppe Pesce, "La religiosità popolare," in *L'evangelizzazione in San Bernardino da Siena: Saggi e richerche,* ed. L. Glinka, Spicilegium Pontificii Athenaei Antoniani, vol. 20 (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, 1980), pp. 72–93 (especially pp. 86–91).

120. Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites,* pp. 115–16, 124–25 n. 48.

121. Bargellini, *San Bernardino da Siena,* p. 783 (sermon 35): "El sicondo peccato che discende de la superbia, si è il peccato di li incanti e de li indivinamenti, e per qauesto peccato Iddio manda spesse volte fragelli a le cittá. . . . Chi misura a spanne, chi con brevi, chi con incanti, chi con malie, chi con indivinamenti."

122. St. Bernardino's obsession with the Holy Name and cult-like following made him suspect to some in the church. Franco Mormando, *The Preacher's Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 103–7. From 1438 to 1442, St. Bernardino served as vicar general of the Observant Franciscans. Father

Ritual and Demonic Magic

Late antique amulets incorporated textual elements that we associate with handbooks of ritual and demonic magic. Such textual elements included extended series of powerful names comprised of a host of foreign deities (*ignoti dei*), Hebrew angels and archangels whose names end with the suffix *-el* (such as Gabriel, Michael, Rasziel, Dumiel, Samael, Tahariel, Uriel), and other powerful spirits found in the Book of Enoch; incomprehensible *voces magicae,* comprised of various strings of majuscule letters and syllables; spells, invocations, conjurations, and divinations; and *characteres,* cryptic and seemingly meaningless combinations of repeated letters, and number series. Equally powerful were magic word squares and number squares; acrostics, anagrams, and palindromes; and timeless magic words or formulas of ancient Near Eastern origin such as ABRACADABRA (or variants) and ABRAXAS (the Gnostic ruler of the heavens), which were often written as diminishing and augmenting series of letters. Papyrus amulets configured magical text in inverted triangles (whose three sides symbolized the Trinity), mandorlas, and other shapes to enhance their perceived power. Almost in a category by itself was the ubiquitous ancient five-line Roman magic square SATOR AREPO TENET OPERA ROTAS, which was a palindrome readable in four directions. Many imaginative interpretations have been posited for this magic square, including the literal translation, "Arepo the sower guides the wheels by his work." The possibility of rearranging the letters of the palindrome to spell out PATER NOSTER in cruciform may help explain the popularity of this bit of ancient magic in the medieval Christian imagination. One could then add

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Bernardino da Feltre (1439–94) and other Franciscans echoed St. Bernardino's stern condemnations of textual amulets and superstitious practices and called for the excommunication of practitioners. Montesano, *"Supra acqua et supra ad vento,"* pp. 80–82. *Quaresimale di Pavia del 1493,* vol. 1 of *Sermoni del B. Bernardino da Feltre nella redazione di Bernardino Bulgarino da Brescia,* ed. Carlo da Milano (Milan: "Vita e Pensiero," 1940), p. 258 ("De fructu vinee reddendo," ll. 14–17): "ubi est ille qui vadit post auguria, incantationes, brevia, tante diavolerie, a libri de ventura, a superstitione? Omnes reputantur ad Ecclesiam sicut infideles et debent expelli a consortio fidelium." Extant Italian textual amulets of the fifteenth century could not only incorporate lists of divine names but also begin with the YHS monogram. In his own mind, St. Bernardino could rationalize his devotion to the Holy Name as offering a Christian remedy in the spirit of faith and reverence. Among other remedies that he advocated was reciting or wearing the prologue to the Gospel of John as protection against witches. Artists depicted St. Bernardino with the YHS monogram. The painter Ansano di Pietro di Mencio (1405–81) shows him holding up the monogram before scores of kneeling worshipers in the Piazza del Campo. Mormando, *The Preacher's Demons,* frontispiece. The painter Moretto da Brescia (ca. 1498–1554) shows him holding up the monogram and saying "Pater manifestavi nomen tuum hominibus." *The Madonna and Child with St. Bernardino and Other Saints*, ca. 1540–54, London, National Gallery, no. NG625.

the letters *A* and *O* (the romanized form of the Greek letters *alpha* and *omega*) to the arms of the cross in order to indicate Christ.[123]

Traces of ancient ritual and demonic magic survive in early Christian and Byzantine amulets, but there is little evidence of their use in medieval amulets before the thirteenth century. After the twelfth century, the vocabulary of textual amulets in the West came to be enlivened and energized by the spread of pseudo-Solomonic grimoires. Authorship of these works of magic was attributed to King Solomon, though ultimately inspired by God. Versions of the *Key of Solomon* (*Clavicula Salomonis*) claimed that the ancient text had been passed down in various written forms before being translated from Hebrew into Latin by a rabbi in the Provençal city of Arles. Whatever the claims of authorship in different manuscripts, pseudo-Solomonic texts served as a conduit for Hellenistic and Jewish magic, even if through Arabic intermediaries. Christianity and Solomonic magic coalesced in handbooks that influenced textual amulets including magical seals and figures.[124] Textual amulets resulting from this union of traditions combined Christian prayers and invocations of divine names, along with magic circles, seals, and figures incorporating bands of formulaic text, astrological signs, strange *characteres,* and names of powerful spirits and angels. As in the ancient world, mystical figures, magic words, and formulas in geometric configurations also offered protection and healing.[125] Grimoires explained

123. Concerning translations and physical reconfigurations of the SATOR AREPO formula, see Richard-Ernst Bader, "Sator Arepo: Magie in der Volksmedizin," *Medizin historisches Journal* 22, no. 2/3 (1987): 115–34; Ernst Darmstädter, "Die Sator-Arepo-Formel und ihre Erklärung," *Isis* 18, no. 2 (October 1932): 322–29; Forbes, *Midwife and the Witch,* pp. 86–93; Claude Lecouteux, *Mondes parallèles: L'univers des croyances du moyen âge* (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 1994), p. 107. SATOR AREPO was not the only magic square. ROLOR OBUFO LUAUL OFUBO ROLOR was even less comprehensible. In the medieval world, retrograde presentation of text was thought to enhance the magical efficacy of words (not restricted to SATOR AREPO), whether written or spoken. Medieval manuscripts containing verbal charms and amuletic texts prized the SATOR AREPO formula as a source of magic power even when the mysterious words were written as a line of text rather than configured as a magic square.

124. Thorndike, "Solomon and the *Ars notoria,*" in *Magic and Experimental Science*; Frank F. Klaassen, "English Manuscripts of Magic, 1300–1500: A Preliminary Survey," in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits,* pp. 14–19.

125. Magic circles in the form of talismanic seals could be an allusion to the cosmology of the closed Ptolemaic universe, with its ten concentric spheres of heavenly bodies, and a way to harness astral power from the cosmos. But circles in amulets and talismans do not reproduce the Ptolemaic model. Reasons for the apparent popularity of this geometric form are not hard to find. The circle had long associations with magic and power since antiquity. Textual amulets, birth girdles, and other apotropaic devices (for example, inscribed magic rings, popular devotional medals, and *Agnus Dei* pendant disks) obviously encircled the body at different points to ward off evil and misfortune. Seals and coins offered a model by juxtaposing brief mottos in bands along the obverse and reverse rims, with powerful insignia of temporal authority or spiritual power in the center. For this reason, royal coins were sometimes drilled or perforated near the upper rim so that they could be worn

how to summon powerful spirits and perform particular rituals in one's self interest or to do evil to others. Circles traced on the ground or a ritually purified platform could serve as a *locus magi* for the rites, operations, and experiments of demonic magic, a focus of power from which magicians could conjure a host of powerful spirits by name, in such a way that they were obliged to obey. Once summoned, these powerful spirits, some of which commanded legions of other spirits, supposedly remained under the magician's control. Distinctive *characteres* in the magic seals and figures bound the demons.[126]

One of the leading texts of ritual and ceremonial magic was *The Sworn Book of Honorius* (*Liber iuratus* or *sacer*), supposedly authored by "a son of Euclid and master of Thebes." The text may date from the second half of the thirteenth century but was certainly used in the fourteenth century to guide magicians through highly structured sequences of purifications, suffumigations, conjurations, mystical prayers, and rituals using magic circles and seals to attain a beatific vision of God, knowledge of things, and material benefits such as protection against fire and evil spirits.[127] Christian devotional trappings and a profession of faith supplemented prayers based on *voces magicae* (incomprehensible magic words in strange tongues) and invocations of angels and planetary spirits, who could be sources of favorable or unfavorable cosmological influences. The magician was to attend mass, receive assistance from a priest, and recite

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around the neck as amulets. Many contemporary manuscripts use circles as a graphic device to frame images and show connections between them, to trace historical continuity over time, and to present simplified bits of text in a layout conducive to access and memory. Examples of such manuscripts include the roundel portraits in Peter of Poitiers's *Genealogia Christi* and in English and French genealogical chronicle rolls of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, scriptural scenes in thirteenth-century French *Bibles moralisées,* and especially texts pertaining to the memory arts. Nicholas of Cusa emphasized the God-like infinite nature of circles and other geometric forms.

126. In Christopher Marlowe's version of the mythological Doctor Faustus, the magician conjures demonic spirits from a magic circle by using incantations based on the Tetragrammaton and other powerful symbols: "Iehova's Name, Forward, and backward, Anagramatis'd: Th'abbreviated names of holy Saints, Figures of every adiunct to the heauens, and Characters of Signes." Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragicall History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus,* act 1, scene 3, in *Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, 1604–1616,* ed. W. W. Greg (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), p. 177. The frontispiece of the 1616 first printing and other early editions illustrates this scene and shows Doctor Faustus conjuring spirits. Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites,* pp. 175–80.

127. Gösta Hedegård, ed., *Liber iuratus Honorii: A Critical Edition of the Latin Version of the Sworn Book of Honorius,* Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Studia Latina Stockholmiensia, no. 48 (Stockholm: Institutionen for Klassiska Språk, 2002), pp. 30–40, 67–71, 130. Concerning the *Sworn Book of Honorius,* see also Jean Patrice Boudet, "Magie théurgique, angélologie et vision béatifique dans le *Liber sacratus sive juratus* attribué à Honorius de Thebes," *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome: Moyen Âge* 114 (2002): 851–90; Robert Mathiesen, "A Thirteenth-Century Ritual to Attain the Beatific Vision," in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits,* pp. 143–62; and Richard Kieckhefer, "The Devil's Contemplatives: The *Liber juratus,* the *Liber visionum* and the Christian Appropriation of Jewish Occultism," in ibid., pp. 250–65.

prayers at prescribed canonical hours. Some of the acts were to be performed three, seven, or other numerologically significant numbers of times.

The *Sworn Book* contains detailed instructions for the creation of a seal of the "living and true God" (*sigillum Dei vivi et veri*), a multipurpose talismanic seal for use in particular rites and operations conducted from within a *locus magi*. The seal was comprised of concentric or interlocking circles, heptagons, and pentagons, around which were written a host of angelic names, series of letters, and crosses. At the center of the seal was a pentacle inscribed with a Tau cross, around which were configured the divine names *El* and *Ely.* Evil spirits that saw the powerful seal would fall under its spell and be reduced to obedience. Other rituals of writing involved the use of virgin parchment and consecrated ink. After the magician placed the *signum Salomonis* above himself for protection, he was to step out of the magic circle and write seven powerful names (Laily, Lialg, Veham, Yalgal, Narath, Libare, and Libares) either on the ground or on small pieces of parchment (*in cedulis*). These pieces of parchment did not serve as textual amulets, in the sense of protective objects worn on the body, but rather as ceremonial objects used in the course of complex magical rites and operations described in the *Sworn Book*.[128] In contrast to some textual amulets, which were copied carelessly or written down from memory, master magicians were supposed to make a virtue of copying the exemplars found in grimoires. The *Key of Solomon* emphasized precise copying of *characteres,* magic seals invoking powerful spirits, and bits of text, which would then be consecrated through a series of rituals in prescribed sequences. One had to replicate text and follow recipes exactly to be effective and produce the desired results.[129]

There are circles in the *Ars notoria* (Notory Art), with its emphasis on daily visualization of *notae;* that is, non-necromantic memorial figures that a person

128. Instructions to write powerful names on slips of parchment can be found in other handbooks of ritual magic. For example, in a fifteenth-century necromancer's handbook (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliotek, Clm 849), the reader is told how to write out magic formulas on slips of parchment. Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites,* pp. 252–53. This practice of ritual and ceremonial magic might explain the three-line handwritten sheet near one of the witches in Peter Bruegel the Elder's engraving of a *Walpurgisnacht* or *synagoga diabolica* scene (1565). Perhaps the written sheet had been copied from the magician Hermogenes' well-worn book of black magic, filled with diabolical incantations that were powerful enough to compel St. James the Elder against his will. H. Arthur Klein, *Graphic Worlds of Peter Bruegel the Elder* (New York: Dover Publications, 1963), p. 261.

129. François Ribadeau Dumas, ed., *Clavicules de Salomon 1641; ou le véritable grimoire, secretum secretorum* (Paris: Pierre Belfond, 1972), p. 71: "Ces caractéres et noms divins sont les plus precieuses chôses de toute la nature tant celestes que terrestres, c'est pourquoy il faut être fort exact, en les faisant et avoir une frande rectitude en les ecrivant ils doivent être écrits sur du parchemin vièrge d'agneau, avec de l'encre commune au commencement du mois d'aoust avant le soleil levé, étant en ton êtat, êtant tourné du coté du soleil levant, et les conserveras pour les suspendre a ton col un pareil jour et heure que tu sera venu au monde."

would inspect or gaze upon at specified times, while supplicating angelic assistance through prayers to God, in order to attain knowledge of the liberal arts. Christianity and learned magic coalesced in *Ars notoria,* which was not unrelated to the goals of *Ars memorativa.* Accompanying some of the memorial notes in a thirteenth-century English manuscript (London, British Library, Sloane MS 1717) are magic words in word series based on ABRACALABRA (that is, *abra, abraca, abracal, abracala,* and so on), formulas (SATOR AREPO and *ω et alpha et ω*), divine names (*el, eloy, adonay, athanatos, tetragramaton*), and prayers ("Adoro te rex regum domine"). A fifteenth-century notebook kept by the Cistercian monk Richard Dove of Buckfast includes a magic circle (*figura*), with a Tau cross in the middle, flanked by an *alpha* and *omega,* as well as with the Greek *Theos* and other divine names interspersed with crosses around the rim (London, British Library, Sloane MS 513).[130] Seals in extant multipurpose textual amulets (discussed in Chapters 4 and 5) were designed to facilitate memory, much like *notae* in contemporary *Ars notoria* manuscripts. Visualizations of particular prayers and magic formulas (or parts of them) were a way of conveying simplified text that was to serve as a focal point for meditation. Amuletic text could be divided up into clearly labeled component parts with rubrics or laid out as a series of seals that either functioned separately or in relation to other elements. By facilitating memory, seals and figures contributed to the magical efficacy of amuletic text.

Textual amulets influenced by Solomonic magic might have been defined as demonic if they appealed to the litanies of strange names not recognized within Christianity. However, extant amulets showing such demonic influences are few in number, though in some cases medieval stories and legends about Devil-pacts (*pacta*) worn on the body as a guarantee of supernatural power might point to such amulets. According to medieval legend, people pledged their souls to the Devil through legal agreements, either verbal or written, in order to enjoy the illicit benefits of demonic power, including protection from disease and immunity (albeit temporary) from divine authority. Legends about Devil-pacts clearly represent a different, more literary tradition of the magical use of the written word. Originating in the ancient Near East, the Devil-pact theme was endlessly recast during the Middle Ages before reaching its fullest literary expression with early modern treatments of the legend of Dr. Johannes Faustus and Mephistopheles. Christian concerns about Devil-pacts can be traced back to St. Augustine, who condemned textual amulets with overtly magical texts as born of an alliance with the Devil. During the Middle Ages, the Devil was ultimately deemed responsible for human activities inimical to Christian doctrine, even if the pact

130. London, British Library, Sloane MS 1717, fols. 11v, 36r–37v; Sloane MS 513, fols. 192r–201v. Concerning Dove's notebook, see David Bell, "A Cistercian at Oxford: Richard Dove of Buckfast and London, BL Stoane 513," *Studia Monastica* 31 (1989): 69–87.

that supposedly allowed people to commit acts of magic and sorcery was only an oral agreement rather than a written contract.[131] Written Devil-pacts were described and depicted as single-sheet parchment documents, more often folded than rolled, about the size of a minor legal conveyance, bearing the contractant's signature and pendant seal.[132] According to legend, some Devil-pacts were written in retrograde to invoke diabolical powers and then signed in the contractant's blood to demonstrate serious contractual obligations,[133] and others

131. The fourteenth-century Aragonese inquisitor Nicolau Eimeric viewed certain ritual practices based on the magical efficacy of powerful words, symbols, and names as heretical and demonic. Nicolau Eimeric and Francisco Peña, *El manual de los inquisidores,* trans. Luis Sala-Molins and Francisco Martín (Barcelona: Muchnik Editores, 1983), p. 81 (1:16): "solicitan su ayuda mediante signos o escribiendo letras o pronunciando nombres." Concerning Eimeric, see Henry Charles Lea, *Materials Toward a History of Witchcraft*, ed. Arthur C. Howland (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1939), vol. 1, pp. 212–13; Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages,* pp. 206, 231. Theologians had seen diabolical influences behind proscribed ritual practices. Such influences were taken more seriously in the late Middle Ages. Even without physical evidence of a pact with the Devil, the church believed that common sorcery worked as a result of preexisting pacts with demons, whose evil powers were unleashed by a few words or signs from people held to be magicians or witches. Michael D. Bailey, "From Sorcery to Witchcraft: Clerical Conceptions of Magic in the Later Middle Ages," *Speculum* 76, no. 4 (October 2001): 977–78. The French theologian Jean Gerson (1362–1429) condemned certain textual amulets as diabolical and their makers and users as worthy of excommunication. Jean Gerson, *Traité des diverses tentations de l'ennemi,* in *Jean Gerson: Oeuvres complètes,* ed. Palémon Glorieux (Paris: Desclée et Compagnie, 1966), vol. 7, p. 346 (no. 324): "Et s'aucun mal aduient la journee, comme souuent aduient, ilz diront aussi que c'est pour telle encontre au'ils auront eu our pour aucune telle sorcerie. Ainsy aduient des garisons que ilz reputent aduenir non mie par Dieu ou par nature, mais par ie ne say quelz briefuez ou pommes escriptes ou charmes ou teles sorceries qui sont sans raison, par l'enhortement de l'ennemi, et sont chascun dimenche deffenduez sus peine d'escommuniment." See discussion on Devil-pacts in Lea, *Materials,* pp. 199–201.

132. This is seen in the illustration of the Theophilus legend, which was transplanted from Byzantium to the West as early as the eighth century and exists in many versions. The legend concerns a sixth-century Greek priest in Asia Minor, clerk (*vidame*) to the bishop of Adana in Cilicia. Theophilus was either frustrated in his desire to become bishop or so desired to win back his clerical appointment that he sought assistance from a Jewish magician and willingly made a pact with the Devil. After pawning his soul for temporary advantage, Theophilus came to regret his compact and fear eternal damnation. But the Virgin Mary heard the prayers of Theophilus and interceded in his behalf, taking back the parchment contract from the Devil. In a matter of days, the parchment contract was burned, and the penitent priest died having been forgiven for his crime. Maximilian Rudwin, *The Devil in Legend and Literature* (Chicago: Open Court, 1931), pp. 180–84; Émile Mâle, *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century,* trans. Dora Nussey (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), pp. 260–62; Michael W. Cothren, "The Iconography of Theophilus Windows in the First Half of the Thirteenth Century," *Speculum* 59, no. 2 (April 1984): 308–41.

133. Since antiquity certain magic texts had been written in retrograde, with blood used as ink. Budge, *Amulets and Talismans,* p. 472; Hansen, *Quellen und Untersuchungen,* pp. 4 (no. 27), 17 (no. 27), 121 (no. 25a). Artists depicted retrograde writing as demonic. In a fifteenth-century block book, a demon is shown holding up a tablet on which the sins of the dying man's life are recorded in mirror writing. See Benjamin Pifteau, ed., *Ars bene moriendi: Reproduction photographique de l'édition xylographique du XVe siècle* (Paris: Delarue Libraire-Éditeur, n.d.), pp. vii, 7–8.

were accompanied by oral pledges of homage and fealty to the Devil. Folding or rolling pacts facilitated their concealment on the contractant's body or storage in the "Devil's archives." The Devil offered protection to contractants, who could wear the pacts on the body as a physical manifestation of demonic protection.[134]

Oral and written traditions mingled in moralistic tales about Devil-pacts. The English cleric Walter Map (ca. 1130–1210) wrote a story about Eudo, the young son of a French knight, who orally entered a compact with the Devil, with feudal oaths of homage and fealty, after greedy neighbors had seized Eudo's estates and left him impoverished. By means of three signs or tokens (*tribus signis*), the Devil offered Eudo the power to recover his lost patrimony and a chance of repentance before eternal damnation.[135] In the thirteenth century, the Cistercian monk Caesarius of Heisterbach recounted a story about two heretics who, in league with the Devil, had deceived many unlettered people at Besançon by pretending to perform miracles. The bishop called on a cleric who was a former necromancer to learn from the Devil the source of their extraordinary powers. The Devil revealed that the powers of the two heretics came from small parchment *chartulae* (that is, *cyrographa* or written pacts). Frederic C. Tubach, in his thematic survey of *exempla,* described the pacts in Heisterbach's tale as "devil's charms," which allowed the heretics to perform false miracles. Once the *chartulae* had been removed from under the skin of the heretics' armpits (and thus

134. Devil-pacts were described as having the trappings of legal documents, just as fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Middle English Charters of Christ, the very antithesis of Devil-pacts, were generally depicted in manuscripts. Formulaic Latin expressions such as *Sciant presentes et futuri,* script ostensibly in the blood of Christ, and hand-drawn pendant seals in the shape of the Side Wound of Christ lent credibility to charters that Christians pure in heart and soul could supposedly offer at the Last Judgment as legal evidence of having been delivered from the Devil's control. In return for acts of penance, charity, and love, bearers of such charters were bound to Christ and earned salvation. Keen, *The Charters of Christ and Piers Plowman,* passim; Mary Caroline Spalding, ed., *The Middle English Charters of Christ,* Bryn Mawr College Monographs, vol. 15 (Bryn Mawr: Bryn Mawr College, 1914), pp. vii–xii; R. N. Swanson, "Passion and Practice: The Social and Ecclesiastical Implications of Passion Devotion in the Late Middle Ages," in *The Broken Body,* ed. A. A. Macdonald, H.N.B. Ridderbos, and R. M. Schlusemann, Mediaevalia Groningana, vol. 21 (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1998), pp. 20–22, 28 (see p. 21, plate 6, for a fifteenth-century Charter of Christ that includes apotropaic imagery related to the Passion); Emily Steiner, "Inventing Legality: Documentary Culture and Lollard Preaching," in *The Letter of the Law: Legal Practice and Literary Production in Medieval England,* ed. Emily Steiner and Candace Barrington (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), pp. 185–201.

135. Having won back his estates through his new aggressive powers, Eudo also attacked the church and in the end was condemned by the bishop of Beauvais to be burned at the stake. Walter Map, *De nugalis curalium; Courtiers' Trifles,* ed. and trans. M. R. James, rev. C.N.L. Brooke and R.A.B. Mynors, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 314–41 (bk. 4, chap. 6): "Hiis et huiusmodi seductas fabulis, Eudo libens adquiescit in pactis, sibi iurato promissoque firmiter quod ei tribus signis mortem cum fuerit proxima prenunciabit" (p. 328).

from physical contact with their bodies), the two men were rendered powerless, enabling the bishop to have them summarily condemned and burned at the stake.[136]

While Devil-pacts were chiefly the stuff of medieval legend, historical records show that ecclesiastical authorities were increasingly concerned about people consorting with demons. Special inquisitors appointed by the church adjudicated cases concerning Devil-pacts during the inquisitions and witch trials of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In 1437 Pope Eugenius IV (1431–47) empowered his inquisitors to proceed against magicians and diviners whose pacts (*charta scripta*) with the Devil gave them power to commit or overcome malevolent acts, cure disease, and exercise supernatural power.[137] In 1448 a suspected sorcerer and heretic named Jaquet Durier confessed under torture to Dominican inquisitors in Vevey (Pays de Vaud, Suisse Romande) that an accomplice Pierre Ruvinat had thus concealed a *signum* under Durier's arm. The Devil had ostensibly impregnated the piece of parchment with his own sweat and Durier's blood.[138] While many Devil-pacts must have been figments of the imaginations of the alleged perpetrators or zealous inquisitors, other pacts may have been textual amulets of a forbidden sort. Inquisitors might confuse textual amulets and Devil-pacts, though from different traditions, when used as supernatural sources of protection and power.

We have seen that some textual elements that appealed first to early Christians in the eastern Mediterranean then moved to the West with the expansion of the faith. Gospel readings and quotations, words and symbols of Christ, liturgical formulas, common prayers, and psalms earned early acceptance by Christians for their efficacy. Other amuletic texts like the apocryphal Heavenly

136. Strange, *Caesarii Heisterbacensis,* pp. 296–98 (bk. 5, chap. 18); Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1888), vol. 3, p. 424; Lea, *Materials,* vol. 1, p. 104. In antiquity, certain types of magic amulets were placed under the right arm. See Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World,* p. 183. Tubach, *Index exemplorum,* p. 77, no. 953, offers this pithy summary: "Charm of devil protects heretics. Two heretics, protected by a devil's charm placed under their armpits, deceive people by false miracles. When discovered, they are burned at the stake."

137. Hansen, *Quellen und Untersuchungen,* pp. 17–18, no. 27: "in signum desuper chartam scriptam vel quid aliud tradunt, cum ipsis obligatoria, ut solo verbo, tactu vel signo maleficia, quibus velint, illis inferant sive tollant, infirmitates sanent, aeris intemperiem provocent, et super aliis nefandis pacta firmant, seu auod talia conceperint praesumptores extant, imagines vel alia constituunt fierique procurant, ut ipsi daemones inde constringantur, cum illorum invocationibus maleficia perpetrant, baptismatia et eucharistitiae, necnon aliis sacramentis et quibus illorum materiis."

138. Martine Ostorero, "*Folâtrer avec les démons*": *Sabbat et chasse aux sorciers à Vevey* (*1448*), Cahiers Lausannois d'Histoire Médiévale, vol. 15 (Lausanne: Université de Lausanne, 1995), p. 228: "Item magis interrogatus quod esset illud signum quod habebat sub brachio, dixit et sponte confessus est quod erat quoddam pergamenum quod demon strixerat ex sudore suo demonis et ex sanguine ipsius delati, et posuit sibi delato sub brachio cum unguibus Petrus Ruvinat.

Letter originated in the ancient world but retained their vitality through the end of the Middle Ages, evolving textually almost beyond recognition. Vernacular translations and jingles supplemented Latin texts, especially in the late Middle Ages. From the thirteenth century, when physical evidence becomes more substantial, we can detect a marked change in textual elements. The efficacy of standard Christian elements was enhanced by the addition of seals, figures, and conjurations borrowed from pseudo-Solomonic grimoires, based directly or indirectly on Hellenistic Greek, Jewish Cabalistic, and Arabic sources. In the process, traditional lists of powerful divine names, often assembled in accordance with the principles of Christian numerology, were joined by angelic, mystic, and demonic names of pagan origin.

However, the influence of learned magic on textual amulets only extended so far. Faust-like sorcerers wearing special robes and using wands and other apparatus might stand inside magic circles to summon and command demonic spirits, and astrologers guided by handbooks might fabricate talismanic seals under propitious astral conditions in order to channel the natural power of the cosmos for human benefit. Still, the textual amulets of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries were relatively free of secret magical arts and remained predominantly Christian in their orientation. Extant amulets sometimes show the influence of pseudo-Solomonic texts but tended not to employ flagrantly transgressive rites as Faustian sorcerers might use. The resulting composite texts might look like folk compilations thrown together with little planning. But amulet producers who knew the efficacy of each textual element could assemble disparate elements to create multipurpose self-help devices. Over the centuries, amulet producers adjusted to the changing sensibilities of Christians. As a ritual practice, textual amulets endured from the ancient world to the end of the Middle Ages by adapting to new historical realities, not by remaining static.

3
Methods of Production and Use

In the Middle Ages, the two most common writing formats of textual amulets were folded sheets and small text rolls (most commonly written *carta transversa*), producing lightweight parchment or paper manuscripts that could be easily transported, worn around the neck, and bound to the body. Some late medieval folding amulets were configured into page-like cells formed by the creases of a more-or-less full sheet. Beyond folded sheets and rolls, codices written or owned by saints could be regarded as sacred relics and used as amulets; and small devotional codices or booklets, sometimes sewn or tacked together without wooden boards or parchment wrappers, could also be used as amulets, even if never created with that purpose in mind.[1] At the very least, common writing formats of textual amulets facilitated effective placement of powerful words

1. Small prayer books, lives of saints, and even books of hours could qualify as *libelli*. The word *libellus* appears in many medieval texts, suggesting modest size without any hint of magical function. The word *libellus* could mean a small book of little value, as in a 1383 Italian library inventory. Don C. Skemer, "The Library of the Augustinian Priory of S. Stefano di Prato, ca. 1300," *Traditio* 53 (1998): 139 n. 27. In English law, the word could signify a small book or a writ, in the sense of a legal document (hence the word *libel*). Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List,* p. 279 ("libellus"). Concerning *libelli* and the "libellification" of service books, see John Lowden, "Illuminated Books and the Liturgy: Some Observations," in *Objects, Images and the Word: Art in the Service of the Liturgy,* ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton: Index of Christian Art, Department of Art and Archeology in Association with Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 17, 22. For the genre of *libelli precum,* see Pierre Salmon, *Les manuscrits liturgiques latins de la Bibliothèque Vaticane,* Studi e Testi, vol. 270 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1972), and *Analecta liturgica: Extraits des manuscrits liturgiques de la Bibliothèque Vaticane: Contribution à l'histoire de la prière chrétienne,* Studi e Testi, vol. 273 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1974). The Italian Humanist Coluccio Salutati used the words *libellum* or *libriciolum* to refer to a Visconti family book of hours. Francesco Novati, "Un esemplare Visconteo dei psalmi poenitentiales del Petrarca," in *F. Petrarca e la Lombardia: Miscellanea di studi storici e richerche critico-bibliografice raccolta per cura della Società Storica Lombarda* (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli Editore, 1904), p. 214n.: "nonne libricioli legum, nam canonicarum horarum beate Virginis libellum, quem vulgo libriciolum dicunt."

and other textual elements on the body, where they could work continuously in one's behalf. Physical configuration could also transform text. Even when clerics prepared textual amulets from scripture and mainstream Christian elements, characteristic writing formats made it possible to exploit and enhance the inherent power of sacred words and give them new meanings and functions. Textual amulets were the successful union of content, form, and function. On close inspection, textual amulets can be far more imaginative in conception and coherent in execution than they might first seem.

The methods of amulet production and use can be studied most profitably by applying the principles of codicology, a systematic archaeological approach to the handwritten codex, viewed as physical object. In the past half-century, codicological studies of extant medieval manuscripts have emphasized writing materials, production techniques, quire structure, design specifications, decoration and illumination, binding and storage, later physical modification, and provenance. Codicology has helped scholars extract hidden meaning from physical context, localize and date manuscripts, shed light on the imperfectly known world of book producers and readers, and trace long-term trends in book history and written culture. More recently, codicology has been applied comparatively to aspects of handwritten books from different centers of production, geographical regions, and cultures.[2]

In this chapter, we will examine textual amulets in a codicological way. We will consider writing materials and production methods; the significance of folding, rolling, binding, and posting; the use of suspension capsules, sacks, pockets, and other containers to facilitate portability; and storage in groups or collections. Beyond production techniques, configuration, and physical use, we will also examine different methods of exploiting the power of words. We will evaluate

2. Codicology has developed since World War II but has obvious roots in the older fields of paleography and diplomatics. L.M.J. Delaissé argued that codicology was the creation of the medievalist François Masai, who in his 1950 article "Paléographie et codicologie" in the journal *Scriptorium,* which he had founded in Brussels four years earlier, emphasized the archaeology of the hand-produced book as a useful tool for the study of medieval texts. "By analysing and grouping on a large scale the work of the human hand as it appears in book techniques, the production of manuscripts in the Middle Ages will come back to life: in other words the archaeological method will give us the possibility of writing the history of the medieval book." L.M.J. Delaissé, "Toward a History of the Medieval Book," in *Codicologica 1: Théories et principes,* ed. Albert Gruys and J. P. Gumbert, Litterae textuales, vol. 1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), pp. 75–83 (especially p. 80). Concerning comparative codicology, see the various studies in Albert Gruys and J. P. Gumbert, eds., *Codicologica 2: Eléments pour une codicologie comparée,* Litterae textuales, vol. 2 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978); J. P. Gumbert's concluding remarks in Marilena Maniaci and Paola F. Munafò, eds., *Ancient and Medieval Book Materials and Techniques: Erice, 18–25 September 1992,* Studi e testi, vols. 357–58 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1993); and Phillippe Hoffmann, ed., *Recherches de codicologie comparée: La composition du codex au Moyen Âge en orient et en occident,* Collection Bibliologie, no. 6 (Paris: Presses de l'École Normale Superieure, 1998).

the mechanics of physical contact and the reason that amulets were so often worn over the heart. But textual amulets were not just worn physically, as commonly thought, without being read, seen, or otherwise used. In the late Middle Ages, textual amulets could also be read, performed, displayed, visualized, and used interactively. Multiple amuletic functions and alternatives to the purely physical use contributed to their wider circulation.

Writing Materials and Rituals

Simple textual amulets based on brief magic formulas and Christian symbols like the sign of the cross could flourish in a predominantly oral culture and did not require written exemplars. Wearing textual amulets on the body was not the only way to arm oneself with apotropaic words. In late antiquity people were sometimes known to write directly on the body in the manner of a tattoo, but without penetrating the flesh or inserting an indelible ink or pigment to make the tattoo permanent. There is evidence of early Christians, perhaps influenced by ancient Jewish practices, tattooing the body with apotropaic words and symbols, but amuletic tattooing does not appear to have been much practiced in the West.[3] In England, references to writing supports other than parchment and paper can be found in Anglo-Saxon leechbooks, a twelfth-century monastic manuscript (Durham Cathedral Chapter Library, Hunter MS 100), and later medieval collections of amuletic texts and verbal charms. In popular practices with ancient antecedents, one could write the name of Christ, a brief formula, or a doggerel jingle on an apple, a piece of cheese, or a slice of butter, or mold them into bread and wafers, then ingest them to achieve some amuletic effect.[4] They

3. In the *Legenda aurea* version of an early Christian legend, the Devil, acting on behalf of the magician Cyprian of Antioch, tried to tempt and seduce the virgin St. Justina. But she defended herself by making the sign of the cross and by the apotropaic crosses written on her body. Graesse, *Jacobi,* pp. 632–36 (chap. 142). The magician Cyprian's small library of magic books and rolls was depicted in a ninth-century illuminated manuscript of the homilies of St. Gregory of Nazienzus (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS gr. 510, fol. 332v). See Henri Auguste Ormont, *Miniatures des plus anciens manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale du VIe au XIVe siècle* (Paris: H. Champion, 1929), plate 47. Jane Caplan, ed., *Written on the Body: The Tattoo in European and American History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. xvi–xvii. Concerning talismanic tattoos in the Renaissance, see Jennipher Allen Rosecrans, "Wearing the Universe: Symbolic Markings in Early Modern England," in Caplan, *Written on the Body,* pp. 46–60.

4. For example, an English manuscript of the late fourteenth century (London, British Library, Sloane MS 3564) offers birthing magic based on powerful words written on bread or cheese (fol. 55r–v, "Si mulier laboret in partu scribe in pane uel in caseo Ogor. secor. exi foras. In nomine patris etc.") and a remedy based on St. Veronica's name written in blood on the patient's forehead (fol. 46v, "Istud contra fluxum sanguinis secundum Eylbtum ad theolotum. Scribe hoc nomen veronica in fronte cum sanguine patientis et dic orationem in istam"). For an Irish example of a Christian cure based on eating an apple on which a cross had been written or marked, see Daniel Dubuisson, "Les

could also be written or inscribed on free natural materials such as stones, soil, sticks, and leaves, or on hand-fashioned objects such as small pieces of broken pottery, wooden boards, and small metal sheets. An English manuscript of the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century includes magico-medical recipes for the preparation of small, square lead *laminae* to help a woman conceive and to treat anthrax fistulas (London, British Library, Additional MS 15236).[5]

Our focus is on book-like textual amulets using flexible writing supports, which accommodated a more extensive text in a portable format. While there is substantial evidence of ecclesiastical book relics, private devotional manuscripts, and other small codices being used as textual amulets, our principal concern is with textual amulets made from sheets, rolls, or strips of parchment and paper. The selection of writing materials was probably a matter of convenience not affecting efficacy. Amulet producers might use whatever writing material was at hand. But clerical producers perhaps gravitated toward sacralized writing supports, if available, in the belief that one could enhance efficacy by using parchment slips or blank leaves, which were "consecrated" in the sense that they had

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talismans du roi Cormac et les trois functions," *Revue historique* 250, no. 508 (1973): 289–94, especially p. 292 n. 5. Instead of molding words into bread, one could place the written words on top of the loaf. In accordance with twelfth-century German *ordines* for the liturgical consecration of bread and cheese, one could write the Pater Noster on pieces of parchment called *breves*. Karl Zeumer, ed., *Formulae merowingici et karolini aevi. Accedunt ordines iudiciorum dei,* Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Legum Sectio V Formulae (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1886), pp. 635, 686. A possible example of such an amulet is found in the Lewis Collection, Free Public Library of Philadelphia. It is a small slip of parchment containing the words *Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie,* from the Lord's Prayer. The Library's catalogue description refers to it (probably in error) as a bookmark.

5. London, British Library, Additional MS 15236. On fol. 54v, the fertility amulet ("Ut mulier concipitur. fiat lamen plumbeam per modum subscriptum. et in eodem lamine scribantur prescripte littere per modum . . .") was comprised of a series of almost indecipherable letters and *characteres,* ending with the word *amen,* written along the perimeter of a lead *lamina* (2.0 × 2.2 cm). The woman was to wear it around her neck until she conceived. On fols. 31v–32r, the recipe related to anthrax fistula (a type of ulcer or wound) calls for inscribing crosses at the four corners and in the middle of a *lamina,* which is depicted as measuring 1.5 × 2.0 cm but was supposed to be fitted to the actual dimensions of the wound. The recipe includes a prayer ("Domine ihesu christi qui passus es pro nobis in cruce. da sanitate in huic famulo tuo amen") and makes reference to the Five Wounds of Christ, corresponding to the use of five crosses. While placing the *lamina* over the fistula, one was supposed to say an Anglo-Norman French prayer that began "Dame seinte marie mere." For a recent discussion of these two *laminae,* see Sophie Page, *Magic in Medieval Manuscripts* (London: British Library, 2004), pp. 30–31. Similar to the latter *lamina* in Additional MS 15236 is a vernacular recipe in a late medieval English manuscript in Stockholm, which explains how to heal an open wound by covering it with a lead plate inscribed with five crosses and then uttering a series of incantations. Ferdinand Holthausen, "Rezepte, Segen und Zaubersprüche aus zwei Stockholmer Handschriften," *Anglia: Zeitschrift für englische Philologie* 19, no. 1 (1896–97): 81–82, no. 16. In addition to incantations, the reader was instructed to "washe þe wounde and þe leed with hoot water," which actually provided a measure of first aid. The use of such *laminae* is reminiscent of that of some ancient Greek *lamellae*.

been cut from sacred books, which were popularly believed to have supernatural powers, including their miraculous ability to withstand fire and flood.[6] Text leaves or blank scraps of parchment cut from sacred books might have enjoyed the status of sacralized objects, perhaps needing no additional ecclesiastical blessing.

Using odd pieces left over from larger sheets of parchment used for copying books in the scriptorium, monastic scribes could use their free time to copy small devotional books for personal use.[7] If scribes could copy devotional books for the laity, there is no reason why they could not also prepare textual amulets. The need for writing material could also lead to abuse. Monastic manuscripts were sometimes mutilated for small blank pieces of parchment. For example, the Italian humanist Benvenuto da Imola complained bitterly in his commentary (1373) on Dante's *Divine Comedy* that Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–75) had recently visited the Benedictine abbey of Monte Cassino and was dismayed to learn that errant monks had been mutilating priceless library books by cutting pieces of parchment from the margins and using the pieces to make textual amulets (*brevia*) for sale to women.[8] There is no reason why this sort of amulet

6. This was a common theme in *exempla* and folktales. C. Grant Loomis, *White Magic: An Introduction to the Folklore of Christian Legend,* Mediaeval Academy of America Publications, no. 52 (Cambridge, Mass.: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1948), pp. 31–32; Thompson, *Motif-Index,* vol. 2, p. 158 (D1266).

7. For example, see the twelfth-century customal for the Benedictine monasteries of Fruttuaria (S. Benigno Canavese) in northern Italy and Sankt Blasien in southwestern Germany. Luchesius G. Spätling and Petrus Dinter, eds., *Consuetudines Fructuarienses–Sanblasianae,* Corpus Consuetudinum Monasticarum, vol. 12 (Siegburg: Franciscus Schmitt, 1987), pt. 2, pp. 142–43: "Facit etiam psalteries et ymnarios de ipsis talibus, quae remanent de magnis cartulis, quando inciduntur. Et facit scribere iuuenes discendi causa et postea uenundat eos cum licentia abbatis uel prioris, et quicquid inde accipit, quod necessarium est ad suam obedientiam emit." In 1423, the French theologian Jean Gerson wrote in his treatise *De laude scriptorum* (*consideratio* 12) that it was permissible for monks to copy on feast days. In his view, monastic scribes who copied books, brief treatises, and small devotional books ("codicillos devotionis") on feast days were doing God's work rather than engaging in manual labor. Jean Gerson, *Opera omnia,* ed. Louis Ellies du Pin (Antwerp: Sumptibus Societatis, 1706; repr., Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1987), vol. 2, col. 703. In *De laude scriptorum,* chap. 11, Johannes Trithemius quoted Gerson's opinion with approval. Trithemius, *In Praise of Scribes,* p. 76.

8. Benvenuto da Imola, "Excerpta historica ex commentariis Benevenuti de Imola super Dantis poëtae comoedias," in *Antiquitates italicae medii aevi sive dissertations . . .* , ed. Ludovico Antonio Muratori (Milan: Ex Typographia Societatis Palatinae, 1740), vol. 1, col. 1296: "Et occurrens in Claustro, petivit a Monacho obvio, quare Libri illi pretiosissimi essent ita turpiter detruncati. Qui respondit, quod aliqui Monachi volentes lucrari duos, vel quinque Solidos, radebant unum Quaternum, et faciebant Psalteriolos, quos vendebant pueris; Et ita de marginibus faciebant Brevia, quae vendebant mulieribus." Benvenuto da Imola offered this note about the mutilation of Monte Cassino manuscripts in order to explain a passage in *Il paradiso* (canto 22, lines 74–75), referring to scraps of writing material. Dante Alighieri, *La commedia secondo l'antico vulgata,* ed. Giorgio Petrocchi (Turin: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1975), p. 367: "e la regola mia / rimasa è per danno de le carte." William Warren Vernon, *Readings on the Paradiso of Dante, Chiefly Based on the Commentary of Benvenuto da Imola,* 2nd edition, revised (New York: Macmillan, 1909), vol. 2, pp. 207–8.

production could not have taken place in countless other religious houses across the medieval West.

Related to the use of sacralized writing materials is the elevated status of the art of writing as a priestly activity, which could lend permanence to the spoken word and thus enhance its power. Most medieval people associated writing with the church and its clergy, who were professional mediators of sacred power. The high esteem of writing was inevitable in a predominantly oral culture in which scripture and liturgical service books played an important role in Christian worship. Even in oral cultures in which religion is not focused on sacred books such as the Bible or Qur'ān, common folk were wont to believe that books were endowed with magical or divine power.[9] Writing commanded popular respect not only from the sixth to twelfth centuries, when clerics dominated the ranks of professional readers, but also from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, when the laity swelled the ranks of the literate.[10]

Rubrics and embedded instructions in amuletic texts occasionally call for writing materials to be prepared in ritualistic ways somewhat reminiscent of ancient authorities such as Marcellus Empiricus of Bordeaux. Amid magical incantations is this Roman physician's explanation of how textual amulets should be prepared so that writing supports were properly impregnated with powerful words to guarantee efficacy.[11] Late medieval instructions for amulet preparation might recommend writing in myrrh or pigeon's blood (raising the possibility of animal sacrifice) rather than the usual iron-gall ink. Writing in human or animal

9. Goody, *Power of the Written Tradition,* p. 156.

10. Smith, "Oral and Written," . . . p. 311: "It is essential to remember that the written culture of the Middle Ages was the product of a society in which oral communications was the norm, but whose religion was based upon the written word of God. However, Latin clerical culture was rarely, if ever, hermetically discrete. Its forms bore the heavy imprint of oral ways of thinking. It is the constant process of osmosis between oral and written which needs to be stressed. Furthermore, we need to remember that access to the written word was not confined to those who could read and write. Large groups of people could and did rely on the services of others to read or write on their behalf."

11. Daniel and Maltomini, *Supplementum magicum,* vol. 2, p. 257; Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World,* p. 133; Georg Helmreich, ed., *Marcelli de medicamentis liber* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1889), p. 110 (bk. 10, chaps. 34–35), p. 139 (bk. 14, chap. 68); d'Alverny, "Survivance de la magie antique," pp. 165–68. For example, Marcellus (bk. 10, chap. 34), "Scribes carmen hoc in charta virgine et linteo ligabis et medium cinges eum vel eam, quae patietur de qualibet parte corporis sanguinis fluxum: sicycuma cucuma ucuma cuma uma ma a." Concerning Marcellus Empiricus's references to the preparation of textual amulets, see Ricardus Heim, *Incantamenta magica graeca latina* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1892), p. 491, no. 97; Ricardus Heim, ed., "Incantamenta magica graeca latina," *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie,* Supplementband, 19 (1893): nos. 64, 95, 97. Brown, *Cult of the Saints,* p. 116: "The greatest benefit that Marcellus promises in his preface is that his book will enable the reader to cure himself, *sine medici intercessione.* As such, the *De medicamentis* fits into a long tradition of handbooks of do-it-yourself medicine, which were always particularly favored by great landowners who traveled frequently and who would have found themselves separated from urban services on their estates."

blood, a mixture of blood and ink, or in retrograde (mirror-writing) were practices associated with necromancy and aggressive magic.[12] Directions for the preparation of such amulets often called for virgin parchment (*charta virginea* or *pergamena virginea*), which medieval use seems to have defined as *charta non nata,* referring to uterine parchment made from the tough membrane of the amniotic sac or from the skin of the aborted fetus of a kid, lamb, or other mammal. The purity of parchment, uncontaminated by the outside world, could make a more powerful amulet. The same material might be used for the amulet's carrying sack or binding cord to keep apotropaic text on the afflicted body.[13]

Magical compendia and household manuals providing instructions for the preparation of textual amulets seem to have been satisfied by ordinary writing materials. Outside grimoires, instructions calling for ritualized preparation of textual amulets using virgin parchment and other such materials were somewhat uncommon. This seeming indifference to ritualized preparation of writing materials stands in stark contrast to the production of talismans, with celestial images, seals, and signs engraved on semiprecious gemstones and appropriate metals. Pseudo-Solomonic grimoires like the *Key of Solomon* recommended talismans of metals attuned to particular heavenly bodies in order to gain control over powerful spirits. When virgin parchment was used for Solomonic seals, one was to write in colors appropriate to particular heavenly bodies.[14] The *Picatrix* explains to readers how to make and use talismans of particular materials at auspicious times to attune them astrologically to planets, constellations, and other heavenly bodies. Rituals and incantations helped intensify astral powers to protect, cure, and control.[15]

12. The anonymous author of *Richeut* (or *Richaut*), an Old French *fabliau* composed around 1170, noted their association with aggressive magic. Dominique Martin Méon, ed., *Nouveau recueil de fabliaux et contes inédits, des poètes français des XIIe, XIIIe, XIVe et XVe siècles* (Paris: Chasseriau, 1823), vol. 1, p. 41 (*Richaut,* ll. 113–22): "Herselot, sez me que loer / Conmant m'an vanche, / Escrivez brief de sanc et d'anche. / Faites heraudes / Don les ymages soient chaudes / Et refroidies. / Dit Richaut, deus poires porries / Ne pris-je pas ces sorceries: / Ce m'est avis / Jà par charaies n'ert conquis." See also the edition of I. C. Lecompte, in *Romantic Review* 4 (1913): 261–305, 439–87.

13. Montesano, "*Supra acqua et supra ad vento,*" p. 81 n. 163; Calderara, *Abraxas,* pp. 78–79. Witches were alleged to use the skin of the aborted human fetus, stillborn child, or newborn that died before being baptized.

14. S. Liddell MacGregor Mathers, ed., *The Key of Solomon the King: Clavicula Salomonis* (London: G. Redway, 1889), p. 63.

15. Henry Kahane, Renée Kahane, and Angelina Pietrangeli, "Picatrix and the Talismans," *Romance Philology* 19 (1966): 574–93; Ritter and Plessner, "*Picatrix,*" pp. xx–lxxv (Introduction and Summary); Pingree, *Picatrix,* pp. xv–xvi. The *Picatrix* was a translation of *Ghāyat al-Hakim fi'l-sihr,* an Arabic compilation tentatively attributed to the mathematician Abu-al-Qāsim Maslamah ibn Ahmad al-Majrītī (d. 1004?). The text was ultimately based on Hellenistic magic texts, often through Arabic sources. The *Picatrix* was first translated into Spanish around 1256 at the court of

Influenced by the *Picatrix,* the pseudo-Arnaldus medical treatise *De sigillis,* long attributed to Arnaldus de Villanova (ca. 1240–1311), a Catalan professor of medicine in Montpellier, laid out a theoretical foundation for talisman preparation. Astral power could enhance the powers of talismanic seals incorporating scriptural quotations, divine names, and other amuletic text. Astrologers were supposed to inscribe talismanic seals expertly on precious metals and stone, under the most advantageous conjunctions of heavenly bodies. *De sigillis* explained how to prepare twelve talismanic seals, each made under the influence of a different sign of the zodiac. One of the twelve was a gold seal (*sigillum leonis*), probably a two-sided talisman like an extant seal (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum). The latter has an astrological image of Leo on the obverse and an inscription with the apotropaic formula "Vincit Leo de tribu Iuda, radix David" (Revelation 5:5) on the reverse, an allusion to the loosing of the seven seals on the heavenly book "in the right hand of him that sat on the throne." A longer version of this formula, surviving in ecclesiastical benedictions and textual amulets, offers the "cross of the Lord" as a powerful shield turning demons to flight ("Ecce crucem domini, fugite partes adversae, vincit Leo de tribu juda, radix David, alleluia").[16] While preparing the *sigillum leonis,* one was supposed to recite the words "Exurge Leo de tribu Iuda" and Psalm 42 ("Iudica me, Deus, et discerne causam meam"). Combining scripture with the astral power of the constellation Leo, the seal offered general protection against kidney and stomach ailments, abscesses, severe fevers, and other afflictions. Instructions called for the seal to be positioned over the kidneys (*in renibus*) since Leo corresponded with that area of the body. In 1301, Pope Boniface VIII (1294–1303) wrote in a letter that Arnaldus had used such a gold *sigillum leonis,* held in place on the body by a girdle or truss, to treat the pontiff for kidney stones.[17] Either astrological

King Alfonso X (El Sabio) of Castile and León (1226?–1284) and later into Latin. Vernacular versions proliferated in subsequent centuries.

16. Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter,* vol. 2, pp. 80, 87, 92, 94. The apotropaic formula can be translated as "Behold the Cross of the Lord! Flee demonic foes! The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David has conquered. Alleluia."

17. Marc Haven [E. Lalande], *La vie et les oeuvres de Maître Arnaud de Villeneuve* (Paris: n.p. 1896; repr., Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1972), pp. 63–64; Paul Diepgen, "Studien zu Arnald von Villanova: Arnalds Stellung zur Magie, Astrologie und Oneiromantie," *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin herausgegeben von der Puschmann-Stiftung an der Universität Leipzig unter Redaktion von Karl Sudhoff* 5 (1912): 88–115 (especially 99–100 n. 6); Joseph Ziegler, *Medicine and Religion, c. 1300: The Case of Arnau de Vilanova* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 245–50; Juan A. Paniagua, *Studia Arnaldiana: Trabajos en torno a la obra médica de Arnau de Vilanova, c. 1240–1311* (Barcelona: Fundación Uriach 1838, [1994]), pp. 208 (bk. 3, chap. 400), 417 (bk. 11, chap. 107). Paniagua regards *De sigillis* as a doubtful or spurious work that was not written by Arnaldus de Villanova, who only knew how to prepare this particular talismanic seal, not all of those described in the treatise. See also Weill-Parot, *Les "image astrologiques,"* pp. 456–59, 477–81, 893.

talismans or textual amulets could address specific medical problems. But unlike most clerically prepared amulets relying on the power of words, medical talismans were prepared by practitioners with access to precious materials and mastery of complex rituals.

Physical Contact

Textual amulets provided a tangible physical bond between words, symbols, and images that were sources of supernatural power and the persons or objects that were the intended beneficiaries of that power. The benefits of wearing powerful words written on pieces of parchment or paper appealed to a popular mentality that had what Lynn Thorndike once called "a rational objection to assigning any motive force to incorporeal entities without power of physical contact."[18] Some theologians argued that Christians could not expect divine protection by wearing sacred words that they should have heard in church. However, writing gave physical permanence to words, perhaps also heard or remembered. Written words continued to act in one's behalf long after the sound of spoken words had ceased. Supported by the weight of historical tradition, people wore textual amulets around the neck or otherwise placed them in physical propinquity to the body. By binding textual amulets and other consecrated objects to the body, people believed that they could enjoy supernatural protection night and day.

God was the ultimate source of the magical efficacy of Christian words, theologically speaking, but the producers and users of textual amulets seem to have believed that divine power residing in powerful words placed on the body could protect in a preemptive way. The textual amulet was a person's constant companion, a silent protector like one's guardian angel or *phylacteria* containing relics.[19] It is no surprise that some textual amulets were worn for years on end without ever being removed. For example, when Robert Forbes, the vicar of Rougham (Norfolk), died in 1709/10, he was discovered to be wearing a textual amulet in a blue silk sack, which he had worn for such a long time that the piece of paper had become badly stained by perspiration.[20]

18. Thorndike, "Magic, Witchcraft, Astrology, and Alchemy," vol. 8, p. 674.

19. Snoek, *Medieval Piety,* p. 83. "The wearing of the *fylacterium* containing the relics is also concealed behind the daily pattern of life—seldom described—in early medieval times. Reports which are largely to be found in the hagiographies place clerics centre stage, although it cannot be said that lay people are entirely ignored. The *fylacterium* in fact was part of the 'equipment' belonging to every household in the early Middle Ages—and possessions. Otherwise the sources often speak of the relics as 'travelling companion' but not so frequently of the Eucharist."

20. This is reported in an unsigned letter of 1709 or 1710 in the North Family Miscellaneous Papers, 1563–1789 (London, British Library, Additional MS 32502, fol. 90r): "Mr. North being then at London his Steward Brought to me a Small Blew Silk Bag, which the Woman that laid out

Many users of textual amulets were content to wear them and enjoy their benefits without ever laying eyes on their texts. Essential to this sort of use was physical agency, which focused the protective or therapeutic power of the word on an individual. Binding was believed to increase the magical efficacy of powerful words. A textual amulet could protect continuously, unlike the fleeting words of a pastoral blessing, and could be contemplated, like an icon, or read devotionally; and it could transmit apotropaic words over a distance, like St. Hildegard of Bingen's letter to Sibylla, living about four hundred kilometers away in Lausanne. Writing also permitted amulet producers to include the given name of the intended owner or bearer. By including the name, one could personalize the amulet and focus its power on one person. One could also include instructions calling for the user to recite particular texts or observe rituals, which in effect amplified the power of words.[21] While some apotropaic texts could be used in oral or written form, others clearly worked best in writing. For example, a magic text like the SATOR AREPO formula must have functioned best when written as a five-column word square, as it had been configured in antiquity, rather than when written in a single line as a sentence.

Textual amulets could either be worn on the body for general protection against assorted dangers and afflictions, or placed on specific sites on the body to deal with specific problems. William Caxton explained the distinction in *The Doctrinal of Sapience* (1489):

> Ther ben somme that make wrytynges and bryeuttes full of crosses and other wrytynges, and sayen that alle they that bere suche breuettis on

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the Corps found Tyed with a small Riband about the Ministers Neck. Upon Opening the Bag I found a Paper very near the size of this, discoulord very yellow with Sweat. I transcribed it in the same Character and Words as they stood there. I was the rather induced to it, Having just before read in the Account of the Gowryes Conspiracy in Scotland, the Earl Gowry after his death being stript was found to Wear Such a Charm About the Neck, which t'is said prevented the Bleeding of his Wounds till the said Charm was taken off." The reference to an earlier textual amulet worn by the "Earl Gowry" refers to John, third earl of Gowrie (1577?–1600), who was a member of the noble Ruthven family of Scotland and a Protestant political opponent of King James VI of Scotland (the future King James I of England). The Gowrie Conspiracy against King James VI ended in 1600 when the earl of Gowrie and his brother Alexander were killed in the city of Perth. The earl of Gowrie's amulet, the North letter goes on to report, was a "Celtic" text beginning with the words "Eywn nydlab ase byw udgaa eywd."

21. Around 1364, Ruberto di Guido Bernardi of Florence recorded in writing how and why to prepare a variety of textual amulets (some accompanied by common prayers) to be worn on the body, and thus facilitate the recitation of vernacular prayers three times each day. Giovanni Giannini, ed., *Una curiosa raccolta di segreti e di pratiche superstiziose fatta da un populano fiorentino del secolo XIV* (Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1898), p. 42: "Al male del chadere si vòle dire questa oraçione; e portala addosso chom'é scrito quìe. . . . E [a] questo punto c'à'l male del chadere e' fa dire cinqueciento avemaria et fa cantare una messa a onore de la Trinità e de' tre Re"; ibid., p. 46: "Questa è una buona oraçione a dirla ongni die tre volte e portarla adosso."

> them may not perysshe in fyre, ne in water, ne in other peryllous place. And ther ben also somme breuettis and wrytynges whyche they do bynde vpon certeyn persones for to hele them of somme sekenesses and maladyes.[22]

For general protection, the default position for textual amulets (like reliquary pendants and crucifixes) was around the neck. As gateway to the soul, the heart was the "default position" over which to hang a textual amulet designed to protect the wearer against evil spirits. Ruberto di Guido Bernardi of Florence recommended suspending magic gems from the neck like an amulet ("a modo d'uno brieve").[23] In this position, a textual amulet was suspended protectively like a shield over one's heart, which in the Middle Ages was the most vital of human organs, serving as the chief gateway to the soul and playing a central role in memory.

The heart's special role in medieval notions of physiology is explained in Duke Henry of Lancaster's Anglo-Norman devotional treatise *Le livre de seyntz medicines* (1354). Divine grace was sacred medicine, offering the only way to prevent the Devil from infecting the body, which Duke Henry likened to a person's home or castle. To protect the soul from evil and eternal damnation, one should place Christ's *enseignes* (that is, the Cross and other instruments of the Passion) on the body's various doors or entrances, including the senses and especially the heart ("le meistre port"), through which either good or evil could readily penetrate the otherwise unprotected soul. The Devil was forever trying to invade the human heart, where sin would become death.[24] Textual amulets were certainly powerful words worn over the heart, if not actually "books of the heart."

However, there were other ways to wear or bind textual amulets. One could address specific afflictions or health problems most directly by applying textual amulets to particular parts of the anatomy. In the ancient world, textual amulets had been placed over open wounds to staunch blood or above and below the

22. Caxton, *The Doctrinal of Sapience,* p. 55.

23. Giannini, *Una curiosa raccolta,* p. 75.

24. E. J. Arnould, ed., *Le livre de seyntz medicines: The Unpublished Devotional Treatise of Henry of Lancaster,* Anglo-Norman Text Society, no. 2 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1940), pp. 102–3: "Et la signe de vous, Sire, qe jeo deveroie avoir sur mes portes, c'est qe vos armes de la greve passion soit si proprement purtraites sur mes portz. . . . Et la porte de coer, ceo est celle qe plus de mestier en ad d'estre signee et merchee de vos armes, douz Sires: car c'est la meistre port de mon hostiel par ou touz passent, bon et malveis, qe a l'alme veignont, et mult plus u passent de males qe de biens, sanz comparison." Ibid., p. 121: "Et ensi est il de coer: c'est un place ou touz les chemyns s'assemblont, come de la bouche et de touz les autres lieus entour. Et la se vient le pecché mortel et nule autre part, car nule pecché est mortel tanqe il vient en coer, ne nul coustome de l'alme ne poet le diable chalangier forsqe la."

tongue to realize other goals.[25] Special-purpose amulets could be used on any afflicted part of the body. St. Augustine had complained about people who positioned Gospel books to cure headaches, and in later centuries placing sacred books or brief extracts from scripture over a person's head was perhaps employed as a method of curing folly.[26] Such practices continued in the Middle Ages. For example, an Anglo-Saxon amuletic text against theft called for one to write a magical formula and place it under one's left heel inside the shoe. Medieval practice was generally to place magico-medical amulets near the affliction—in the mouth in case of toothache, on the right ear for headaches, under the head for insomnia, and so on around the body. Yet instructions in some late medieval collections of magical texts recommended carrying single-purpose amulets on one's person rather than placing them directly on an affliction. Instructions might call for textual amulets offering general protection merely to be worn *super se;* that is, on the body but not precisely over the heart.[27]

A traditional belief in the therapy of the written word perhaps explains the 1308 accusation against Cathar heretics in Foix, who held or placed books over the heads of the infirm and spoke words that witnesses were unable to identify

25. Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World,* p. 230; Sperber, *Magic and Folklore,* pp. 103–7.

26. Hieronymus Bosch, in his early painting *Cure of Folly*, 1475–80 (Madrid, Prado Museum), was perhaps ridiculing the amuletic use of scripture. In the Flemish countryside, a nun or other pious woman is shown carefully balancing on her head a book (most likely scripture) bound in red leather or fabric with a fore-edge clasp. The book is closed out of ignorance. While perhaps using the book to relieve her own folly and absorb some sacred wisdom, the woman observes with an air of detachment while a country charlatan wearing a funnel for a hat (a sign of deception) surgically removes a stone from the head of a heavy-set old man named Lubbert Das in order to cure him of folly. The would-be doctor was illustrating a Flemish proverb about cutting out a stone to eliminate folly. Next to the nun, as if to underscore clerical involvement in such practices, a monk encourages the hapless patient to bear the pain of surgery. Some art historians have interpreted the woman's action as an attempt to gain wisdom by physical contact with the book. See Ludwig von Baldass, *Hieronymous Bosch* (Vienna: Verlag Anton Schroll, 1943), p. 231, and Robert L. Delevoy, *Bosch: Biographical and Critical Study,* trans. Stuart Gilbert (Geneva: Albert Skira, 1960), pp. 20, 24, 25, 27. In the Low Countries, however, codices and small written sheets used in this way might well have been considered amulets. According to the *decreta* issued by the archbishop of Utrecht in 1372–75, the word *phylactery* pertained either to amulets on separate sheets or to entire books. See Samuel Muller Fzn., "Mandamentum van bisschop Aernt van Hoorn tot handhaving der kerkelijke tucht," *Archief voor geschiedenis van het aartsbisdom Utrecht* 17 (1889): 131: "receptionibus, philat(er)iorum scilicet librorum et articularum, in quibus talia . . . conscribi solent."

27. Grendon, "Anglo-Saxon Charms," pp. 206–7 (D12); Baumann, *Aberglaube für Laien,* vol. 1, p. 447; Reinburg, "Popular Prayers," p. 314. A fifteenth-century English amuletic text for toothache recommended wearing an amulet based on the name of Christ: "Sancta Apollonia virgo fuit inclita, cuius pro Christi nomine dentes extracti fuerunt. Et deprecata fuit dominum nostrum Jesus Christum, ut quicunque nomen suum super se portauerit, dolorem in dentivus destruat pater et filius et spiritus sanctus, amen." One was to wear the amulet on the body and say prayers. Holthausen, "Rezepte, Segen und Zaubersprüche," p. 84, no. 25.

or recall.[28] Scripture or other texts could be held over a person's head or brought briefly into physical contact with an affliction, just as the healing touch of medieval kings was thought to cure scrofula. In the sixteenth century Johann Weyer ridiculed the popular remedy of treating impotence by attaching to the man's groin a textual amulet made of virgin parchment, which had first been blessed by having had a psalm said over it seven times.[29] Indeed, some people actually rinsed the ink from sacred books and textual amulets and drank the brownish liquid as medicine.[30]

Just as textual amulets were supposed to touch the body as a way of directing healing powers to specific afflictions, aggressive amulets also needed physical contact with intended victims. For example, Renaud de Beaujeu's Arthurian romance *Le bel inconnu,* an Old French text of the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, describes an enchanter named Mabon and his brother (both claiming to be *jongleurs*), who first used magic spells to lay waste to Snowdon in Northern Wales and then cast a spell on the daughter of a certain King Guingras. When she refused to marry Mabon, the enchanter touched her with an unidentified magic book, transforming her into a serpent. The spell was finally lifted when Mabon was slain by the knight Guinglain.[31] Other literary works like

28. Annette Pales-Gobilliard, ed., *L'inquisiteur Geoffroy d'Ablis et les Cathares du Comté de Foix (1308–1309),* Sources d'Histoire Médiévale Publiées par l'Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1984), pp. 170, 246, 300. For example, "tenebat dictus hereticus quendam librum super caput dicte infirme in quod legebat quedam verba que ipse testis non intelligebat" (170).

29. Gregory Zilboorg, *The Medical Man and the Witch During the Renaissance,* Publications of the Institute of the History of Medicine, series 3, vol. 2 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1935), pp. 149–50.

30. Eating and drinking powerful words were forms of traditional magic well documented in ancient and medieval societies. Michael D. Swartz, "Magical Piety in Ancient and Medieval Judaism," in Meyer and Mirecki, *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power,* p. 178; David Frankfurter, "The Theory and Practice of the Magical *Historiola* in Ritual Spells," in ibid, p. 467; Parkinson, *Cracking Codes,* p. 138. To produce a potable medicine, one could pour water over sacred text, just as one might pour water over the holy relics, shrines, and tombs of the saints, then collect it in an *ampoulle* or bottle. Stephen Wilson, *Saints and Their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 19; Bühler, "Prayers and Charms," p. 274; Ó Floinn, "Insignia Columbae I," pp. 150–51. This medieval survival of ancient folk practices could obviously result in water damage to important manuscripts. In the mistaken belief that St. Columba was the scribe responsible for the seventh-century Book of Durrow (Dublin, Trinity College, MS A.4.5), the folios of the book relic were washed as late as the seventeenth century to produce a sacred medicine to cure sick cattle. As a result some ink ran and some parchment leaves cockled.

31. G. Perrie Williams, ed., *Renaut de Beaujeu: Le bel inconnu: Roman d'aventures,* Les Classiques Français du Moyen Âge (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1929), p. 102, ll. 3340–42: "Çaens me vinrent encanter: Quant il m'orent tocié d'un livre, Si fui sanblans a une wivre"; Karen Fresco, ed., *Renaut de Bâgé: Le bel inconnu (Li biaus desconeus; The Fair Unknown),* with an English translation by Colleen P. Donagher, Garland Library of Medieval Literature, Series A, vol. 77 (New York: Garland, 1992), pp. 198–99.

the *Decameron,* with a colorful tale about a love amulet, as we will discuss in Chapter 4, use an "aggressive touch" to focus supernatural powers on a particular person or object.

Folding and Rolling

Textual amulets were most commonly restricted to one side of a flexible writing support. Folding or rolling reduced amulets to a wearable size, provided that the full sheet size was not too large. But the process of folding or rolling also made textual amulets bidirectional. They worked inward to empower and protect the besieged human body and outward to ward off penetration of the body by demons and other evil spirits.[32] Binding was a two-part effort to protect an individual and also control the actions of malevolent spirits. When used to bind the wickedness of the Devil, textual amulets could be seen as a legitimate use of sacred power against demonic forces that were ultimately very difficult to contain.[33] Thongs or cords looped around the neck encircled the bearer protectively, bound textual amulets to the body, and suspended them so that they dangled over the heart. While the circle might serve as an emblem of God and eternity, the medieval practice of encircling the body in a protective zone was largely based on traditional magic, enshrined in communal memory for thousands of years.[34] In fact, textual amulets that were curled or draped around the human

32. Katerina Horníckova has argued that Byzantine ὑστέρα (*hystera* or womb amulets of bronze) may have been "worn with the evil side out in order to catch and take inside the disease demon. Then, the other (protective) side would have touched the body and imposed protective power on it; we have spoken about the importance of the actual contact with the body and its particular part with the amulet in order that the protective power be more efficient." Katerina Horníckova, "The Power of the Word and the Power of the Image: Towards an Anthropological Interpretation of Byzantine Magic Amulets," *Byzantinoslavica: Revue internationale des études byzantines* 59, no. 2 (1998): 246. Concerning such amulets, see V. Laurent, "Amulettes byzantines et formulaires magiques," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 36 (1936): 311–15.

33. Dendle, *Satan Unbound,* p. 121: "Though hagiographers of the Middle Ages frequently end on positive notes of encouragement through repeated claims that the devil was bound a long time ago, is bound now, and will be bound again in times to come (mutually conflicting claims that betray the unease fueling them), they do not cease to foster, even to expand, the very processes whereby his containment is denied."

34. George Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, n.d.), p. 153. Ancient and medieval magicians customarily drew a circle around themselves to ward off demons and evil spirits. Thompson, *Semitic Magic,* pp. lviii–lx. The circle was, according to Francis King, *Magic: The Western Tradition* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), p. 12, "not usually the simple geometrical figure of that name but a complex mandala created as a symbol of the inviolability of the magician's mind, body and soul—and summoned the spirit into the triangle which lay outside the circle, outside the integrity of the magician's individuality." Toshiyuki Takamiya, "Gawain's Green Girdle as a Medieval Talisman," in *Chaucer to Shakespeare: Essays in Honour of Shinsuke Ando,* ed. Toshiyuki Takamiya and Richard Beadle (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1992), pp. 75–79.

body physically encircled it like a magic ring. Some such rolls had text on both sides, like late medieval English birthing amulets (girdles), so that they pointed in two directions like folded amulets. Eventually, the revival of classical learning offered a body of ancient doctrine supporting traditional bidirectional use. For example, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486?–1535), the eminent Renaissance philosopher of natural magic, found ancient authority to explain the dual role of binding; that is, controlling hostile actions and natural calamities (thus protecting oneself) by binding or wearing magical words, names, images, and symbols.[35]

In general, textual amulets seem quite irregular in overall trim dimensions, vertical-to-horizontal orientation, and folding patterns. Dimensions and folding patterns were as variable as texts, much like papyrus amulets in Roman and Byzantine Egypt. Textual amulets lacked the overall regularity of quire folding patterns for codices, which were generally symmetrical despite minor permutations resulting from local practices in geographically dispersed monastic and commercial scriptoria.[36] A degree of regularity even prevailed with unusual text formats such as folded single sheets and folding books (*Faltbuch* or *livre plicatif*), for example, almanacs, liturgical calendars, breviaries, *vade mecum* reference works, and related texts produced in English, French, and Italian monastic scriptoria during the period 1265–1519.[37] Textual amulets are somewhat comparable to private letters, unlike official letters prepared in accordance with

35. *Henrici Cornelii Agrippae ab Nettesheym de occvlta philosophia libri III,* chaps. 40, 69–73.

36. Concerning medieval methods of folding parchment sheets into quires, see Léon Gilissen, *Prolégomènes à la codicologie: Recherches sur la construction des cahiers et la mise en page des manuscrits médiévaux,* Les Publications de Scriptorium, vol. 7 (Ghent: Story-Scientia, 1977), and J. P. Gumbert, "On Folding Skins, according to Gilissen," *Gazette du livre médiéval,* no. 43 (Autumn 2003): 47–51.

37. Regularity in folding can be seen in the twenty parchment folios (13.7 × 9.6 cm) comprising an Italian cleric's folding book of ca. 1455 (Princeton University Library, Princeton MS 78). The manuscript includes a full liturgical calendar, possibly of Florentine origin, a form for preparing indulgences, and other useful texts in Latin and Italian. Each leaf was folded twice vertically, thus forming three equal columns; then each leaf was folded once horizontally, midway between the upper edge and the leather covers. The text block was riveted together and fitted with a metal ring, by means of which it could be hung on one's girdle or belt. Like other folding books, the text could be written within or occasionally across uniform-sized, page-like areas created by the rectilinear patterns of the folds. Concerning late medieval folded sheets, see J. P. Gumbert, "Über Faltbücher, vornehmlich Almanache," in *Rationalisierung der Buchherstellung im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit: Ergebnisse eines buchgeschichtlichen Seminars, Wolfenbüttel 12.–14. November 1990,* ed. Peter Rück, Elementa diplomatica (Marburg an der Lahn: Institut für Historische Hilfswissenschaften, 1994), vol. 2, pp. 111–21, and Michelle P. Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: A Guide to Technical Terms* (Malibu: The J. Paul Getty Museum in association with the British Library, 1994), p. 124. For a recent study of the folding of single sheets of hagiographical text in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see Darwin Smith, "Plaidoyer pour l'étude des plis: Codex, mise en page, transport et rangement," *Gazette du livre médiéval,* no. 42 (Spring 2003): 1–15.

customs of particular chanceries, allowing space for an address panel or a slit for thongs and seals.[38]

In the absence of uniform standards for physical presentation, much depended on individual decisions such as the producer's preference for vertical-to-horizontal orientation of the writing material available, the length of the text to be accommodated, physical configuration (folded or rolled), use of the verso, type of enclosure, and mechanical way of binding. The *chartula* of St. Francis, discussed in Chapter 4, was written on both sides of a piece of parchment measuring 13.5 × 10.0 cm. It was then folded once in each direction to form four equal parts with the flesh side out.[39] The same variability in dimensions and folding patterns is seen with two textual amulets preserved in the Pisa, Biblioteca Universitaria, also discussed in Chapter 4. The smaller of two Pisan amulets (17.7 × 20.5 cm) was folded down like a letter with two vertical and horizontal folds to form nine rectangular spaces of similar size; a religious inscription was added to the central panel of the verso, perhaps to serve as a label when the amulet was fully folded. The other Pisan amulet (23.5 × 20.5 cm) has three vertical and two horizontal folds to form twelve rectangular spaces of similar size. A sixteenth-century Spanish broadside amulet printed on parchment was folded down twice in each direction to form a small rectangle with nine equal areas.[40] Three fifteenth-century parchment amulets from German-speaking areas show similar variability in dimensions: (1) an amulet measuring 21.5 × 15.0 cm, possibly copied by Johannes Forster for a certain Stephan, which was described when it was in Breslau, now Wrocław, Poland (Staats- und Universitäts-Bibliothek, Handschrift I.Q.152); (2) an amulet measuring 42.0 × 33.0 cm, made for a Swiss castellan named Anthonius Owling von Brig (fl. 1467–1528) and based in part on a vernacular version of the Heavenly Letter, beginning "Das ist der brieff, den bapst

38. Pierre Chaplais, *English Royal Documents: King John-Henry VI, 1199–1461* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 37–38; H. S. Bennett, *The Pastons and Their England: Studies in an Age of Transition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 127. For early medieval Italian examples, see Armando Petrucci, Giulia Ammannati, Antonio Mastruzzo, and Ernesto Stagni, eds., *Lettere originali del medioevo latino* (*VII–XI sec.*): *I. Italia* (Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, 2002).

39. By comparison, a personal letter from St. Francis of Assisi to Brother Leo was written on one side of a piece of parchment measuring 13.0 × 6.0 cm, and it had one vertical and six horizontal folds (Spoleto, Capitolo della Cattedrale). Attilio Bartoli Langeli, *Gli autografi di Frate Francesco e di Frate Leone,* Corpus Christianorum, Autographa Medii Aevi, vol. 5 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), plates 1–3.

40. The broadside amulet offered protection against violent injury and death. It was said to have been copied from one carried by the Habsburg Carlos V (1500–58), who became king of Spain in 1516 and Emperor Karl V in 1519, and by his illegitimate son Don Juan of Austria (1547–78). Protection was provided by prayer formulas arranged in a series of five contiguous seals, which in turn was arranged in cruciform to enhance magical efficacy. Reproduced in *La inquisición* (Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura, 1982), p. 60. The broadside amulet includes the familiar liturgical formulas as "Crux sit mecum," "Crux Christi super gladium," and the travel charm "Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat."

leo kunig karolo von himel sant" (Brig, Stockalper Family Archives); and (3) a parchment amulet measuring 9.0 × 21.5 cm, with a thirty-four-line text based on the Heavenly Letter and other standard elements in German (Innsbruck, Universitätsbibliothek).[41]

It is possible that folding patterns were matters of personal convenience accomplished with little conscious thought, just as we might fold up handwritten notes to tuck them away for later use. However, it is tempting to consider the possibility that folding could have been a conscious effort to enhance magical efficacy, and not just a practical measure to reduce a textual amulet in size and make it portable. Making amulets from single sheets of parchment or paper facilitated complex folding patterns not possible with the quires of a traditional codex. The mystical principles of Christian or sacred numerology could have influenced particular folding patterns or determined the specific number of vertical and horizontal folds. Ancient number magic and scriptural numerology (especially in Revelation) contributed to a highly developed body of medieval lore. Christian numerology influenced diverse human activities from the design of cathedrals to the structure of Bible codices and composition of texts. Even theologians who decried superstition could not escape Christian numerology as an organizing principle.[42] Some grimoires assigned mystical significance to particular numbers based on their correspondence to Greek letters, which could be made to spell out divine names.[43] Though sacred numbers, odd and even, served a mnemonic function, they could also give meaning and order to daily life, symbolically reminding Christians of their place in the cosmos.[44]

41. Joseph Klapper, "Altschlesische Schutzbriefe und Schutzgebete," *Mitteilungen der Schlesischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde* 30 (1929): 141–42, 163–64; Dieterich, "Weitere Beobachtungren," p. 248; Anton E. Schönbach, "Altdeutsche Funde aus Innsbruck," *Zeitschrift für deutschen alterthum und deutsche Literatur,* n.s., 21 (1889): 393–94.

42. In the thirteenth century, for example, though the Dominican Stephen of Bourbon decried what he referred to as superstition, he divided his scholastic theological commentary on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit into seven sections, each virtue and vice being further subdivided into seven chapters, and each of those into seven paragraphs. Schmitt, *Holy Greyhound,* pp. 14–15.

43. Mathiesen, "A Thirteenth-Century Ritual," in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits,* p. 149.

44. For a general introduction to Christian numerology and number magic during the Middle Ages, see Vincent Foster Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism: Its Sources, Meaning, and Influence on Thought and Expression* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938); Ernest Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages,* trans. Willard R. Trask, Bollingen Series, no. 36 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 501–9, concerning what Curtius called *Zahlenkomposition*; Heinz Meyer, *Die Zahlenallegorese im Mittelalter: Methode und Gebrauch* (Munich: W. Fink, 1975); and René Deleflie, ed., *Thibaut de Langres: Traité sur le symbolisme des nombres: Un aspect de la mystique chrétienne au XIIe siècle* (Langres: Dominique Gueniot, 1978), pp. 13–30. See also Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine,* pp. 40–44; Duchet-Suchaux and Pastourneau, *The Bible and the Saints,* pp. 259–61; and Frank Calcott, *The Supernatural in Early Spanish Literature Studied in the Works of the Court of Alfonso X, El Sabio* (New York: Instituto de las Españas, 1923), pp. 121–26. Mâle, *Gothic Image,* p. 11. Concerning sacred numerology and

Numerological symbolism of folding patterns would be consistent with the use of sacred numbers in many amuletic texts. Rubrics and embedded instructions guided the users of textual amulets to recite common prayers such as the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria, usually three times in a day. Instructions were sometimes accompanied by a series of crosses, prompting amulet users to make the sign of the cross that many times.[45] Producers of textual amulets may have assumed that sacred or mystic numbers were powerful enough to enhance magical efficacy without any special effort on the user's part. But if the user thought actively about the folding or unfolding of amulets, then sacred numbers could also help focus the user's mind on fundamental concepts of Christian doctrine and help the user mentally summon up apotropaic words and images possibly contained in the text. If the folding patterns were numerologically meaningful, the sacred number three could stand for the Holy Trinity; four for the Gospels, Evangelists, Cardinal Virtues, Tetragrammaton, or the letters in *Deus;* five for the Books of Moses or the Wounds of Christ; seven for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Petitions of the Lord's Prayer, or the Sacraments; eight for the everlasting day of the Resurrection; nine for the orders of angels; and twelve for the Apostles. One could also add or multiply sacred numbers to yield other numbers of Christian virtue and even create perfect numbers. For example, seven was the sum of three and four, both of which are sacred numbers; and twelve was the product of these numbers, suggesting completeness, though the number's special status could also have been influenced by its astrological significance.[46]

Textual amulets of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, whether handwritten or printed, use the number fifteen (occasionally twenty) as the standard

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book structure, see Johannes Rathofer, "Structura codicis: Ordo salutis zum Goldenen Evangelienbuch Heinrichs III," in *Mensura: Mass Zahl, Zahlensymbolik im Mittelalter,* ed. Albert Zimmermann, Miscellanea mediaevalia: Veröffentlichungen des Thomas-Instituts der Universität zu Köln, no. 16 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), vol. 2, pp. 333–55 (especially pp. 334–35). For controversial views of the role of numerology in early medieval books, see David R. Howlett, *British Books in Biblical Style* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), and Robert D. Stevick, *The Earliest Irish and English Bookarts: Visual and Poetic Forms before AD 1000* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994). David R. Howlett, *Sealed from Within: Self-Authenticating Insular Charters* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), pp. 4–8, claims to detect the mathematical symmetries of "biblical style," revealing a host of encoded meanings, in the prologue to the Gospel of John, and in other late antique and early medieval texts.

45. Late medieval diminishing and augmenting charms called for ritual counting up to or down from the numbers 9 and 12. Hunt, *Popular Medicine,* pp. 81, 357 n. 81; Gray, "Notes on Some Middle English Charms," p. 64.

46. Among other sacred numbers listed in his *A.B.C. des simples gens,* the French theologian Jean Gerson delineates the seven petitions in the Lord's Prayer and the twelve articles of faith constituting the Credo. Glorieux, *Jean Gerson,* vol. 7, pp. 154–57, no. 310; Deleflie, *Thibaut de Langres,* pp. 82–83 ("Qvomodo creentvr perfecti"); Wardale, "Some Fifteenth-Century Charms," p. 387.

multiplication factor for the apotropaic Measure of Christ (*mensura Christi*) or Length of Christ (*longitudo Christi*). Represented graphically as a horizontal line or bar crossed by two short vertical lines toward the left and right ends, the Measure of Christ was believed to offer its viewers protection that day against evil, misfortune, and sudden death. Using the multiplication factor, as determined from the Golden Cross of Constantinople, which was among the relics of the Crucifixion in the Hagia Sophia, one could calculate the actual height or "true length" of Christ.[47] Smaller sacred numbers including five and fifteen were multiplied to yield magical higher numbers, such as the hundreds of thousands of drops of blood that Christ shed for mankind, represented graphically in late medieval English manuscripts for their magical and apotropaic value.[48] In short, Christian numerology could enhance the power of amuletic text by prompting devotional acts and engaging memory, somewhat like unrolling a prayer roll or fingering rosary beads to sequence one's recitation of common prayers from memory.[49] Living in what Jesse M. Gellrich has called "a world charged with signs," users of textual amulets could easily attach symbolic meaning to numbers, whether or not such a meaning was intended.[50]

47. Concerning the use of the Measure of Christ since the eleventh century, see Gabriel Llompart Moragues, "Longitudo Christi Salvatoris: Una aportación al conocimiento de la piedad popular catalana medieval," *Analecta sacra Tarraconensia* 40 (1967): 107.

48. For example, at the end of *Prayers of passyon of our lorde Jhesu Cryst* in a fifteenth-century English manuscript is the following calculation (Princeton University Library, Taylor MS 17, fol. 8v): "The nombre of the droppes of blode / That Jhesu Cryst shedde for manhode / Fyue hondred thousande for to tell / And eyght and forty thousande well / Fyue thousande also grete and small / Here is the nombre of them all." John Block Friedman, *Northern English Books, Owners, and Makers in the Late Middle Ages* (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1995), pp. 162–64, suggests the formula of multiplying 5 wounds by 30 (that is, saying the Pater Noster and Ave Maria fifteen times each day), by 365 days in a year to calculate the number of drops of Christ's blood.

49. Concerning the number symbolism of rosaries and their use to keep track of prayer sequences, see Peter Murray and Linda Murray, *The Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 453–54. In England, "Pater Noster" was the name applied either to the entire rosary or to its 15 large beads, while "Ave Maria" applied to the 150 small beads. H. J. Smith, *Illustrated Symbols and Emblems of the Jewish, Early Christian, Greek, Latin, and Modern Churches* (Philadelphia: T. S. Leach, 1900), p. 123. Reinburg, "Popular Prayers," p. 64, notes that. "private rolls could be carried in purses or suspended from a belt, and read when convenient. The physical act of rolling and unrolling may have had psychological or mnemonic properties akin to those of fingering beads." She also writes, "At times their [i.e., books of hours and other prayer books] physical characteristics—shape, color, texture—contributed to their use as devotional objects, akin to amulets or rosaries" (p. 362). Of course, people could count on their hands rather than using rosary beads as mnemonic devices. See Claire Richter Sherman, ed., *Writing on Hands: Memory and Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Carlisle, Pa.: The Trout Gallery, Dickinson College, 2000), pp. 64, 66.

50. Jesse Gellrich, *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages: Language Theory, Mythology, and Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 62.

Reading, Visualization, and Memory

There must have been an element of truth in moralistic tales about cunning charlatans who duped superstitious peasants into buying worthless amulets, which had been sealed so that their users could not easily discover that the text was worthless or even nonexistent. While there is no confirming physical evidence in the medieval West, some textual amulets were probably sewn into articles of clothing and suspension capsules, thus rendering them unreadable unless users cut the linen threads to remove them. Unlettered people might well have been told to keep the textual amulets closed at all times, that opening the amulet would diminish its mystery, reduce the force of its magic words, and render it useless.[51] The sixteenth-century Spanish theologian Pedro Sánchez Ciruelo, who had little tolerance for textual amulets unless used as aide-mémoires, observed around 1530 that most people were loathe to read their amulets for fear that the brief prayers, divine names, and other textual elements would lose their potency after the amulet was opened. In 1620, when a Morisco named Juan Borbay was hauled before the Spanish Inquisition in Valencia for the possession of a traditional Arabic amulet against the Evil Eye and demons, he offered in his own defense that his mother had given him the paper amulet, which he could not read.[52]

Even professional readers could adduce good reasons for keeping textual amulets unread, closed, and sealed. The English surgeon John Arderne (1307–77) offered one explanation in a story about an English knight, a son of Lord Reginald de Grey de Shirland (near Chesterfield, in Derbyshire), in the entourage of King Edward III's son Lionel of Antwerp, duke of Clarence (1338–68), when the royal prince married a niece of Bernabò Visconti, lord of Milan (1354–85)

51. Henri-Jean Martin, *The History and Power of Writing,* trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 134. In the twelfth century, Martin notes, "The common people, who were still of a more primitive mentality, accepted writing as something with magical powers that could set down the Word of God, keep the memory of the dead in funerary inscriptions, and invoke God and the celestial powers from crosses and shrines by country roads."

52. Pedro Sánchez Ciruelo, *Reprobación de las supersticiónes y hechicerías del Maestro Pedro Ciruelo,* Colección Joyas Bibliográficas, no. 7 (Madrid: Joyas Bibliográficas, 1952), p. 75: "Otros, que la han de traer colgada al cuello en collar de tal o tal manera; otros dicen que la nómina no se ha de abrir ni leer, porque luego pierde la virtud y no aprovecha." About Borbay, see Luis García Ballester, *Los moriscos y la medicina: Un capítulo de la medicina y la ciencia marginadas en la España del siglo XVI* (Barcelona: Labor Universitaria Monografías, 1984), pp. 203–4. It is interesting to note that Ethiopic textual amulets ("magic scrolls") of recent centuries are often sealed in leather enclosures. Such enclosures have no drawstrings and cannot be resealed without resewing. Inside, the enclosed rolls are sealed again by means of a parchment strip attached at the top of the roll and wound around it. Yet the rolls are fully written. There are examples of such textual amulets in the Bruce C. Willsie Collection of Ethiopic Magic Scrolls (Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library).

in 1368. The knight had a magico-medical amulet (*carmen*) against spasm and cramp. He put it in a purse and suspended it from the neck of an unnamed man, who had come down with a severe neck cramp during the wedding festivities. Arderne believed that the amulet and ritualistic recitation of common prayers had combined to cure the man in a matter of hours. In offering advice for future use of the text in amulets, Arderne noted,

> Let it be closed afterwards in the manner of a letter so that it cannot be opened easily, & for this reason I used to write it in Greek letters that it might not be understanded of the people. And if any one carries that charm written fairly in the name of God almighty, & believes, without doubt he will not be troubled with cramp . . . & let it be made secretly that every one should not know the charm lest perchance it should lose the virtues given by God.[53]

While some textual amulets were neither supposed to be opened nor read, the spread of lay literacy from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries almost guaranteed that others would be, especially since many of the textual elements were scriptural or quasi-liturgical and therefore would be familiar to potential users. At a time of growing literacy, an increasing number of people, even if marginally lettered in Latin and the vernacular, could see the potential benefits of direct or mediated access to the written word. Old French verse romances of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a mirror of contemporary society, offer early evidence of the relationship between textual amulets and reading.[54] The courtiers for whom the early *trouvères* and troubadours created these romances as social entertainment were initially an audience of listeners. Mediated access to the written word

53. Power, *Treatises of Fistula in Ano,* pp. 103–4 ("A Charm against Spasm and Cramp"). The text is as follows: "In nomine patris ✠ et filii ✠ et Spiritus sancti ✠ Amen. ✠ Thebal ✠ Enthe ✠ Enthanay ✠ In nomine Patris ✠ et Filii ✠ et Spiritus sancti ✠ Amen. ✠ Ihesus Nazarenus ✠ Maria ✠ Iohannes ✠ Michael ✠ Gabriel ✠ Raphael ✠ Verbum caro factum est ✠." According to the Latin version of the same passage, "Miles accepit Carmen, in pergamento scriptum in bursa positum, in collo patientis apposuit" (p. 102). Sir Theodore Turquet de Mayerne (1573–1655) cited this passage in his commonplace book *De amuletis* (London, British Library, Sloane MS 1184, fol. 67v). Mayerne assumed that the amulet mentioned by Arderne had been in roll format. The "scrovole of parchemente shall' be closed in the manner of a letter, so that yt maye not lightly be opened and forsaken whosoever bearyth this scrovole upon hym." Arderne's text does not date the event. Concerning the marriage of Lord Lionel in 1368, see May McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century, 1307–1399,* vol. 5 of *The Oxford History of England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 267.

54. Evaluating the role of courtly magic in twelfth-century literature, David Rollo has argued that the magic arts were metaphors for literacy. David Rollo, *Glamorous Sorcery: Magic and Literacy in the High Middle Ages,* Medieval Cultures, vol. 25 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), pp. 45–56.

by professional readers transformed unlettered courtiers into "aural readers," part of a local "textual community."[55]

Over time, courtiers as a social group attained the rudiments of literacy, but they still might not read for themselves. As the *Roman de la Rose* explained, "Even if princes know how to read, they cannot undertake to study and learn a great deal, since they have too much to attend to elsewhere."[56] Aristocrats valued the written word, even if hired clerks did their record keeping and mediated their access to literary texts by reading them aloud and interpreting them in the process. Miracles, charms, amulets, inscribed gems and rings, wondrous herbs, and other features of aristocratic religion and magic presented in Old French romances and related courtly literature (particularly English and German) were quite familiar to readers and audiences alike.[57] Even if unable to prepare or decipher textually complex amulets, courtiers were drawn to them and might be able, with the assistance or coaching of professional readers, to navigate brief texts and thus gain direct access to sacred power.

We can see evidence of this in Gerbert de Montreil's *Continuation de Perceval,* which is a continuation of Chrétien de Troyes's *Perceval* or *Li contes del Graal.* Gerbert de Montreil was a Picard poet who had ties to the court of Ponthieu. Written around 1226–30, the *Continuation* serves as a revealing window into aristocratic religion and offers evidence of textual amulets in relationship to reading. John W. Baldwin has observed, "Gerbert's *Continuation* registers clerical efforts after the Lateran Council to channel the beliefs and practices of the laity in conformity with Christian theology as it was being defined in the Paris schools."[58] As the *Continuation* begins, the knight Perceval is at the Fisher King's castle, where he is preparing to undertake his quest for the Holy Grail. To be ready for the dangers that lie ahead, Perceval accepts a textual amulet (*brief*) from a *preudom,* a religious hermit and wise old man. At the time, religious hermits were generally secular clergy who, without holy orders, celebrated the holy office, managed rural shrines, and offered scribal services, though some late medieval hermits were reputed to dabble in black magic.[59] We should consider

55. Concerning "textual communities" and "aural readers," see Stock, *Implications of Literacy,* pp. 90–92; Elizabeth Robertson, "'This Living Hand': Thirteenth-Century Female Literacy, Materialist Immanence, and the Reader of the *Ancrene Wisse,*" *Speculum* 78, no. 1 (January 2003): 14.

56. Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose,* trans. Charles Dahlberg, 3rd edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 309, ll. 18665–76.

57. Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages,* pp. 105–15.

58. John W. Baldwin, *Aristocratic Life in Medieval France: The Romances of Jean Renart and Gerbert de Montreuil, 1190–1230* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pp. 246–47.

59. Ibid., pp. 213–15. The knight bachelor Aiol, in the twelfth-century French *chanson de geste* bearing his name, acquires a parchment amulet (*brief*) from a French hermit named Moïse (or Moses), a name suggesting knowledge of the magical arts. Aiol uses the amulet in his heroic campaign to reconquer fiefs unjustly taken from his father, Count Elie, whom Charlemagne's son, King

this passage in relation to one in Chrétien's *Perceval,* written some fifty years earlier. In this passage, Christian penitents direct Perceval to a hermit, who turns out to be his uncle. The hermit teaches the noble knight a prayer based on the most potent and holy names of Christ. His teaching method consists of repeatedly whispering the prayer into an ear of Perceval until the latter had committed the words to memory. The hermit tells Percival not to utter the names unless he is facing mortal peril.[60]

In Gerbert's *Continuation,* by contrast, the hermit gives Perceval a textual amulet rather than teaching him a litany of powerful names. Like many marginally lettered French aristocrats, Perceval might have been tempted to read the amulet, but the hermit warned Perceval not to bother trying; for the text contained many words, probably putting it well beyond Perceval's limited reading ability. Small and fully rolled ("petit, roont, tot a compas"), the parchment amulet contained a *letre*. This word could refer to a brief amulet text like a list of divine names, which French romances of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries mention as being used in textual amulets; or it could refer to a "letter of protection" like the Heavenly Letter, which offered Christians protection in battle, among many other benefits. Any version of the Heavenly Letter would have been more difficult to read than divine names, especially if one were already familiar with the names or had learned them by repetition. Before setting out on his quest, in Gerbert's *Continuation,* Perceval holds the textual amulet in one hand and tears a piece of fabric from his silk coat with the other hand. He uses the piece of cloth to enclose the amulet roll and wear it (albeit unread) around his neck. As long as it is on Perceval's body, the hermit said, the valiant knight could

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Louis the Pious (813–40), had banished to Bordeaux. Foerster, *Aiol et Mirabel und Elie de Saint Gille,* p. 14, ll. 450–69: "Quant iopu estoie iouenes, .i. brief portai, / Ne fu onques nus mieudre ne n'ert ia mais, / Li non de Iesus Crist i sont tout vrai" (ll. 455–57); "Moyses prist le brief, se li dona, Desor le destre espaule li saila" (ll. 462–63). Dickman, *Le rôle du surnaturel,* pp. 145, 195; Tubach, *Index exemplorum,* pp. 457–58. For an example of a hermit offering black magic as a service to the laity, we turn to Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (canto 2, stanzas 14–15), first published in 1516 and revised in 1532. In this epic poem, the damsel Angelica seeks out a kindly, long-bearded religious hermit, skilled in necromancy, to facilitate her escape to Paris. The hermit opens his book of secrets and quickly summons a spirit, made compliant by the power of the written magic. The spirit easily forces Charlemagne's knight Rinaldo to break off his ongoing combat with the Saracen warrior Sacripante, making it possible for Angelica to leave. Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso,* ed. Cesare Segre (Turin: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1976), p. 25.

60. Alfons Hilka, ed., *Das Percevalroman von Christian von Troyes* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1932), ll. 6481–91: "Et li hermites li consoille / Une oreison dedanz l'oroille, / Si li ferma tant qu'il la sot; / Et an cele oreison si ot / Assez des nons nostre Seignor, / Car il i furent li greignor / Que nomer ne doit boche d'ome, / Se por peor de mort nes nome, / Quant l'oreison li ot aprise, / Desfandi li qu'nan nule guise / Ne la deïst sanz grant peril." See the brief discussion in Ernst Robert Curtius, "Nomina Christi," in *Mélanges Joseph de Ghellinck, S.J.,* Museum Lessianum, Section Historique, no. 14 (Gembloux: Éditions J. Duculot, 1951), vol. 2, pp. 1029–32 (especially p. 1032).

not be brought down or defeated.[61] While one might forget or not have time to articulate apotropaic words in the fury of battle, an amulet worn on the body provided night-and-day protection.

In later centuries, higher levels of lay literacy would enable aristocratic readers to read amuletic texts, even if reading occasionally required a modicum of outside assistance. In his *Confessio amantis,* the English poet John Gower (1325?–1408) shows how assisted reading might have worked. In the tale of Jason and Medea, based in part on Gower's reworking of the ancient Greek story found in Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie* and Guido della Colonna's *Historia troiana,* the Greek princess and sorceress Medea prepared Jason, leader of the Argonauts, for combat by giving him a textual amulet (*charme* or *carecte*) and an arsenal of other *materia magica,* which he was supposed to carry along on his legendary quest to capture the Golden Fleece from the king of Colchis. Gower's Medea taught Jason to "read" the text, in the sense of teaching him how to recognize talismanic seals and articulate powerful names that he had already committed to memory. This preparation enabled Jason to recite the words ritualistically (not read them phonetically), with prescribed physical gestures such as facing east on bended knees.[62] Gower was writing in the wake of the Black Death, which must have contributed to the popular appeal of magic. Men of learning like Gower had direct access to books of magic, and increased literacy promoted amulet use without outside assistance or mediation. A bit of coaching

61. Mary Williams, ed., *Gerbert de Montreuil: La continuation de Perceval,* Les Classiques Français du Moyen Âge (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1922), vol. 1, pp. 9–10, ll. 238–57, 284–94: "Et avec lui un brief aporte / Petit, roont, tot a compas. Il samble bien qu'en es le pas / En eust liute este la letre. . . . Quant Perchevaus escouté ot / Ce que le preudom dit li ot, / En sa main tini le brief roont; / Une pieche deschire et ront / De sa cote a armer de soie. / Dist Perchevaus: 'Ou que je soie / De chi partis, le penderai / A mon col, plus n'atenderai.'"

62. John Gower, *Confessio amantis,* bk. 5, ll. 3578–92, in Macaulay, *Complete Works of John Gower,* vol. 3, pp. 44–45: "And gan out of hire cofre take / Him thoughte an hevenely figure, / Which al be charme and be conjure / Was wroght, and ek it was thurgh write / With names, which he scholde wite, / As sche him tauhte tho to rede; / And bad him, as he wolde spede, / Withoute reste of eny while, / Whan he were londed in that yle, / He scholde make his sacrifise / And rede his carecte in the wise / As sche him tauhte, on knes doun bent, / Thre sithes toward orient; / For so scholde he the goddess plese / And winne himselven mochel ese." Concerning Gower's use of magic, see George G. Fox, *The Mediaeval Sciences in the Works of John Gower,* Princeton Studies in English, no. 6 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1931), pp. 136–55 (especially pp. 152–53). In the Florentine *Libro della distruzione di Troia,* Medea gives Jason an assortment of magical herbs, ointments, stones, and textual amulets (*brievi*). Alfredo Sciaffini, ed., *Testi fiorentini del dugento e dei primi del trecento,* Autori Classici e Documenti di Lingua Pubblicati dall'Accademia della Crusca (Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1954), p. 156, ll. 14–18: "Giason le rispuose e promisse tanto, che Medea gli diede unguenti, erbe, pietre preziose, inchantamenti, sorti et brievi e diverse gienerazione di chose, per li quali li tori e gli 'ncantamenti, che a guardia del tosone erano, si potessero distruggiere e confondere; e insengnogli chome egli ne lavorrebbe."

must occasionally have helped unlettered or marginally lettered people "read" textual amulets.[63]

Beyond aristocratic society, expanded lay literacy and familiarity with the text at hand allowed many people, even without assistance, to read textual amulets as easily as they might read common prayers and liturgy. Factors that facilitated reading and memory include the use of more formal scripts such as the Gothic *textualis* book hand ("Black Letter") of liturgical and devotional books, navigational aids such as initials and rubrics, the arrangement of textual elements into a predictable order, and physical configuration of textual amulets in cells. To the extent that people actually read textual amulets, the style of reading was most likely to have been a vocalized, murmured reading (*dicere*), or alternatively a combination of vocalized or fully voiced reading with silent reading (*legere*). While word separation, the essential precondition for silent reading, was universal in manuscripts of the High and Late Middle Ages,[64] not all lay readers were capable of reading silently.

Silent reading was appropriate at higher levels of Latin literacy, for academically trained professional readers who had full command of grammar and nuance and could understand, memorize, gloss, interpret, compile, criticize, compose, and write out scholastic text, which was often full of abbreviations and contractions. At the same time, silent reading made less sense for marginally lettered people, who read without full comprehension or were limited to reading relatively simple apotropaic, devotional, and liturgical texts with which they were already familiar. By sounding out or subvocalizing unfamiliar words, such readers would have found it easier to decipher written text, whether in Latin or the vernacular. Amuletic texts made a virtue of redundancy. Moreover, seeing and hearing words at the same time made them easier to remember, and memory (like writing itself) offered a much-needed degree of permanence that facilitated protection and healing.

The thirteenth-century rediscovery of Aristotle provided a philosophical foundation for this approach, promoting a belief in the five senses, especially sight and hearing, as complementary sensory paths to the intellect and memory. The senses allowed impressions to be made on the intellect, just as seal matrices made sharp impressions in soft wax, in time hardening and becoming permanent. Aristotle provided an academic justification for reading texts in new ways,

63. Concerning Gower's references to the *Sworn Book of Honorius* and other magic texts, see Mathiesen, "A Thirteenth-Century Ritual," in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits,* pp. 158, 162 n. 47.

64. Paul Saenger has done important work on silent reading, especially *Space Between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), and "Reading in the Later Middle Ages," in *A History of Reading in the West,* ed. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), pp. 128–48.

especially combining words and images.[65] For a literary allusion to the multisensory approach to memory, we turn to *Le bestiare d'amour,* which the Picard poet Richard de Fournival (fl. 1246–60) directed to an unidentified noblewoman. He was the son of a French royal physician and rose to be chancellor of the cathedral chapter of Nôtre Dame of Amiens. Fournival observed that memory was a special power God had given to human beings. Two bodily doors (the eyes and ears) served as gateways to the memory, so that one could most readily remember by reading words and hearing them read aloud, and by seeing words vividly described in verse as well as being depicted in painted images.[66] Multiple sensory paths helped marginally lettered amulet users read and remember apotropaic text. Seeing and hearing text at the same time made it possible to decode and remember complex text and figures.

In the ancient and medieval worlds, Christian producers of textual amulets often relied on memory, however imperfect, as a fertile source of apotropaic text. Textual amulets in the common tradition of magic often call for the recitation of common prayers from memory and offered users alternative ways to derive amuletic benefits. For spiritual protection, one might have to say three Pater Nosters and Ave Marias in good devotion, or either to look at or contemplate (*videre* or *inspicere*) particular charms and figures at least once daily. The once-a-day approach was consistent with the popular religious belief in keeping the Devil away by making a sign of the cross, reciting the Pater Noster, or looking at a sacred image. From the thirteenth century, learned magic also assigned an expanded role to memory. Influenced by the *Picatrix* and other handbooks of learned magic, the proponents of natural magic believed that the inherent power of talismanic images, etched into human memory, contributed to the efficacy of talismans. The imagination perceived these powerful images, whether in incised talismans or another physical form, and gradually became conditioned to accept and remember more images. In this way, memory became an agent in tapping powerful cosmic forces conveyed through talismanic images.[67] Adding Solomonic

65. Camille, "Sensations for the Page," pp. 33, 36–37; Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 36.

66. Cesare Segre, ed., *Li bestiaires d'amours di Maistre Richart de Fornival e li response du bestiaire,* Documenti di Filologia, no. 2 (Milan: Riccardo Ricciardi Editore, 1957), pp. 4–5: "Et pour chu Diex, ki tant aime l'omme qu'il le velt porveoir de quant ke mestiers lui est, a donne a homme une vertu de force d'ame ki a non memoire. Ceste memoire si a ii portes, veïr et oir, et a cascune des ces ii portes si a un cemin par ou on i puet aler, che sont painture et parole. Painture sert a l'oel et parole a l'oreille. Et comment on puist repairier a le maison de memoire et par parole, si est apparant par chu ke memoire, ki est la garde des tresors ke sens d'omme conaquiert par bonté d'engien, fair chu ki est trespassé ausi comme present." Richard de Fournival, *Master Richard's Bestiary of Love and Response,* trans. Jeanette Beer (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), pp. xiii–xv.

67. Yates, *Art of Memory,* , pp. 154–55, 298–99. Theorists of natural magic eventually came to seek rational explanations for the perceived *vis verborum* and *vis imaginum* (including figures and

seals and figures enlivened the tradition-bound world of textual amulets and provided both textual reinforcement and ancillary paths to a memorial treasury, which could serve as a reusable font of personal protection. Adding magic seals was a form of redundancy allowing amulet users to visualize powerful textual elements and thus facilitate memory, like an Aristotelian phantasm or mental picture sealed into wax.[68] *Ars notoria* rituals, rooted in the memory arts, required practitioners to undertake proper visual inspection (*inspicio*) of memorial notes "in their due time," as many as ten times each day, coordinated with the lunar cycle, and contemplated "with fear, silence, and trembling." Memory could offer personal protection when prayer books and devotional aids were not available.[69]

Late medieval textual amulets, as well as amuletic texts found in books of hours and other lay devotional manuscripts, sometimes offered optional paths to personal protection. In addition to wearing powerful words or images *super se,* Christians with pure hearts had the option of hearing, reading, or seeing them that day for protection. For example, in the initial quire of an English manuscript of ca.1430 containing Nicholas Love's popular devotional text *The Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ,* a Middle English translation of pseudo-Bonaventure's *De meditatione vitae Christi* (Princeton University Library, Kane MS 21), two passages standing out in red ink ("Ista linea quindenes est longitudo domini nostri jhesu christi . . ." and "Siquis istam oracionem cotidie cum bona deuocione . . ."), offer general protection in the manner of the Heavenly Letter, as well a successful childbirth and baptism of the newborn baby. The first text is accompanied by a figure of the Measure of Christ, 12.7 cm wide and

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characteres) of textual amulets. In his treatise *De incantationibus* (1520), Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525) emphasized the importance of *vis imaginativa* for textual amulets or prayers to work. When the producer and user of textual amulets fervently believed in the power of the words and images therein contained, the spirits of both participants would be altered quickly and significantly, leading to psychological or psychosomatic benefits. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic,* pp. 107–11.

68. Concerning Aristotle's arguments and the sealing-in-wax trope, see Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 16–17, 71.

69. Robert Turner, *Ars notoria: The Notory Art of Solomon Shewing the Cabalistical Key of Magical Operations, the Liberal Sciences, Divine Revelation, and the Art of Memory: Written Originally in Latine, and now Englished by Robert Turner* (London: F. Cottrel, 1657), pp. 76–77. This edition is available in Early English Books Online at http://eebo.chadwyck.com. Turner's English translation was based on a Latin version of the *Ars notoria* by Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486?–1535), which had been available in print for a half century. See the latter's *Opera . . . quibus praeter omnes tabulas noviter accessit Ars notoria, quam suo loco interpositam reperies* (Lyon: per Beringos fratres, 1600). As Turner worded it in *Ars notoria,* p. 88, "Holy Words of Orations, we appoint to be said before the bed of the sick, for an experiment of life or death. . . . And know this, that if thou hast not the books in thy hands, or the faculty of looking into them is not given to thee, the effect of this work will not be the lesse therefore; but the Orations are twice then to be pronounced, where they were but to be but once."

flanked by crosses. In the course of daily devotions, one could look at this figure for protection, cross oneself three times, and say various prayers. Copying this text onto a separate textual amulet worn on the body, while not specified here, would have facilitated visualization and made it possible for several family members to enjoy benefits at the same time. Following this text is a brief prayer based on the legend of the Early Christian martyrs St. Cyricus (also Quiricus or Cyr), who was three years old when beheaded along with his mother St. Julitta around 300; English birthing amulets often invoke these two martyrs. The text in Kane MS 21 offered general protection and material benefits. On the facing folio is the second amuletic text, offering similar promises of general protection and the good will of all people to those who say a particular prayer in good devotion, inspect it visually, or wear it physically on their bodies. A male supplicant named Robert ("famulum tuum Robertum") is mentioned three times in early folios of the manuscript, which was produced in the London area, but other family and household members might also benefit from the apotropaic texts, which were probably used in conjunction with adjacent prayers (written in brown ink) related to divine protection and successful childbirth.[70]

70. Princeton University Library, Kane MS 21, fol. 1v: "Ista linea quindenes est longitudo domini nostri jhesu christi in quacunque in die istam respexeris et de illa te ter signaueris in nomine dei et dicte longitudinis, nec homo nec diabolus tibi nocere non poterit licet fueris in mortali peccato, nec eris consulus vigilando, nec dormiendo nocte, nec die de ventu, nec de aqua, nec de malo spiritu, nec de igne nec de fulgure, nec de tempestate, nec de tonitruo, nec in mare, nec in aqua, nec in terra, nec in bello eris victus nec mala morte morieris nec aliqua species febrium te grauabit semper inimicum tuum superabis. Nam deus et sanctus Ciricus et Julitta de omnibus malis liberabunt te et aug[e]rentabunt bona tua et conquassabunt inimicus tuum. Et si mulier parturiendo laborauerint cito liberabitur et infans baptizabitur. amen." fol. 2r: "Siquis istam oracionem cotidie cum bona deuotione dixerit vel inspexerit aut super se portauerit nulla morte morietur inconfessus nel in bello vincetur. Et si in tempestate maris fuerit accipe ciphum plenum aque et benedicat et dicat hanc orationem supra et iactat in mare et statim cessabit tempestas. Et si mulierem partu fuerit accipe ciphum cum aqua et benedictum ista oratione et da ei bibere et statim liberabitur. Et siquis super se portauerit ab omnibus hominibus amabitur et in conspectu omnium gentium grantum haberit, et nemo potest numerare istius orationis." The *oratio* referred to in the second text might have been the text itself or the preceding prayer to the Virgin Mary. This manuscript was still used in the mid-sixteenth century, when someone writing in a cursive hand (possibly Mary Denys, whose erased *ex libris* is found in the manuscript) crossed out the two charms and wrote the word *Supersticio* in the outer margin next to each. The cursive script of the word *Supersticio* is very similar to that of the erased *ex libris* at the bottom of fol. 4r ("Thys booke ys myne Mary Denys"). Ian Doyle suggested in a letter of 20 December 1980 (on file in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library) that Mary Denys might have been a former Augustinian nun named Mary Dennis from Lacock, Wiltshire (Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 220); and Michael G. Sargent, in "The Textual Affiliations of the Waseda Manuscript of Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ,*" in *Nicholas Love at Waseda: Proceedings of the International Conference, 20–22 July 1995,* ed. Shoichi Oguro, Richard Beadle and Michael G. Sargent (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), suggested that she may possibly be identified with Mary Denys (born Roos), whose husband Hugh was a benefactor of an almshouse connected with Sheen Abbey and Syon Abbey.

There were obvious benefits to verbalizing amuletic texts. The rhyme, repetition, and alliteration of charms produced a sonorous effect that appealed to users and had psychological effects.[71] Versified text could be easily committed to memory and made portable. Words in a sacralized and euphonious language like Latin could be soothing to the ear and thus might seem to have an immediate magical effect. In addition, vocalized reading (the combination of seeing, speaking, and hearing) offered benefits over silent reading because powerful words (when audible) were better able to deter evil spirits. Unless one feared being overheard and prosecuted by ecclesiastical authorities because amulets contained forbidden text, there was no reason to read silently and keep the contents secret. We know from a wealth of popular literature that demons were supposed to become weak and flee in confusion when they heard Christ's name or his own words, just as seeing the sign of the cross reputedly turned the Devil to flight. A story in the *Tabula exemplorum* relates that in France two possessed men tried to exorcise their demons by reciting the customary verses of the Gospel of John (1:1–14). However, after observing one of the possessed men whispering inaudibly in the ear of the other, a priest recited the same verses once again but more effectively, in a loud voice ("clamavit alte et legit illud evangelium"). As soon as the priest reached the words "Verbum caro factum est," the demons fled before the power of "the Word made flesh."[72] Similarly, by hearing Christian words or holding a volume of scripture in one's hands, we learn in the late medieval story collection *Gesta romanorum,* one could resist the Devil's temptations and avert the arrows of demonic invasion.[73] So even if amulet users were able to

71. Bozóky, *Charmes et prières apotropaïques,* pp. 45–46.

72. Welter, *La Tabula exemplorum,* p. 20, no. 64: "Item nota in quadam civitate [in provincia Equitanie] erant duo obsessi a dyabolo. Uni autem illorum obsessorum, cum ambo essent indigentes, invidit alter, quia plus illi dabatur quam sibi et vocavit caute sacerdotem et dixit illi: 'Domine, si illud volueris facere, quod docerem vos, liberaretur socius meus.' Qui eum annuisset dixit sibi quod legeret submisse in auricula socii sui evangelium illud: 'In principio erat verbum' usque ad finem, ita tamen quod non audiret. Sacerdos autem excogitans versucium diaboli volens eos liberare, clamavit alte et legit illud evangelium et cum venisset ad passum illum: 'Verbum caro factum est,' statim ejulantes dyaboli exierunt et illi ambo libertati sunt."

73. In a story set during the reign of the Emperor Titus, a woman conspired with a necromancer to kill her husband (a knight). Employing magical arts of pagan origin, the cunning man took up his bow and aimed a sharp arrow at a wax effigy of the knight. The plot failed, of course, as one would expect in a Christian morality tale. In the story a polished mirror (*speculum politum*) is said to represent scripture, which can ward off evil. Hearing sermons and edifying Christian words could help to deter demonic attack. Österley, *Gesta romanorum,* pp. 430–31 (chap. 102, "De transgressionibus anime et vulneribus ejus"): "Quid ergo est faciendum, ne diabolus nos sagittet et occidat? Certe balneum intremus; istud balneum est confessio, in qua et per quam lavari debemus ab omni sorde peccati; sed oportet speculum politum tenere i.e. sacram scripturam in manu tua, i.e. debes libenter sermones audire et verba edificatoria, in quibus poteris pericula precavere et sagittas diaboli expellere."

read in meditative silence, they might have ample reason to prefer a vocalized reading, or even a more dramatic presentation of ritual conjurations, to deter ever-present demons. While the phrase "lire au coeur" (to read with the heart) in fifteenth-century French aristocratic texts might have implied silent reading, as Paul Saenger has asserted,[74] it is clear that vocalization had potential benefits. Marginally literate people who believed that powerful words could scare away demons would hardly have remained silent.

During the Middle Ages, there was a theological basis for people to recall sacred text from memory and write it down for amuletic use or recite it like a charm or blessing. A combination of biblical authority, Christian theology, and popular tradition supported the belief that sacred words rightly dwelled in the human heart (the seat of reason, memory, conscience, and emotion). In the human heart, Christ or an internal scribe could copy sacred words onto the parchment leaves of a book of memory. "Bodily scripture" worked when the heart was in a person of pure Christian devotion and faith.[75] But theologians added, one should understand the words spiritually and not merely recite them mechanically. St. Thomas Aquinas had argued, as we have seen, that sacred words should be inscribed *in pectore,* and the Dominican Jacopo Passavanti (ca. 1297–1357), in decrying the use of textual amulets in Florence, reminded readers that the words of scripture should be borne in the mind and heart, not around the neck or in a purse.[76] Not always honoring this theological distinction, Christians turned to the memory of words thus recorded as an inexhaustible source of apotropaic text and blessings for all occasions. When the early Christian martyr St. Ignatius of Antioch was "in dyvers grete turmentis," according to the Middle English *Alphabet of Tales,* he was able to call out Christ's name repeatedly for protection against his Roman persecutors because,

74. Saenger, *Space Between Words,* p. 268. Among other arguments, Saenger adduces conventional depictions of late medieval readers with closed lips as evidence of silent reading.

75. Concerning the history of the heart as a metaphor of memory, see Eric Jager, *The Book of the Heart* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), especially the introductory summary on pp. xiv–xvi. Stock, *Augustine the Reader,* p. 33. In the *Confessions,* St. Augustine worked to resolve "the problem that arises between the words he speaks (*lingua mea*) and the text written on his heart by God (*scripturae tuae,* 1:17.14–15). The 'confession' praises God for allowing the narrative of words to unfold into the narrative of informed sacred writing." Monastic *exempla* explain that memorial books only worked in the breasts of good Christians who were free from vice. For example, see Welter, *La Tabula exemplorum,* pp. 63–64, no. 240: "Nota quod litteras inde in corde nostro describit Dominus, quando legem suam et mandata in corde nostro scribit, sed pergamentum humidum per luxuriam vel pilosum per avariciam vel asperum et grossum per superbiam, istam scripturam non recipit. Cor hominis liber est in quo si totus mundus scriberetur sicut in mappa mundi, non erit plenum sed cui Dominus mandata sua scripsit."

76. Passavanti, *Lo specchio della vera penitenzia,* p. 255 ("Della terza scienzia diabolica"): "Portininsi adunque le parole della Santa Scrittura nelle mente, e non a collo: nel cuore, e non in borsa."

he said, "I hafe þat name wretten in my herte." After St. Ignatius was martyred, the Romans removed his heart and discovered "all his herte written within with þies namys, Iesus Christus, & all of letters of golde."[77]

Against this background, it is not surprising that vernacular rubrics and instructions in late medieval amulets and charms often required performative responses in the form of reciting common prayers from memory. We can see this in a Flemish prayer book of the mid-fifteenth century, owned by Rumbold and his wife Christina (London, British Library, Additional MS 39638).[78] The manuscript includes fourteen lines of Latin verse offering protection from the plague (beginning "Ananizapta dei ✠ Sit medicina mei"), a Flemish charm against the plague ("Eene seininghe ouer den sieken der pestilencie"), an amuletic text or verbal charm based on the names of the Three Kings for prevention of epilepsy, and the apotropaic words for safe travel ("Ihesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat"). While not specified in this Flemish manuscript, the magic word *ananizaptus* or *ananizapta* (depending on the gender of the afflicted person) often had a performative aspect. Contemporary charms sometimes call for a caregiver to intone the word three times into the ailing person's ears in order to guarantee mechanical efficacy.[79] Versification of amuletic texts and verbal charms in Additional MS 39638 also facilitated memory, and interspersed crosses were intended to prompt devotional gestures. Vernacular instructions to Rumbold and Christina call for them to invoke the Trinity and recite the Pater Noster, Credo,

77. The pagans were thus won over and embraced Christianity. Banks, *An Alphabet of Tales,* p. 378, no. 563 ("Nomen Christi semper est in corde habendum"). This version is a fifteenth-century translation of Étienne of Besançon's *Alphabetum narrationum.* For a discussion of this example of "bodily scripture," see Jager, *Book of the Heart,* pp. 91–92.

78. London, British Library, Additional MS 39638 (formerly Parham MS LVI) was in the collection of Robert Curzon (1810–73), fourteenth baron Zouche, at Parham, Sussex. Darea Curzon, baroness Zouche (d. 1917) bequeathed the Parham manuscripts to the British Library. For a full description of Additional MS 39638, go to the British Library's Manuscripts Catalogue at http://www.bl.uk.catalogues/manuscripts. St. Rumbold is associated with the city of Mechelen.

79. The magic word *ananizaptus* or *ananizapta* is found in textual amulets, verbal charms, and inscriptions on rings, pendant capsules, and other jewelry in the fourteenth to early sixteenth centuries to prevent plague, epilepsy, poisoning, demons, and all worldly danger. Perhaps an acronym for a magical formula, the word was often associated with St. Anthony of Egypt, the hermit who resisted the Devil and diabolical temptations in the desert. In the late Middle Ages, his name came to be invoked against the plague, St. Anthony's Fire (ergotism), and other afflictions. Simpson, "On a Seventeenth Century Roll," pp. 310–11. To cure epilepsy, we read in London, British Library, Harley MS 585, one should intone the word *ananizaptus* or *ananizapta* (depending on gender) in the ear of the afflicted person. The same prescription ("For þe falling-ewell") is found in a late medieval manuscript in Stockholm. Holthausen, "Rezepte, Segen und Zaubersprüche," p. 78, no. 7. Forbes, "Verbal Charms," p. 302, suggests that the word may have been derived from the initial letters of the magical formula *Antidotum Nazareni auferat necem intoxicationis; Sanctificet alimenta poculaque trinitas alma.* For other possible derivations of the word, see Jones and Olsan, "Middleham Jewel," pp. 263–64 and n. 40.

and other Latin prayers over the sick. The book's owners were also instructed to write out small, single-purpose parchment amulets (each called a *brievekin,* using the Flemish diminutive) based on divine names and apotropaic formulas such as "✠ christus vincit ✠ christus regnat ✠ christus imperat." Caregivers would then suspend the textual amulets from the necks of the afflicted ("Ende dan schrijft dese namen in een lanc parkement aper tijf. . . . Danne schrijft vort in tselve brievekin").[80] Rubrics and instructions in many late medieval textual amulets and exemplars assume that users would unfold or unroll amulets, read the vernacular instructions (perhaps silently), read the Latin text aloud or recite it from memory, and engage on cue in a variety of performative acts. So while some textual amulets were kept closed or sealed to maintain potency, others were opened, read, and even performed in order to enhance magical efficacy.

Enclosures

Textual amulets did not absolutely need enclosures to be used. But placing amulets inside enclosures made them portable, facilitated binding to the body, and protected flexible writing supports and their texts from loss, soiling, and physical damage.[81] Early medieval amulets were perhaps carried and stored in skin or cloth sacks, metal suspension capsules, and other enclosures similar to those known in the ancient world. While metal capsules survive among medieval grave goods, there is little physical or literary evidence of fabric or skin enclosures for textual amulets until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. As we have seen, Reginald of Durham's twelfth-century account of Richard the Engineer and Gerbert de Montreuil's thirteenth-century *Continuation* of Chrétien de Troyes's *Perceval* both mention textual amulets carried in silk sacks. Plain cloth sacks would have been sufficient and might have been more common. Such enclosures could accommodate one or more separate textual amulets, perhaps along with religious articles like relics and rosaries. Wearing a sack with several small textual amulets, each offering some form of specific protection, could serve the

80. London, British Library, Additional MS 39638, fols. 14r–15v. The rhyming charm on fol. 14r reads, "✠ Tunc mors est capta ✠ dum dicitur ananizapta ✠ Ananizapta dei ✠ Sit medicina mei ✠ Anthoni tolle ✠ benigne est mala mors capta ✠ Dum dicitur ananizapta ✠ In ananizapta dei ✠ Sit medicina mei ✠ Alpha ✠ et O ✠ tetontegramaton [sic!] ✠ messyas ✠ sother ✠ emanuel ✠ adonay ✠ adonay ✠ adonay ✠ Casper ✠ melchior ✠ balthasar ✠ Ihesus ✠ autem ✠ transiens ✠ per medium ✠ illorum ✠ ibat ✠ In nomine ✠ patris ✠ et filii ✠ et spiritus ✠ sancti amen." On fol. 145v there are additional charms and prayers to St. Sebastian and St. Anthony of Egypt, popular saints invoked against the plague, demons, and other perils.

81. Theodore Schrire, *Hebrew Amulets: Their Decipherment and Interpretation* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 76: "In addition, since an amulet was meant to be worn constantly, it had to be covered in some way to enable the wearer to visit the toilet—Maimonides instructs the amulet wearer to protect the Holy Names by covering the amulet in a leather case."

same purpose as a folded amulet or roll for general protection. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, small sacks and boxes were used in Italy to store textual amulets assembled as birthing kits.[82] Enclosures for French amulet rolls and other textual amulets for women will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Relatively common were leather pouches, like one that a priest used in 1562 to hold a folded *Zettelein* designed to treat a demon-possessed young girl in the German duchy of Jülich-Cleves-Berg.[83] Pouches could be suspended from the neck by a leather thong or piece of cord (*filum*), which served as the container's drawstring while magically encircling the body. A few amulet enclosures of professionally finished or decorated leather and embroidered luxury fabric survive from around 1500. Metal suspension capsules for relics occasionally survive. Such capsules were used for textual amulets as well. The Augustinian chronicler Johann Busch mentions a woman around 1450 wearing a lead suspension capsule around the neck to carry a folded amulet, which she had secured for five shillings from a *custos* (probably a church sacristan with responsibility for its ecclesiastical vessels, vestments, and even liturgical books).[84] Other natural substances such as bone and horn could also serve as enclosures. Suspension capsules fabricated from less durable substances, like the hollow shafts of quills that Martin Luther mentioned, do not survive.

Enclosures allowed concealment of textual amulets when necessary. But depending on the degree of local enforcement, people could wear textual amulets

82. Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 13, 142, 196 nn. 78–79.

83. Johann Weyer [also Weier or Wier] (1515–88) describes this event in *De praestigiis daemonum*, written while he was serving as personal physician to Duke Wilhelm of Jülich-Cleves-Berg. When the amulet (*Zettelein*) was removed from its leather pouch and unfolded, it turned out to be nothing more than a yellowish piece of paper ("gelblichtes papierlein") that was blank but for a single character, perhaps undecipherable. Weyer's wife Judith declared it worthless and burned it. Johann Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum: Von Teuffelsgespenst und Gifftbereytern . . .* (Frankfurt am Main: Nicolaus Basseum, 1586; repr. Darmstadt: J. G. Bläschke, [1970]), pp. 346–47 (bk. 5, chap. 18): "Nach dem unnd aber das leder vorhin angezogen, zerhawen, ward ein gelblichtes papierlein viel mahl in einander gewickelt, darinn gefunden, ein einzigen Buchstaben darinn verzeichnet, welchen mein Ehefraw, in gegenwertigkeit dess Megdleins, dem Vulvanoauffgeopffert und gebrennt hat." For a discussion of this story in the context of an essay on Weyer as "the founder of modern psychiatry," see Zilboorg, *The Medical Man and the Witch,* pp. 179–80.

84. Busch, *Liber de reformatione monasteriorum,* bk. 3, chap. 21, in Grube, *Des Augustinerpropstes Ioannes Busch,* p. 702: "Cum autem ita secum starem ad colloquendum, vidi de collo eius bursam parvam plumbeam cum filo dependere. Interrogavi eam, quid hoc esset. Respondit: 'In isto plumbo complicato inest litera quedam in se continens, qui eam in collo portaverit, a multis infirmitatibus et aliis malis deberet liberari.' Aperiens ergo plumbum et literas in eo scriptam inveni in ea plura mendacia et omnino falsa. Ita ei dixi: 'Quis literam istam vobis scripsit?' Respondit 'Dedi custodi ville unius, nominans mihi eam, quinque solidos, qui mihi eam scripsit et plumbo eam inclusit sicut et multis aliis, dicens ad multa bona valde eam utilem esse et necessariam." See also bk. 1, chap. 14 (Busch, pp. 694–95).

as openly as they could display certain religious articles. As we discussed in Chapter 1, the church promoted or accepted a wide array of consecrated objects and devotional devices, from elegant creations that skilled artisans made on commission for wealthy patrons, to crude objects produced in quantities and sold by itinerant peddlers. Like textual amulets, some church-sanctioned devotional objects offered believers a physical emblem of hope for divine protection and supernatural healing. From the early Middle Ages, the cult of saints resulted in a proliferation of enclosures, including relic holders (*capsulae* or *pendulae*), reliquary pendants of precious metals, and buckles with the relics of saints; historiated phylacteries; and other jewelry with religious scenes, symbols, and inscriptions. Textual amulets could be used in conjunction with apotropaic devices of a nontextual nature, as in the case of the textual amulet and relic carried by Richard the Engineer in twelfth-century Durham. Rings and textual amulets were suspended together from the neck of William of Hostorpe's gravely ill son in the vain hope of saving him, according to William of Canterbury.[85] The act of transporting textual amulets in small containers could be a sign of piety as well as a way to win supernatural protection, provided that the bearers were "good Christians" and the contents would not arouse the ire of ecclesiastical authorities. Exterior surfaces of enclosures could even be decorated with religious images or liturgical formulas that reinforced the textual amulets placed inside and enhanced their potency, like images of the life of St. Margaret of Antioch decorating the original fitted *cuir ciselé* cylindrical case or *capsa* that still encloses a St. Margaret roll of 1491 (New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, M1092). This case, with its removable cap, is approximately 5.0 cm in diameter and 10.5 cm deep (fig. 1). On the exterior there are three panels with cut-leather and painted portraits of St. Margaret and the dragon, St. Peter with keys, and St. John the Baptist with the Lamb of God.[86] This case does not have loops for a strap, so it must have been transported in a cloth sack with drawstrings, making it possible to wear the sack around the neck or on another part of the body.

At the high end of the market in sacred magic from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, elegant pendant crosses and suspension capsules for textual amulets were available to wealthy patrons, who presumably were less likely to suffer ecclesiastical rebuke and could therefore wear them as openly as devotional objects. When it was discovered in Yorkshire around 1846, the Ingleby Arncliffe

85. William of Canterbury, *Vita, passio, et miracula Sancti Thomae Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi auctore Willelmo, monacho Cantuariensi,* bk. 2, chap. 39, in Robertson, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket,* vol. 1, p. 200: "demptis annulis et brevibus quae causa salutis collo morientis appenderant."

86. Manfred von Arnim, *Drucke, Manuskripte und Einbände des 15. Jahrhunderts,* pt. 2 of *Katalog der Bibliothek Otto Schäfer, Schweinfurt* (Stuttgart: Ernst Hauswedell, 1984), pp. 710–12.

Crucifix was found to have a hollowed-out compartment (like a reliquary cross) containing two folded amulets of the early thirteenth century (concerning the texts, see Chapter 5). The amulets had been prepared for a lay couple, Adam and Osanna, wealthy enough to afford an elegant housing. The crucifix was *champlevé* enamel-on-metal (copper alloy or copper gilt), perhaps thirty centimeters long, handcrafted in Limoges in the early thirteenth century. Crucifixes and other metalwork liturgical objects from southwestern France were luxury imports to the British Isles during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The shape of the cross, Christ inscription, and enamel colors are similar to extant Limoges crucifixes of the early thirteenth century, while the figure of Christ wearing a crown is closer to the pose of Limoges appliqué Christ figures and crucifixes dating from about 1190 to 1210. The crucifix of Adam and Osanna, with its two textual amulets, was probably mounted on an inside wall of a castle or manor house as an object of veneration and a source of household

Image not available

Fig. 1 *Cuir ciselé* case for M1092, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York

protection.[87] In later centuries, socially elite amulet users continued to use elegant housings to bind textual amulets to the body for protection and healing. The Renaissance goldsmith and sculptor Benvenuto Cellini (1500–1571), hardly a stranger to magic, to judge from his autobiographical account of incantations in the Roman Colosseum in 1532, mentions filigree-worked jewelry designed to be worn around the neck as an elegant carrying case for textual amulets (*brevi*).[88]

While most enclosures were worn around the neck, there were other methods of binding and carrying textual amulets. One could carry textual amulets externally, together with other personal belongings, in purses and protective leather pouches or purses. At the top of an English medical roll of ca. 1400, containing vernacular charms (London, Wellcome Historical Medical Library, MS 410), are four small holes, by means of which it could have been attached to a carrying pouch. Textual amulets could have been transported in rigid leather containers like late medieval portable reliquaries.[89] Once folded or rolled, individual amulets could be carried in linen, velvet, or silk sacks, slung over the person's shoulder or suspended from the belt like girdle books and *vade mecum* folding books.[90]

87. John Walker Ord, *The History and Antiquities of Cleveland, comprising the Wapentake of East and West Langbargh* (Stockton-on-Tees: Patrick & Shotton, 1972), pp. 136–40; Christopher Wordsworth, "Two Yorkshire Charms or Amulets: Exorcisms and Adjurations," *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 17 (1903): 401–4. John Sayer discovered the crucifix near Northallerton in Yorkshire. After John Walter Ord transcribed the amulets and illustrated the crucifix in 1847 (see p. 136, fig. 3), the crucifix was lost; the two textual amulets survived and were reproduced by Wadsworth (plate between pp. 402 and 403), when they were the property of W. Richardson of Guisborough. Ord describes the enamel of the crucifix as being "brilliant, white, green, red, and blue colors, inlaid like porcelain-work in the various compartments of the metal." Though only illustrated as a line drawing, the Ingleby Arncliffe Crucifix is similar in appearance to contemporary Limoges enamelwork crucifixes; for example, London, Albert and Victoria Museum (158.1919); Paris, Musée de Cluny (12909, 14672); and New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (17.190.409). *Enamels of Limoges, 1100–1350* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), pp. 49–51, 184–87, 313–16.

88. Benvenuto Cellini, *Due trattati, uno in torno alle otto principali arti dell'oreficeria, l'altro dell'arte della scultura* (Milan: Tipografia di Giovanna Silvestri, 1852), p. 20: "Servivansi già alcuni dell'arte del lavorar di filo in ornar puntali e fibbie per cinture, a far crocette . . . coperte da brevi per portare al collo, e simili." In a glossary appended to C. R. Ashbee's English translation, the word *breve* is defined as "a trinket in the nature of a locket." See *The Treatises of Benvenuto Cellini on Goldsmithing and Sculpture,* trans. C. R. Ashbee (London: Edward Arnold, 1888), p. 149.

89. Relatively few Western examples survive. Dorothy Miner, *The History of Bookbinding, 525–1950 A.D.: An Exhibition Held at the Baltimore Museum of Art* (Baltimore, Md.: The Walter Art Gallery, 1957), p. 55. The ancient roll could be protected in a papyrus or parchment cover for storage, safe handling, and travel, according to Edward Maunde Thompson, *An Introduction to Greek and Latin Palaeography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), pp. 47–48. There is a brief note on late medieval English pouches and cylindrical boxes of the sort that might have transported and stored such rolls, in G. D. Hobson, *English Binding before 1500: The Sandars Lectures, 1927* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), p. 50.

90. Michelle P. Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: A Guide to Technical Terms* (Malibu: The J. Paul Getty Museum in association with the British Library, 1994), p. 124; M. C. Garand, "Livres de poche medievaux à Dijon et à Rome," *Scriptorium* 25 (1971): 18–24 and plates 7–8.

People of higher social status might thus conveniently carry objects useful for amuletic and devotional purposes. In the fifteenth century, the Throckmorton roll, measuring 29.0 × 9.5 cm, was probably carried in a purse suspended from the belt, with a "pair of beads," like those illustrated in contemporary monumental brasses of laymen. This roll contained instructions for its users, probably members of a London mercantile family, to carry it on their bodies in a purse at all times ("deferatur in bursa semper"), in part as an aide-mémoire to prompt their daily complement of common prayers, signs of the cross, and other religious observances.[91] One could conceal textual amulets in one's clothing, which is how the Florentine monastic reformer Giovanni Gualberto (d. 1073) is said to have discovered textual amulets (based on magical incantations) on the bodies of monks in the monastery of S. Maria di Vallombrosa ("quod intra vestes situm breve latet").[92] One could sew amulets into clothing, as in the Near East, a method noted disapprovingly in the *Malleus maleficarum;* or wrap them in pieces of cloth, which were then tucked into sleeves or other garment openings.[93]

The invention of pockets provided a new means of carrying textual amulets at the end of the Middle Ages.[94] Positioned almost over the heart, breast pockets would have been particularly well positioned for amulets of any sort. Evidence from seventeenth-century England gives us an idea how this may have worked. During the English Civil War, the Newcastle-upon-Tyne merchant Ambrose Barnes observed that soldiers in the New Model Army of Parliament carried small Bibles in their pockets for protection. "Many had their lives saved, by bullets hitting upon little pocket-bibles they carried about. The Cavaliers, who had but few bibles among them, laught at this, but serious Christians were affected with it."[95] Though a pocket Bible placed amuletically over the heart could also stop a bullet, King Charles II's royalist supporters were content to

91. S.A.J. Moorat, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts on Medicine and Science in the Wellcome Historical Medical Library,* 2 vols. (London: The Wellcome Historical Medical Library, 1962–73), vol. 1, p. 278. W. A. Pantin, "Instructions for a Devout and Literate Layman," in *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt,* ed. J.J.G Alexander and M. T. Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 398–422.

92. See *Miracula S. Joannis Gualberti,* in *Patrologia latina,* vol. 146, col. 870. Concerning prayer and reform at Vallombrosa, as well as early lives of Giovanni Gualberti, see Henriet, *La parole et la prière,* pp. 235–43.

93. Institoris and Sprenger, *Malleus maleficarum,* pt. 2, qu. 2, chap. 6; Maurice Leloir, *Dictionnaire du costume et de ses accessoires des armes et des étoffes des origines à nos jours* (Paris: Librairie Gründ, 1951), p. 322.

94. Concerning the addition of pockets to medieval clothing, see Doreen Yarwood, *The Encyclopedia of World Costume* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978), pp. 325–26.

95. W.H.D. Longstaffe, ed., *Memoirs of the Life of Mr. Ambrose Barnes, Late Merchant and Sometime Alderman of Newcastle upon Tyne,* Publications of the Surtees Society, vol. 50 (Durham: Surtees Society, 1867), p. 107. This example of amulet use is discussed in Cressy, "Books as Totems," pp. 99, and Heszer, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine,* p. 210.

attribute the protective strategy of their opponents to superstition and zealousness. Another English account of a soldier carrying an amulet in his pocket elicited much the same reaction. In 1690, Protestant soldiers found a textual amulet titled *A Spell. Jesus, Maria, Joseph* in the pocket of a dead Irish soldier near Clonmel in County Tipperary. This textual amulet contained a vernacular version of the Heavenly Letter together with brief Latin formulas. Two Protestant militia officers named Bally and Spencer sent the "copia vera verbatim found in ye pocket of our Creagh" to a Mr. North (London, British Library, Sloane MS 3323).[96] Other seventeenth-century evidence shows soldiers arming themselves with written or printed amulets based on the Heavenly Letter, and soldiers would do so as well in later centuries.[97]

Amulets in Groups

Enclosures permitting textual amulets to be worn on the body also facilitated keeping or carrying amulets in groups. Late medieval physical evidence, though scattered, supports the conclusion that people acquired textual amulets from different sources, transported them over considerable distances, and stored them together in collections, not unlike those of holy relics kept in cathedral treasuries. Some general- and special-purpose textual amulets discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 were once housed together in groups of a dozen or more, though perhaps used individually. Two fifteenth-century French conspiracy cases documented in archival records show how textual amulets circulated and were kept in groups. The first case concerns an alleged plot hatched by Master John of Athens, who was perhaps learned in forbidden magic from the East. The accused was suspected of using necromancy in 1406 against the antipope Benedict XIII (Pedro Martínez de Luna), a member of an Aragonese noble family. The Avignon pontiff

96. A transcription of the *copia* was tipped into a bound volume of Sloane manuscripts (London, British Library, Sloane MS 3323, fol. 288r–v). This version of the Heavenly Letter reads in part: "In nomine Patris, Filii et Spiritus Sancta Amen. This revelation was made by ye mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ to St. Bridget, who desired to know somewhat in particuler, of our Lords Passion. . . . All people who will say devoutly 7 Paters and 7 Aves, & a creed every day for the space of 15 years in honor of our Saviors passion, shall receive these blessings whoever will carry this revelation about them alwaies performing ye same devotions, they should be free from all their enemies, neither shall they dye of a suddain death."

97. Deonna, "À l'Escalade de 1602," pp. 74–106, studies soldiers using such amulets (*billets*) in Geneva at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Given the immediacy of sudden death in armed conflict, it is hardly surprising that soldiers continued using broadside amulets well into the nineteenth century. Carly Seyfarth discusses such amulets based on the Heavenly Letter in *Aberglaube und Zauberei in der Volksmedizin Sachsen: Ein Beitrag zur Volkskunde des Königreichs Sachsen* (Leipzig: Verlag von Wilhelm Heims, 1913), p. 143: "Da die Himmelsbriefe dem Träger vor allem Schutz gegen Verwundung durch Hieb, Stich und Schutz usichern, befanden sie sich in dem Jahren 1866 und 1870/71 im Tornister und auf der Brust gar mancher unserer sächsischen Soldaten."

survived the plot and continued to claim the papacy until his death in 1423. According to legal records, Guillerme Brionne de Saumur, a French cleric and secretary to the jurist Louis Guirani at Avignon, was found to be in possession of a small storage chest (*coffretus*), covered in green fabric and kept closed by a cord under seal. Saumur had recently transported the chest from Avignon to Nice, over 150 kilometres to the southeast. The chest and its contents were seized at Nice and carefully inventoried to provide legal evidence of the alleged plot. The inventory shows that the chest contained eight paper sheets (*cedulae papireal*) of prayers; four other paper sheets containing magic texts, *characteres,* and unintelligible words directed against Benedict XIII; five paper or parchment booklets of seven to fourteen folios (perhaps small folding amulets with the text divided into cells) containing magic texts and prayers; a small parchment roll said to contain the Gospel of John (probably the apotropaic opening verses), accompanied by unintelligible *characteres;* and other *scripta* with magic names and symbols.[98]

The second conspiracy case involves Jean Gillemer, an itinerant book illuminator who plied his trade from Poitiers to Paris and Brussels. On his journeys he painted and decorated books of hours, psalters, and other devotional books for noble patrons. One of these was Charles d'Anjou, who was the count of Maine, duke of Guyenne, and leader of the League of the Public Weal against King Louis XI of France (1461–83). In 1471 Charles Tristan l'Hermite, a trusted royal adviser and investigator, had Jean Gillemer arrested and imprisoned in Tours on suspicion of assisting Charles of France (1446–72), the king's younger brother, by delivering confidential letters and oral messages from him to other noble opponents of the king. The book illuminator was suspected because he was found in possession a bundle of letter-like folded paper and parchment sheets. But most of these turned out to be textual amulets in Latin and French (*brevets* or *billets*), acquired from clerics and laymen in his years of work-related traveling. According to legal testimony given in early 1472, Gillemer had a parchment amulet against fevers; a toothache amulet dedicated to St. Apollania, purchased at a tavern in the town of Croutelle, near Poitiers, and worn around the neck; a love amulet written on a small piece of virgin parchment with cabalistic signs, given to him by a man from Navarre living in Bordeaux; and a paper sheet with the painted image of the Measure of Christ, accompanied by amuletic text in Latin and French.

In addition, Gillemer had acquired a long prayer roll on paper in Lyon from a man named Jean Potier. The text and crosses offered protection against demons,

98. Pierre Luc, "Un complot contre le pape Benoît XIII (1406–1407)," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'École Française de Rome* 55 (1938): 374–402.

sudden death, and childbirth difficulties. Attached to the end of this prayer roll were five small parchment amulets copied in Poitiers from a book belonging to a Franciscan named Jean Boussin, who also had access to an astrological work. In Paris, Gillemer had received from a man named Guillonet a sheet of prayers, including psalms, for daily recitation in front of a crucifix. Also, a certain Jean Adveu had translated other prayers into French for Gillemer, who had only a degree of vernacular literacy, from a Latin prayer book in the library of Saint-Hilaire de Poitiers. Gillemer's interrogation ended suddenly and inconclusively, perhaps when Charles of France's unexpected death eased royal fears about the immediate threat of conspiracy. Most of these textual amulets were in the common tradition, though a few must have made Charles Tristan l'Hermite suspect that Gillemer had been conjuring demonic spirits or had otherwise engaged in unacceptable forms of ritual magic.[99] As with Guillerme Brionne de Saumur, the conspiracy case of Jean Gillemer shows that groups of textual amulets could be gathered from geographically far-flung clerical and lay sources at little if any cost, and then kept bundled together for any eventuality.

While most textual amulets could be housed with like items in storage sacks, chests, and other containers, just as books and documents were stored together in religious houses and private residences, out-of-sight storage made practical sense for textual amulets that were based on demonic magic and thus forbidden fare. For example, Fernando de Rojas (ca. 1470–1541), in his celebrated Spanish play *La Celestina* (1499), describes a paper amulet (*escripta*) containing powerful names and signs written in bat's blood. Before removal, the amulet had been stored in an attic chest in the home of Celestina, a bawdy and cunning old woman whom some people considered a witch. Celestina needed the textual amulet for an elaborate conjuration ceremony addressed to "Pluto, Prince of Fallen Angels," in order to control the actions of a chaste young noblewoman named Melibea, and to arouse in her heart a savage and passionate love for a man named Calisto. When not being used, the textual amulet was stored out of sight with Celestina's other magic paraphernalia, probably to avoid detection and to preserve its potency.[100]

99. A. Lecoy de la Marche, "Interrogatoire d'un enlumineur par Tristan l'Ermite," *Revue de l'art chrétien,* 4th series, 35 (1892): 396–408; Bozóky, *Charmes et prières apotropaïques,* pp. 77–78.

100. Fernando de Rojas, *Tragicomedia de Calixto y Melibea: Libro también llamado La Celestina,* ed. M. Criado de Val and G. D. Trotter, 2nd edition (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1965), p. 78 (act 3): "Yo, Celestina, tu mas conoscida clientula, te conjuro por la virtud y fuerça destas hermejas letras; por la sangre de aquella noturna aue con que estan escriptas; por la grauedad de aquestos nombres y signos que en este papel se contienen." See Antonio Garrosa Resina, *Magia y superstición en la literatura castellana medieval,* Biblioteca de Castilla y León, Serie Literatura, no. 1 (Valladolid: Secretario de Publicaciones, Universidad de Valladolid, 1987), pp. 550–74.

Posting to Protect Home and Property

Some textual amulets were posted to protect household and property rather than being worn on the body or stored in kits, groups, or collections. We know that early Christians wrote *nomina sacra,* crosses, and other apotropaic inscriptions on doors and lintels of private residences as house blessings.[101] But extant medieval evidence of apotropaic inscriptions written or inscribed on the interior and exterior walls of public structures and private dwellings is relatively uncommon until the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[102] One may wonder to what extent textual amulets were openly posted in order to protect and heal, in the way that Ethiopians hang magic rolls on the walls of their rooms even today to guard against evil spirits.[103] Brief handwritten prayers could be displayed devotionally on the walls of private residences, perhaps legitimized by the display of *ex voto* tablets in churches. Displaying Christian text was probably not unrelated to displaying religious images.[104] The domestic display of small handwritten or

101. Vakaloudi, "Apotropaic Amulets of the First Byzantine Period," p. 222.

102. For example, carved stone inscriptions with the magic word *ananizapta* were added to the Felkirchnertor (1368) and Hardertor (1373) in the Bavarian city of Ingolstadt as protection against the plague. Karl Werner, "*Ananizapta:* Eine geheimnisvolle Inschrift des Mittelalters," *Sammelblatt des Historischen Vereins Ingolstadt* 105 (1996): 59–90; Karl Scheuerer, "Ananizapta: Eine abwehrende Inschrift an ehemaligen Ingolstädter Stadttoren," at www.ingolstadt.de/stadtmuseum/scheuerer/ing/ananiz01.htm. Less permanent than the stone inscriptions on the city towers of Ingolstadt were inscriptions hurriedly written after the plague struck. Samuel Pepys's diary reports an interesting example of apotropaic symbols and words being displayed on the exterior of buildings. On 7 June 1665, along Drury Lane in London, Pepys saw "two or three houses marked with a red cross and the inscription 'Lord have mercy upon us' writ there." In accordance with city regulations against the plague, the foot-high cross and accompanying inscription identified the blighted residences. The marks were perhaps intended to serve some therapeutic function for the plague victims forced to remain inside. By quarantining the houses, the marks provided a measure of protection (as well as a warning) to neighbors. Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys,* transcribed and edited by Robert Latham and William Matthews (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), vol. 6, p. 120.

103. "In the province of Tigray," according to Jacques Mercier, "invalids unroll their scrolls and hang them opposite their beds, where they can clearly see the images and text." Jacques Mercier, *Art that Heals: The Image as Medicine in Ethiopia* (New York: Prestel, The Museum for African Art, 1997), p. 47. Figure 38 illustrates how a woman in Aksum prays before a magic scroll hung on an interior wall.

104. Some churchmen disapproved of displaying devotional images. For example, St. Anthony of Padua had recalled St. Jerome's gloss on Ezekiel 8:12–15 concerning the seventy Jewish elders and condemned contemporary devotion to "pictures on the wall" as an abominable exercise in pride and hypocrisy. St. Anthony of Padua, *S. Antonii Patavini: Sermones dominicales et festivi,* ed. Beniamino Costa, Leonardo Frasson, and Giovanni M. Luisetto (Padua: Edizioni Messaggero, 1979), vol. 2, pp. 361–62 (Dominica XX post Pentecosten, sec. 7): "Picturae in pariete sunt phantasmata superbiae, gulae et luxuriae in mente, vel simulatio hypocrisis in religione, vel amor carnalis parentum, et forte filiorum et filiarum, in religioso. Unde in reptilibus, quae clamant: Vae! vae! filii et nepotuli designantur: in abominatione animalium, immunditia fornicationum; in idolis depictis, parentes et amici. Ecce quales picturas quidam nostri temporis religiosi adorant."

printed items became more common in the fifteenth century, and such prayers conceivably had an apotropaic function.[105] It was common in German folk tradition to affix a printed *Zauberzettel* of one sort or another on homes and property; or even to write apotropaic words and symbols directly on walls, over doors and gates, and in other places. Broadside amulets with an array of traditional devotional images and texts proliferated in South Germany and Austria, where they were called *Amulettzettel, Haussegen, Pestblätter, Papierbreverl, Haus- und Schutzbrief,* and other names. Printed examples were worn on the person or posted on walls, like their handwritten predecessors, or were used for other protective purposes.[106]

A recently discovered copper printing plate, probably from seventeenth-century England, could have been used by a printer to produce substantial numbers of

105. What would appear to be a six-line handwritten prayer (its first word may be *Deus*), small enough to fit into the palm of one's hand, is shown affixed with red sealing wax to the wall of the Virgin Mary's room in the 1444 Annunciation panel of an altarpiece formerly in the Augustinian Church of the Holy Savior and Cross in the town of Polling, near Weilheim in Upper Bavaria (Munich, Alte Pinakothek, no. 6247). Concerning the 1444 altarpiece by the Pollinger Master, see *Alte Pinakothek, München: Erlauterungen zu der ausgestellten Gemälden* (Münich: Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, 1983), p. 330.

106. Broadsides could also be used to recount the legend of a saint or explain the amuletic powers of religious statues. Small *offene Briefe* seeking the aid of saints were used as votive offerings, and *Gebetszettel* served both devotional and amuletic purposes for centuries. Printed amulets could even be enclosed in glass tubes for burials, probably offering protection against demons and witches. Karl Friedrich Adolf Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube der Gegenwart,* 2nd edition (Hamburg: Agentur des Rauhen Hauses, 1869), p. 75; Marie Andree-Eysn, *Volkskundliches: Aus dem bayrisch-österreichischen Alpengebiet* (Braunschweig: Druck und Verlag von Friedrich Vieweg und Sohn, 1910), pp. 67–69, 101–2; Dieterich, "Weitere Beobachtungen," pp. 235–42; Richard Andree, *Votive und Weihegaben des katholischen Volks in Süddeutschland: Ein Beitrag zur Volkskunde* (Braunschweig: Friedrich Vieweg und Sohn, 1904), p. 18; Hoffman-Krayer, *Handwörterbuch,* vol. 1, col. 1574; Münsterer, *Amulettkreuze und Kreuzamulette,* pp. 82, 106, 107; Roland Halbritter, "Sudtiroler Breverln: Amulette zwischen Magie und Glaube," *Der Schlern* 72, no. 1 (January 1998): 39–64. See description of amulets in *Auktion 80: Druckgraphic Handzeichungen; Volkskunst, Kunstgewerbe Sammlung Heinz Wüller, Teil II, 20. und 22. September 1999* (Cologne: Venator & Hanstein, 1999), p. 94, nos. 2291–93. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, *Himmelsbriefe* were being printed in eastern Pennsylvania for the use of German immigrants. Concerning a *Himmelsbrief* amulet printed in Pennsylvania in the early nineteenth century, said to have been based on a letter that fell from Heaven and landed in the fictitious German place of Grodoria in 1783, see *The Annual Report of the Library Company of Philadelphia for the Year 2000* (Philadelphia: The Library Company of Philadelphia, 2001), pp. 8–10. An eighteenth-century German broadside amulet provided printed instructions recommending its use either on one's person or at home. "Wer diesen Brief oder Zettel bey sich trägt oder zu Haus hat, und gebrauchen will, muss seinen namen in das Spatium, so in der Mitte, einschreiben, und sich befleissen, allzeit ein gutes reines undateshaftes Gewissen zu haben, damit der allerheiligste namen Gottes nicht geunehrer gelästert, oder hergeblich missbraucht werden. Es soll ein je Mensch dieses KREUZ oder BREVE mit Andacht verehren, und bey sich tragen, damit ihm der Böse feind nichts schaden könne an Seel und Leib am." Hansmann und Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Amulett und Talisman,* p. 127, no. 334.

circular paper amulets, configured as oversized magic seals with a diameter of 12.4 cm. The circular shape made this printed amulet far more suitable for posting than for folding or rolling, and it was obviously too small to serve as a magician's circle. Engraved in a neat Italic type simulating a fine cursive script, the amuletic text was designed to protect one's household and property from demons, enemies, and other dangers ("Super nos ✠ Domos nostras ✠ et Fructus terrae"). At the top of the amulet is the IHS monogram surmounted by a sign of the cross. The text included divine names, magic formulas such as *Christus vincit* and the Three Kings, appeals to Christ and the Crucifix, conjurations against demons, and other standard textual elements interspersed with Greek-style crosses. The efficacy of fairly conventional Christian amuletic text has been enhanced by a graphic configuration based on traditional magic. The text is arranged in four concentric circles of apotropaic text, which encircle a band with nine lines of text arranged in spiral form. At the center is a cross whose upright arm is an arrow, which could either symbolize demonic invasion or indicate the compass point for the east. Arranged around this cross is the inscription "AGLA Iesus Maria Adonaÿ Tetragrammaton. et Verbum Caro factum est Consummatum est."[107] Other texts could also be turned into broadside amulets.[108]

In addition to being posted on domestic walls, textual amulets were placed on or near valuable property such as livestock, stables, cultivated land, trees, and vineyards in order to protect them from disease, fire, and other threats to agrarian productivity. Local clergy facilitated this rural practice. Such amulet use is quite understandable in a predominantly agrarian society. Many medieval monastic manuscripts contain liturgical blessings, prayers, and charms for the aid and protection of livestock against disease and predators, and there is widespread evidence of the continuity of popular religious and magical practices to protect animals in England and on the Continent from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century.[109] Yet textual amulets for farm animals do not survive, though critics mention their use. As early as the seventh century, St. Eligius of Noyon had complained about textual amulets (*ligamina*) based on *lectiones divinas,* which probably meant scriptural quotations or common prayers, being hung

107. Roger Gaskell, an antiquarian book dealer in Cambridge, England, owns the original copper plate, recently discovered, and kindly provided the author with photographs of the plate and a modern proof.

108. Goodspeed, *Modern Apocrypha,* p. 73, mentions eighteenth-century English broadside amulets of the Sunday Epistle, which were most likely framed and hung up in homes to prevent misfortune.

109. Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter,* vol. 2, pp. 124–40; Wilson, *Magical Universe,* pp. 89–111. According to Forbes, *Midwife and the Witch,* p. 87, "The [SATOR] formula could be worn on the person or hung on a wall or tree." Baumann, *Aberglaube für Laien,* p. 444, cites critical comments by Martin von Amberg in fourteenth-century Vienna.

around the necks of people and animals. In the saint's life written by St.-Ouen (also Dado or Audoenus), bishop of Rouen (ca. 600–684), St. Eligius condemned such textual amulets as the Devil's poison rather than Christ's medicine, even if they had been prepared by clerics.[110] Similar strictures are found in penitential and moralistic literature dating from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. For example, in the *Summa confessorum* attributed to Master Thomas de Chobham, subdean of Salisbury Cathedral from at least 1216 to 1230, the long catalogue of punishable superstitions includes placing textual amulets (*pitaciolas*) on people and livestock, in addition to using the Pater Noster or Credo, which were most likely recited as blessings, in order to cure particular infirmities.[111]

Similar opinions are expressed in the anonymous Middle English treatise *Dives and Pauper,* probably written in the first decade of the fifteenth century for the moral edification of worldly and affluent laymen. The text is arranged as a dialogue between Dives, a landowner who could read the vernacular, and Pauper, a mendicant preacher. Pauper told Dives that using textual amulets and charms on men and beasts was an offense against the First Commandment—not just an act of idolatry, but witchcraft:

> Charmes in gadering of herbis, or hangyng of scrowis aboutyn man, woman childe or beeste for any seknesse with, ony scripture or figuryss and carectys, but if it be Pater noster, Aue, or Þe Crede or holy wordis of þe gospel or of holy writ, for deuocion nou3t for no curiouste, and only with þe tokne of holy cros, and alle þat vayn ony maner wychecraft or ony mysbelue, þat alle swyche forsakyn þe feyth of holy chyrche and her cristendam and becomyn Goddis enmyys and agreuyn God wol greuously and fallyn in dampnacoun withoutyn ende, but þey amendyn hem þe sonere.[112]

110. See *Eligii vita* 2.16, in *Monumenta Germaniae historica: Scriptores rerum merovingicarum* (Hannover: Hahn, 1902), vol. 4, p. 706: "Nullus ad colla vel hominis, vel cujuslibet animalis ligamina dependere praesumat, etiamsi a clericis fiant, etsi dicatur quod res sancta sit, et lectiones divinas contineat, quia non est in eis remedium, sed venenum diaboli." Carl Franklin Arnold, *Caesarius von Arelate und die gallische Kirche seiner Zeit* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1894), p. 177 n. 583; Meaney, *Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones,* p. 11.

111. F. Broomfield, ed., *Thomae de Chobham: Summa confessorum,* Analecta Mediaevalia Namurcensia (Louvain: Éditions Nauwelaerts, 1969), pp. 471–72: "aut pitaciolas pro quavis infirmitate super homines aut animalia ponunt preter symbolum et orationem dominicam."

112. Priscilla Heath Barnum, ed., *Dives and Pauper,* Early English Text Society, Original Series, no. 275 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), vol. 1, pt. 1, pp. 157–58 (Commandment 1, capitulum 34). The treatise includes additional condemnations of textual amulets and verbal charms, on p. 162 (cap. 36), and pp. 168–69 (cap. 39 and 40). The treatise remained popular in the fifteenth century. Richard Pynson printed the *editio princeps* in 1493, attributing the text to Henry Parker (d. 1470), a Carmelite from Doncaster: *Here Endith a Compendiouse Treetise Dyalogue of Diues [and] Paup[er], that is to Say, the Riche [and] the Pore* (London: Printed by Richard Pynson, 1493).

Despite criticism, however, such practices continued in the European countryside and can be documented well into the modern era in Western Europe and the New World.[113]

In conclusion, the magical efficacy of textual amulets depended on more than the inherent power of words or on clerical involvement in preparation. Textual amulets were packaged and used in order to serve their intended functions such as protecting, healing, and exorcizing. To enjoy broad benefits, people could concatenate different texts in one amulet or gather amulets in kits, groups, or collections. By studying codicological factors such as writing materials, design, folding patterns, and methods of use and storage, we gain a better understanding of how textual amulets supposedly worked and how powerful words could be made more efficacious and exploited. Textual amulets were commonly bound to the body for general protection, often without being seen or heard by the bearer. Such textual amulets were used like consecrated objects, sacred relics, ceremonial books, and good-luck charms. But reading, memory, visualization, and performance could also play a role in exploiting the full potential of textual amulets. In the late Middle Ages especially, textual amulets could be worn on the body and read aloud to oneself like common prayers; read aloud over someone else in the sense of a vocalized or expressive reading, like a liturgical blessing; posted on walls or placed on children, livestock, and property; or gazed upon like a graphic image (but not read phonetically), expecting spiritual benefits in return. Textual amulets came to be used in more complex, varied, and interactive ways than one would expect based on negative stereotypes in medieval sources and later historiography.

113. In 1590 James Sykes of Guiseley confessed in the episcopal court of York to having prepared and hung paper amulets on the manes of horses in an attempt to cure them. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* p. 179. Concerning the practice, especially in more recent centuries, for which better documentation survives, see Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie,* vol. 2, p. 982; Ciruelo, *Reprobación,* p. 65; R. W. Scribner, "Cosmic Order and Daily Life: Sacred and Secular in Pre-Industrial German Society," in *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1987), pp. 6, 10. On strategies for home protection in rural France, see Hervé Fillipetti and Janine Trotereau, *Symboles et pratiques rituelles dans la maison paysanne* (Paris: Éditions Berger Levrault, 1978), pp. 251–54. According to Seignolle, *Les évangiles du diable,* p. 364 (no. 491), people in Catholic countries would nail *billets de sainte Agathe* to the walls of their homes and stables because St. Agatha was popularly believed to protect against fire. William Tyndale complained about the amuletic use of "St. Agathe's letter written in gospel time" to protect against fire. Tyndale, *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue* (1531), p. 61. In Wales, according to Thomas Gwynn Jones, "charms written on parchment and placed in a bottle, intended to protect cattle from disease or witchcraft, have been found." Thomas Gwynn Jones, *Welsh Folklore and Folk-Custom* (London: Methuen, 1930), p. 141.

4
General Protection and Specific Benefits

As we have seen, textual amulets were used to some extent in the early Middle Ages, when the clergy had a virtual monopoly on reading and writing. But they appear to have been more widely used from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, when expanded lay literacy increased the numbers of potential amulet producers, and the terrors of recurrent plague and internecine warfare fueled popular demand for sources of supernatural protection. Growing demand would eventually provide an economic incentive for amulet production based on the printing press, movable type, and paper. During this period, textual amulets of all sorts begin to survive in modest numbers. A few were preserved because they were saint's relics or had a special provenance. Libraries and museums acquired others because they were illuminated, written in vernacular languages, or contained arcane scribbles, seals, and symbols that people found visually arresting.[1] Mundane examples often survived more by accident than design, buried and forgotten in chests of family muniments. Such textual amulets could be easily overlooked because they were badly worn and in odd physical formats, appearing to be little more than *membra disiecta* (leaves, cuttings, and binder's waste.

The fortuitous survival of textual amulets makes it possible for us to see them as they really were. Without physical evidence from the late Middle Ages, our

1. Of course, even acquisition by a library or museum cannot guarantee survival of ephemeral items. For example, De Ricci and Wilson, *Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts,* vol. 2, p. 2080, no. 368, lists a fifteenth-century amulet based on the Measure of Christ (with drawings in lead point and color) among miscellaneous leaves and cuttings in the John Frederick Lewis Collection, Free Public Library of Philadelphia. Lewis was said to have acquired it from the Munich antiquarian Ludwig Rosenthal in 1910. See Rosenthal's *Catalogue 120. Manuscripts—Handschriften—Manuscrits, 800–1500* (Munich: Ludwig Rosenthal's Antiquariat, [1910]), p. 24, no. 201. Unfortunately, the item cannot be found. Despite the reference in De Ricci, the Free Public Library has no bibliographic record of the item ever having been in its collections.

knowledge of textual amulets would be far more limited because our documentation would be largely limited to the testimony of medieval writers and manuscripts containing exemplars of amuletic texts. In this chapter, we will analyze nine extant English and Italian written amulets dating from the thirteenth to early sixteenth centuries, three other amulets described in contemporary sources, and extant printed amulets. In case studies of particular amulets, we will focus on the material assembly and interplay of textual elements to serve multiple functions with enhanced magical efficacy. We will attempt to localize and date extant amulets, trace their provenance and subsequent modification, and show the influence of contemporary trends in magic, ritual practices, and the culture of reading. Reserved for Chapter 5 are professionally produced textual amulets, particularly small rolls and folded sheets comprised of separate text cells, chiefly for women and often with a devotional component.

The *Chartula* of St. Francis of Assisi

Among the earliest and best known textual amulets offering specific protection is St. Francis of Assisi's well-known folding prayer amulet, containing the *Laudes Dei altissimi* and *Benedictio Fratris Leonis* (fig. 2), which he prepared for his close spiritual associate Brother Leo (d. 1271). Contemporaries described the amulet as a *chartula, litterula,* or *schedula.* St. Francis wrote it on a small piece of parchment in September 1224, when he and Brother Leo were on Monte Alverno (also Alverna or La Verna). Eleven years earlier, Count Orlando of Chiusi had granted this mountain in the Apennines near Arezzo to St. Francis and his followers.[2] Also on Monte Alverno in September 1224, with Brother Leo faithfully at his side, St. Francis had received the Stigmata, bodily marks matching the Five Wounds of Christ on the Cross. In Christian iconography, Brother Leo is often depicted as being either asleep or blinded by the light of the Christ-like seraph on the Cross. St. Francis wrote the *Laudes* on the flesh side of the parchment. He seems to have composed these two brief texts in his mind,

2. For studies and editions of the *chartula,* see Duane Lapsanski, "The Autographs of the *Chartula* of St. Francis of Assisi," *Archivum franciscanum historicum* 67 (1974): 18–37; Kajetan Esser, ed., *Die Opuscula des Hl. Franziskus von Assisi,* Spicilegius Bonaventurianum, vol. 13 (Grottaferrata: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1976), pp. 134–46; Giovanni M. Boccali, ed., *Opuscula S. Francisci et scripta S. Clarae Assisiensium,* Pubblicazioni della Biblioteca Francescana, vol. 1 (Assisi: Editore Porziunsola, 1978), pp. 258–63; Enzo Lodi, ed., *Enchiridion euchologicum fontium liturgicorum,* Bibliotheca Ephemerides Liturgicae, Subsidia, vol. 15 (Rome: Edizioni Liturgiche, 1979), p. 1686, no. 3373; Attilio Bartoli Langeli, "Gli scritti da Francesco: L'autografia di un *illitteratus,*" in *Frate Francesco d'Assisi: Atti del XXI Convegno internationale, Assisi, 14–16 ottobre 1993,* Atti dei Convegni della Società internazionale di studi francescani e del Centro interuniversitario di studi francescani, Nuova serie, vol. 4, directed by Enrico Menestò (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1994), pp. 103–59; and Langeli, *Gli autografi,* pp. 30–41, 79–82.

Image not available

Fig. 2 *Chartula* of St. Francis of Assisi (verso), Sacro Convento, Assisi

then wrote them down from memory on the recto and verso of a small piece of parchment, now irregularly shaped and measuring approximately 13.5 × 10.0 cm. It was folded down to a very compact size of 6.7 × 5.0 cm. The *Laudes* was written on the flesh side, which faced outward when the amulet was folded, so that it came to be badly rubbed and abraded over time. As a result, the sixteen lines of text in the *Laudes* can be read in part only under ultraviolet light, with missing words and variant readings being supplied from later manuscript copies of the text.

The text is chiefly comprised of praises to God and brief quotations from Psalms, the Gospels, and the Pauline Epistles. Years of prayer and meditation had made the scriptural phrases part of St. Francis's own devotional vocabulary, easily recalled from memory (if imperfectly), residing in the heart, as though they were his own words. According to Thomas of Celano (d. ca. 1255), St. Francis said that the words he wrote on the parchment sheet were those that he had meditated in his heart ("meditatus sum in corde meo").[3] His text thus resembled an almost-improvisatory patchwork, like the memory-assisted monastic compositional method called centonization.[4] The praises essentially constitute a litany of about forty divine names, chiefly consisting of Latin words for the attributes of God; for example, *Defensor, Dominus, Omnipotens, Salvator, Sanctus,* and *Spes*. As we have seen, the amuletic use of divine names was deeply rooted in Christian tradition and magic. While some of these names also appear in standard amuletic lists of divine names during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, St. Francis did not include any of the Greek or Hebrew names (generally interspersed with crosses) that had such a central role in textual amulets. While his text was not overtly amuletic, St. Francis appreciated the spiritual power of divine names and believed that any piece of writing was precious because it might contain the name of God or at least letters of the alphabet, which could be scrambled and sorted to spell out the divine name. St. Bonaventure (d. 1274)

3. Thomas de Celano, *Vita secunda Sancti Francisci,* chap. 20, sec. 49, in *Fontes franciscani,* ed. Enrico Menestò and Stefano Brufani, Medioevo francescano, Testi, vol. 2 (Assisi: Edizioni Porziuncola, 1995), p. 490.

4. Concerning centonization, see Cabrol, *Dictionnaire,* vol. 2, pt. 2, cols. 3255–59. Meditative reading was based on bits of text fluidly and uncritically assembled with the goal of inspiring contemplation and faith, like the *sacra lectio* prescribed in religious houses since St. Benedict ordained it in his Rule. Memory of sacred text found spontaneous expression in thoughts and writings that evoked words and images from scripture. James Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), vol. 1, p. 18; Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture,* trans. Catharine Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1961), pp. 90–99: "The memory, fashioned wholly by the Bible and nurtured entirely by biblical words and the images they evoke, cause them to express themselves spontaneously in a biblical vocabulary. Reminiscences are not quotations, elements of phrases borrowed from another. They are the words of the person using them; they belong to him. Perhaps he is not even conscious of owing them to a source" (pp. 93–94).

recorded that St. Francis occasionally asked his followers to gather up all sheets of parchment with writing (*schedula scripta*) wherever found, lest the Lord's name written thereupon might be trampled on the ground.[5]

Scholars have long appreciated the amuletic character of the *chartula*. St. Francis was not the first saint who used amuletic texts to exorcise demons and effect miraculous cures of people. In the sixth and seventh centuries, as we have seen, Merovingian holy men like St. Marculfus and St. Eligius of Noyon had orally recited exorcism formulas and prayers over the demon-possessed. Church-ordained exorcists in the minor orders could also perform exorcisms.[6] St. Francis was also a holy man, whose words were reputed to have power over demons. Early Franciscan texts such as Umbertino of Casale's *Arbor vitae crucifixae Jesu Christi* (1305) and the *Speculum perfectionis status fratris minoris* (1318), the latter once thought to be by Brother Leo himself, portray St. Francis as a holy man who lived his life in imitation of Christ and who, when preaching or praying, could turn demons to flight by the power of his spoken words. While St. Francis was wont to lump personal book ownership, even of psalters and other devotional books, with material possessions that detracted from the purity of a mendicant life, he did value the power of sacred words, whether spoken or written.[7] St. Francis could have simply said blessings over Brother Leo but must have realized that binding sacred words to the body offered advantages over oral presentation. He wanted Brother Leo to keep the *chartula* folded up on his body as a physical source of divine protection.

In no way was the *chartula* designed to replace a devotional book such as a breviary, and surely Brother Leo would have had no trouble recalling such a

5. St. Bonaventure, *Legenda maior sancti Francisci* 10.6, in Menestò and Brufani, *Fontes franciscani,* pp. 867–68. Gellrich, *Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages,* p. 35. "Like the relics of a saint in the cathedral, letters themselves were intrinsically sacred to Saint Francis of Assisi, who is said to have collected and saved every shred of parchment that he found during his travels because 'litterae sunt quibus componitur gloriossimum domini Dei nomen' ('letters are the things from which the most glorious name of God is composed')." Gellrich cites Thomas of Celano, *Legenda prima,* in *S. Francisci Assiensis vita et miracula* (Rome: Desclée, Lefebure, 1906), p. 83.

6. John Harper, *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century: A Historical Introduction and Guide for Students and Musicians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 25, 299. In an illuminated Italian pontifical of the early fourteenth century (Princeton University Library, Princeton MS 7), the exorcist is shown receiving a *libellus* as part of his ordination by the bishop (fol. 7v). Accompanying a litany of the saints, the pontifical also provides an exorcism text for oral delivery (fol. 88v). Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter,* vol. 2, p. 549.

7. Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short, eds., *St. Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* (New York: New City Press, 1999), vol. 3, pp. 176, 304, 865–66. In a saint's life written around 1275 by an anonymous Benedictine monk from Oberaltaich, Germany, St. Francis is said to have practiced bibliomancy by opening the Gospels on the altar. St. Francis ostensibly did so several times, each time finding a passage that revealed the Lord's will.

brief prayer-like text from memory without having a written version to read. Specifically, St. Francis told Brother Leo to keep the *chartula,* presumably on his person, for the rest of his life ("accipe tibi chartulam istam et usque ad diem mortis tue custodias diligenter"). In offering protection against demons, St. Francis gave his companion a textual shield and exorcistic device, something akin to Irish *loricae,* rather than just a portable prayer sheet for meditative reading.[8] Like earlier Christian holy men, St. Francis provided divine names and blessings in writing, without monetary compensation, unlike errant clerics and charlatans, in order to exorcise demons from a tormented soul. Sacred words functioned here as a textual shield against the Devil's unspecified temptations, as they had with the temptations faced by Christ and St. Anthony of Egypt. Such temptations were only to be expected in a demon-plagued wilderness; that is, a remote location of uncultivated land or desert, ideal for a hermit's voluntary retreat, not unlike Monte Alverno.[9]

On the verso, St. Francis wrote out a five-line benediction (*Benedictio Fratris Leonis*), chiefly quoting Aaron's Priestly Blessing (Numbers 6:24–26). St. Francis wrote in a rather common script, showing little training or practice, and in equally imperfect, Italicism-filled Latin. Brother Leo was far more literate than St. Francis and annotated both sides of the *chartula* in a well-formed Gothic book hand, providing details about St. Francis's role in its preparation.[10] On the verso, along with the benediction, is a Tau cross (*signum thau*) rising from Golgotha, with a crudely sketched head, most likely representing that of Adam, which lies horizontally in a grave or a cave. In Italian Crucifixion scenes and crucifixes of the twelfth century, Adam's skull is depicted at the foot of the cross. In effect, Christ was the "New Adam." Though the Tau cross could symbolize the Trinity, it was popularly associated with divine power and protection from demons and plague, and was therefore included in many textual amulets of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Christians traced the use of the Tau cross as an emblem of divine power and protection back to the symbol that God first gave to protect the Israelites against the tenth and final plague (the deaths of the firstborn). In Christian iconography, the Tau cross was used to represent the apotropaic *signum* that the Israelites

8. Lapsanski, "Autographs," p. 19; Esser, *Die Opuscula,* p. 135; Langeli, *Gli autografi,* pp. 34–35 nn. 11–12.

9. One may compare Richard de Bury's gleaning from the Gospel of Matthew (4:1–14) about Christ girding on the "shield of truth" for protection against the Devil. *The Philobiblon of Richard de Bury,* ed. and trans. Ernest C. Thomas (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, 1888), p. 18: "Hoc autem est veritas libris inscripta, quod evidentius figuravit Salvator, quando contra tentatorem praeliaturus viriliter scuto se circumdedit veritatis, non cuiuslibet immo scripturae, scriptum esse praemittens quod vivae vocis oraculo erat prolaturus" (2:34).

10. Langeli, *Gli autografi,* pp. 23–29; Esser, *Die Opuscula,* pp. 137, 140, 143–44.

marked, using the paschal lamb's blood, on the lintels and doorposts of their homes (Exodus 12:12–13). Aaron was often shown painting Tau crosses on doorposts. In this way, the plague that God visited upon Egypt "passed over" their houses. So when dispensing the Tau cross and the Priestly Blessing, St. Francis effectively acted in place of Aaron, high priest and worker of miracles, who was sometimes depicted as a forerunner of Christ.[11] Coincidentally, in Christian numerology the letter *T* stood for the sacred number 300, symbolizing the victory of God over the Devil. Exorcism formulas and Tau crosses were essential Franciscan weapons to combat the Devil, a recurrent theme in the writings of St. Francis and his followers. The Tau cross served as a reminder that the forces of good would triumph over evil.[12]

After the intended use of the prayer amulet by Brother Leo during his lifetime, it continued to have an apotropaic function as a sacred relic for the Christian faithful rather than as a personal amulet. St. Bonaventure said that the *chartula* remained effective and provided miraculous healing after the death of Brother Leo in 1271. By 1338 the *chartula* was stored among the relics in the sacristy of the Sacro Convento in Assisi, where it was preserved in a flat wooden reliquary that had a glass window for viewing by the faithful. The *chartula* was housed in a silver shrine by 1473 and in various reliquaries in later centuries.[13] As a relic of St. Francis, the *chartula* was not unlike medieval books such as the Cathach of St. Columba, enjoying special status because of an association with particular holy persons who had copied, owned, or used them. Similarly, letters written by saints were popularly believed to possess healing powers and could be applied to the body therapeutically, like scripture, sacred relics, and consecrated objects.[14] Scribal copying of the *Laudes* underscores its standing and reputation. At least twenty-one manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth

11. The scriptural authority of Tau crosses may also rest on Ezekiel 9:4, in which God said to the prophet, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that shall be done in the midst thereof." See Damien Vorreux, "Tau," in *Dizionario francescano: Spiritualità,* ed. Ernesto Caroli (Padua: Edizioni Messaggero, 1995), cols. 2004–5; Husband, "Winteringham Tau Cross," pp. 22–23. John V. Fleming, "The Iconographic Unity of the Blessing for Brother Leo," *Franziskanische Studien* 63, no. 3 (1981): 203–220, discusses the Adamic iconography and use of the Tau cross; he notes, "the Hebrew *taw,* the final letter in the alphabet, actually means 'sign' or 'mark,' and what the Vulgate renders as *signum Thau* is called more simply a 'sign' in the Septuagint and other translations" (pp. 216–17).

12. Deleflie, *Thibaut de Langres,* p. 54; Andree-Eysn, "Das Tau und die Pestamulette," in *Volkskundliches,* pp. 63–72; Marie-Odile Andrade, *Les porte bonheur* (Paris: Christine Bonneton Éditeur, n.d.), pp. 62–63, 129; Antonio Blasucci, "Demonio," in *Dizionario francescano: Spiritualità,* cols. 353–68; Damien Vorreux, "Tau," in ibid., cols. 2003–12.

13. St. Bonaventure, *Legenda maior sancti Francisci* 11.9 and *Legenda minor sancti Francisci* 4.6, in Menestò and Brufani, *Fontes franciscani,* pp. 876, 990. Langeli, *Gli autografi,* pp. 80–82.

14. Vezin, "Les livres," pp. 101–15; Poulin, "Entre magie et religion," p. 137.

centuries include copies. Some might have served as exemplars for further copying, though there are no extant examples of the text having been copied onto single sheets for use as textual amulets.[15]

Italian Amulets for Domenico and Calandrino

Single-purpose textual amulets composed from memory, like those by St. Francis of Assisi and St. Hildegard of Bingen, coexisted with equally ordinary looking amulets copied from written exemplars. The makers of such amulets are rarely known. Late medieval Italian textual amulets for specific protection must have been very common. Two related paper amulets dating from the first quarter of the fifteenth century (Pisa, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 736, nos. 2–3) are probably representative of everyday amulets, simple enough to be disposable (fig. 3 a-b). The first of these two examples from Pisa is a thirteen-line Latin plague amulet dedicated to St. Sebastian, whose intercession with Christ is sought by the supplicant Domenico (Dominichus). St. Sebastian (d. ca. 290) was a Roman soldier from Narbonne and a member of the Praetorian Guard under the emperor Diocletian (284–305). In the late Middle Ages and especially after the Black Death began to ravage Europe in 1348, St. Sebastian acquired cult status and was depicted as bravely defending the ancient city of Rome against a hail of plague arrows delivering pestilence, just as textual amulets with the name of God had once offered Christian crusaders a spiritual shield against Muslim arrows and bolts. The text of Domenico's amulet is confined to the recto of a rectangular piece of paper measuring 17.7 × 20.5 cm. At the end of the text is a row of fifteen crosses, which reminded the supplicant to make the right devotional gesture, just as the fifteen large beads in a rosary prompted prayers. Of course, the number fifteen has a numerological role in the Measure of Christ and Fifteen Mysteries.

Preserved along with the thirteen-line plague amulet is a twenty-seven-line Latin plague amulet, also copied for Domenico. The second amulet is written in a semi-Gothic cursive hand similar in style and date to the first (pointed *a,* both long and short *s,* hooks and loops) on a piece of paper measuring 23.5 × 20.5 cm. It has virtually the same text as the first, except for minor differences in orthography (for example, *Eloi* instead of *Elloj*) and abbreviations. This text is followed by a row of fifteen crosses, beneath which is written a prayer appealing to St. Vincent for intercession with Christ against the plague. An explanatory label in Italian was added on the top line by the scribe, who wrote "Questa sie ~~una~~ do orazioni contra peste" around the space occupied by the customary

15. Concerning manuscript copies of the *Laudes,* see Esser, *Die Opuscula,* p. 137.

Image not available

Fig. 3 MS 736, nos. 2–3, Biblioteca Universitaria, Pisa

heading "✠ ihesu" and corrected the number of *orazioni* from one to two, also adding text below the row of crosses. Similarly, the first plague amulet was also labeled in Italian "✠ Orazione contra peste santo sebastiano," but this was done on the central panel of the verso so that the inscription was only visible when the amulet was folded.[16] Domenico's two plague amulets folded down to a rectangle no longer than 8.0 cm, so that when fully folded they would easily fit in a small pouch or carrying case. Embedded instructions told Domenico to carry each amulet on his person, and it is very likely that he did so. Water stains on each certainly suggest that the two amulets were perhaps once stored together. Having two copies of the same amulet was insurance against loss, allowing one copy to travel while the other remained at home to protect the family and household, or two family members to have more-or-less the same amulet.[17]

Domenico's two amulets were undoubtedly copied from a single written exemplar, probably a family miscellany of charms, prayers, recipes, and other useful information. Exemplars were not hard to find, given the popularity of prayers to St. Sebastian and devotion to the Tau cross. For example, under the rubric *contra pestilentiam,* an Italian plague charm also invoking the aid of St. Sebastian was copied around 1454 into a Venice-area manuscript miscellany, which possibly belonged to the Barozzi family (London, British Library, Additional MS 41600, fol. 91v). In order to prepare a textual amulet, according to the instructions, one was to copy the large Tau cross, together with an inscription invoking the Trinity ("deus pater ihesus christus et spiritus sanctus"). Users were supposed to wear or carry the textual amulet and recite it from memory.[18] For

16. Giorgio Del Guerra, "Per la storia degli amuleti: Una preghiera contro la peste del 1400," *Rivista delle scienze mediche e naturali* 15 (1933): 49–53. A portion of Del Guerra's transcription is reprinted in Cardini, "Il 'breve' (secoli XIV–XV)," p. 72. For a brief description of this textual amulet, among the manuscripts received from the Fondo Camici-Roncioni, see Guiseppe Mazzatinti, "Orazioni contro la peste," sec. 15, in *Inventari dei manoscritti delle biblioteche d'Italia* (Florence: Libreria Editrice Leo S. Olschki, 1916), vol. 24, p. 62, no. 726 (5). The two textual amulets are now designated Pisa, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 736 (formerly Roncioni 100), containing seven leaves under the label "inserto di fogli vari"; the two amulets are respectively numbered 2 and 3. The author is grateful to Professor Armando Petrucci (Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa) for having brought these two amulets to his attention and for providing descriptions and photographs.

17. Parallel use is suggested in a vernacular prayer to St. Sebastian found in a fifteenth-century French miscellany. The supplicant appeals to this helper saint for protection from the plague and mentions either carrying the prayer or keeping it at home (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS fr. 24957). Pierre Rézeau, *Les prières aux saints en français à la fin du moyen âge: Prières à un saint particulier et aux anges,* Publications Romanes et Françaises, vol. 166 (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1983), p. 460: "Sainct Sebastien glorieux, je te requier de cueur piteux que gardes ceulx de maladie qu'on appelle epydemye, qui porteront ceste oraison, ou qui l'auront en leur maison, en priant Dieu que de cueur fin leud doing paradis en la fin."

18. The prayer to St. Sebastian in London, British Library, Additional MS 41600, reads in part, "Omnipotens sempeterne deus qui precibus et moritis beati et gloriosi martiris tui sancti sebastiani, quandam generalem pestem hominibus pestifera revocasti. Praeterea supplicibus tuis ut qui hanc

centuries, producers of Italian amulets incorporating the Tau cross against the plague continued to call them prayers.[19] Another Italian family miscellany with exemplars is Newberry Library MS 105. Among its thirty-three Latin prayers and magical texts are remedies for everything from demonic possession to common fevers (fols. 39r–60v). Included are the SATOR AREPO formula, a graphic representation of the Measure of Christ, lists of divine names interspersed with crosses, and other textual elements that were common in late medieval amulets. While spiritual benefits may have accrued in many instances from reciting prayers orally, certain texts include prefatory instructions for amulet preparation and use. Readers are assured, for example, that carrying the names of the Three Kings on one's person could prevent epilepsy, and that those armed with the seventy-two names of Christ need fear neither enemies nor death without receiving last rites (fols. 49r, 60v).[20] A professional scribe probably copied the manuscript's texts from different exemplars. Potential users included the head

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orationem dixint et ille super se portauerint ac decus in cordibus eorum memoria habuerint ac in nomine tue et in sue festivitatis die deciore legerint et sub eius confidentia. . . . Agyos, otheos. Agyos, yschiros. Agyos athanatos. Eleyson ymas. Sanctus deus. Sanctus fortis. Sanctus et immortalis. Miserere nobis." The latter part of the prayer includes a version of the Greek chant called the *trisagion* or *trishagion* (in romanized form reading, *agios otheos, agios ischiros, agios athanatos, eleison imas*), which found its way from Orthodox to Western liturgy: Lodi, *Enchiridion euchologicum fontium liturgicorum,* p. 1020, nos. 2341–42; p. 1145, nos. 2647–48. For a description of Additional MS 41600, see *British Library Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts, 1926–1930* (London: British Museum, 1959), p. 81; and the British Library Manuscripts Catalogue at http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/manuscripts. Another example is found in a fifteenth-century paper miscellany (Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1133 [O.II.26]), which includes an *Oratio gloriossimi Sancti Sebastiani, virtutis maxime contra pesto*. See Salamone Morpurgo, *I manoscritti della R. Biblioteca Riccardiana di Firenze: Manoscritti italiani* (Rome: n.p., 1900), p. 165.

19. For example, a seventeenth-century broadside seized by the Sant'Uffizio in Venice offers the Tau cross and long lists of divine names for general protection. At the top of this broadside amulet is the title *Oratio contra pestem & subitaneam mortem, ac contra alia Aduersia & Pericula mundi.* Gilly and van Heertum, *Magia, alchimia, scienza,* vol. 1, p. 155 (Venice, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Sant'Uffizio di Venezia, b. 31).

20. Chicago, Newberry Library MS 105. The manuscript identifies certain texts as being appropriate for amuletic use. For example, "hec tria nomina qui secum portaverit soluitur a morbo christi pietate caduco et omnia rerum" (fol. 49r); "hec sunt Septuaginta duo nomina domini nostri yhesu christi quisquis portaverit non moriet absque penitentia et inimicos non timebit" (fol. 60v). For a description, see Paul Saenger, *A Catalogue of the Pre-1500 Western Manuscript Books at the Newberry Library* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 218–21. Similar versions of an amuletic text *pro morbo caduco* were recorded by Richard Reynes in fifteenth-century England and by Johann Weyer in sixteenth-century Germany. Cameron Louis, ed., *The Commonplace Book of Robert Reynes of Acle: An Edition of Tanner MS 407* (New York: Garland, 1980), pp. 169, 385–86, no. 28; Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum: Von Teuffels gespenst Zauberern und Gifftberentern, Schwartzkünstlern, Herren und Unholden, darzu irer Straff, auch von den Bezauberten und wie ihnen zuhelffen sey,* trans. Johann Fuglino (Frankfurt am Main: Nicholaus Basseum, 1586), p. 321 (bk. 5, chap. 8).

of the household, family members, or anyone else; the text simply designated *N famulus* to signify the *nomen* of the supplicant or petitioner.[21]

Clerical, professional, and domestic amulet preparation were common in late medieval Italy and in later centuries as well. But social critics tended to focus on a shadowy underground of wily vagabonds, beggars, rogues, indulgence preachers, hermits, blessers, sorcerers, conjurers, enchanters, charmers, healers, "old women" (*vetulae*), and other people living or traveling on the fringe of society. For a price, such purveyors of popular magic would gladly dispense worthless textual amulets, false relics, quack remedies, love potions, and prognostications to gullible folk everywhere.[22] Italian vernacular literary works, though fictional and imaginative, provide entertaining narratives that document the trade in textual amulets. While *novellieri* sometimes borrowed stock motifs, they also added realistic details based on present-day life and personal experiences, though tending to stereotype country folk as crude, ignorant, and easily duped.[23]

In the *Decameron* (ninth day, fifth story), Giovanni Boccaccio presents what is probably the most detailed vernacular tale about a textual amulet. A house painter named Bruno prepares a love amulet (*brieve*) for Calandrino, who is assisting him in painting Niccolò Cornacchini's villa at Camerata, in the Tuscan countryside near Florence. Though already married, Calandrino has become hopelessly infatuated with Niccolosa, a beautiful young woman from the Tuscan town of Camaldoli, home of the White Monks of St. Romuald. Calandrino is determined to win her affections, and to this end Bruno offers to prepare a love amulet for his use. Boccaccio portrays Calandrino as an amorous but dull-witted fellow, presumably unlettered and incapable of preparing amulets

21. Customized preparation of textual amulets for particular persons whose given names are identified in the text had been a standard practice since Greek magical papyri, and this practice seems to have continued during the Middle Ages. However, there were times when it was desirable not to give the owner's name, and in these cases, the text tended to substitute the letter *N* (for *nomen*) or leave a blank space (especially in printed examples), in which the amulet's owner could write his or her name. Blank spaces were used instead of personal names in ancient formularies of amuletic texts. Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World,* pp. 138, 151. To permit use by family members of either gender, a French amulet used the formula "libera me famulum tuum vel famulas N in nomine Domini nostri Jhesu Christi amen." Aymar, "Le sachet accoucheur et ses mystères," p. 334. Gustavo Uzielli, "L'orazione della misura di Cristo," *Archivio storico italiano,* 5th series, 27 (1901): 341.

22. Daniel E. Bornstein, *The Bianchi of 1399: Popular Devotion in Late Medieval Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 166–67; Monica H. Green, "Documenting Medieval Women's Medical Practice," in *Practical Medicine from Salerno to the Black Death,* ed. Luis García-Ballester, Roger French, Jon Arrizabalaga, and Andrew Cunningham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 336. Cf. Bosworth, *Mediaeval Islamic Underworld,* vol. 1, pp. 5–11, 87–88, 122, 128.

23. Lauro Martines, *Strong Words: Writing and Social Strain in the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. 177–81; D. P. Rotunda, *Motif-Index of the Italian Novella in Prose,* Indiana University Publications, Folklore Series, no. 2 (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1942), pp. vii–ix, 81–84.

without assistance. Since such efforts require certain magic rituals to be effective, Bruno secures a live bat, frankincense, and a candle blessed by a priest before preparing the amulet containing *characteres* ("con alquante cateratte"), written with or without a written exemplar, on a small piece of virgin parchment. Calandrino wants the amulet to bring him good luck in love. Once Niccolosa is touched with the amulet, Bruno promises, she will not be able to resist the binding power of its magical text and will thus succumb to Calandrino's amorous advances.

In order to understand how this might work physically, we must turn to a sumptuously illustrated manuscript of Laurent de Premierfait's French translation of the *Decameron,* executed around 1411–14 for Duke John the Fearless of Burgundy (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. Lat. 1989). The miniature depicts the amulet (*ung brief*) as measuring perhaps 10.0 × 15.0 cm, with at least two lines of written text, though as depicted too small to be identifiable as *characteres*. Bruno is shown handing the love amulet to his friend Calandrino, who already has his left hand on the woman and is poised to touch her with the amulet in his right.[24] Niccolosa cannot resist Calandrino and follows him to a barn for a sexual encounter. But the tryst fails miserably when his wife Donna Tessa is alerted and storms in on the unsuspecting couple, whereupon Calandrino is appropriately humiliated. Boccaccio happily details Calandrino's folly and makes him the object of ridicule, like many characters in Italian Renaissance *novellistica*. However, Boccaccio did not argue that textual amulets inevitably failed. Calandrino was thwarted, but Niccolosa did nonetheless succumb to the power of the love amulet. If Donna Tessa had not stormed in on her wayward husband, Calandrino's lust might have been rewarded.[25]

Beyond Boccaccio's story, satirical accounts of textual amulets in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italy can be found in the vernacular *novelle* of Franco Sacchetti (1335–1400) and Giovanni Sercambi (1347–1427), as well as the Latin *facetiae* of the humanist Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459). These stories added

24. Eberhard König, ed., *Boccaccio Decameron: Alle 100 Miniaturen der ersten Bilderhandschrift* (Stuttgart, Zurich: Belser Verlag, 1989), pp. 209–10, reproducing the miniature on fol. 175r of the manuscript and transcribing the relevant text: ".i. aultre peintre nommé brunet fist seinctemant ung brief afin que calandrin ioyst de celle femme. Et apres ce que du brief il ot touchié la iouvencelle il feigny vouloir faire tout son laisir" (p. 209).

25. Giovanni Boccaccio, *Il Decameron,* ed. Carlo Salinari (Rome, Bari: Laterza, 1986), ninth day, fifth tale: "Calandrino s'innamora d'una giovane al quale Bruno fa un brieve, col quale come egli la tocca, ella va con lui, e dalla moglie trovato, ha gravissima e noiosa quistione." Concerning magic rituals sometimes accompanying the use of love amulets, see Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites,* pp. 199–203. John Payne (1842–1916) translated the word *brieve* as a "talisman" or a "script," in *Stories of Boccaccio (The Decameron), Translated from the Italian into English with Eleven Original Etchings by Leopold Fleming* (n.p.: privately printed, n.d.), vol. 2, pp. 513–19. Concerning Boccaccio's use of the word *cateratte,* see Delbert R. Hillers, "Two Notes on the Decameron (III vii 42–43 and VIII vii 64, IX v 48)," *MLN* 113, no. 1 (1998): 186–91.

contemporary details to the old stock theme of greedy charlatans producing worthless amulets to dupe ignorant peasants, only to have lettered people expose the fraud.[26] Sercambi's tale of deception (*De malitia in inganno*) concerns an itinerant charlatan named Bonzera (or Marzo), who could pose as a monk one day and a physician the next. On a road near Lucca, he meets a young married couple, Cilastro and Bovitora, and for a fee prepares a *breve* that is to be placed on the man's genitals before intercourse to assure that his wife becomes pregnant. Franco Cardini has argued that the textual amulet was supposed to counteract the wife's sterility and perhaps even her husband's impotence. Consistent with the emphasis in Italian *novellistica* on exposing deception, Cilastro opens and reads the two-line vernacular text, but concludes that the amulet is a worthless fraud, without therapeutic value.[27]

Poggio Bracciolini describes an unprincipled friar preaching near Tivoli, where people had traveled with their children to seek refuge from the plague in Rome. The friar offers to provide plague amulets (*brevia contra pestem*) to simple folk (*stulta plebecula*) in nearby villages at a premium price, telling gullible customers to wear the plague amulets around their necks by means of a virgin-parchment cord and not open them for fifteen days, lest the protective devices loose their magical efficacy. The friar left after money changed hands, and when one of the textual amulets was opened and read, it proved to contain nothing but a bawdy two-line vernacular jingle.[28]

In Italian literary tales, Jews could take the place of Christian charlatans as the purveyors of textual amulets for money. Franco Sacchetti writes about a Jew living in the town of Mugello (near Florence). For a fee of eight florins, the Jew prepares a textual amulet (*brieve*) for a young widow, whose eleven-year-old son's growth had been inexplicably stunted. After the boy has worn this textual amulet around his neck for a prescribed, numerologically significant period of nine days and nights, the mother's parish priest opens the amulet and read it aloud. The priest condemns the four-line Italian text ("Sali su un troppo / E serai grande troppo; / Se tu mi giugni, / Il cul mi pugni") as being utterly worthless and no substitute for Christian prayers.[29] There was a popular belief that Jews, living on the fringe of Christian society, prepared textual amulets for

26. Cardini, "Il 'breve' (secoli XIV–XV)," pp. 68–71.

27. Giovanni Sercambi, *Novelle,* ed. Giovanni Sinicropi, Università degli Studi di Torino, Filologia Testi e Studi, no. 5 (Turin: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 1995), pp. 761–66 (novella 95). The text reads, "Bella sei e buono culo hai, / fattel fare e impregnerai" (p. 765).

28. Poggio Bracciolini, *Facezie,* ed. Marcello Ciccuto (Milan: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 1983), pp. 363–64 (no. 233). The text reads, "Donna, se fili, e cadeti, / Quando te fletti, tien lo culo chiuso."

29. Franco Sacchetti, *Il trecentonovelle,* ed. Valerio Marucci (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1996), pp. 768–71 ("Novella CCXVIII").

Christians. Some Jews may have done so, but it should be remembered that Jews were no more masters of magic than were Christians.[30] As eternal outsiders, Jews were often convenient targets of suspicion because of their long association in the popular imagination with *tefillin, mezuzah,* and other ritual practices that were exotic enough in a predominantly Christian world to be considered magical. The proliferation of pseudo-Solomonic handbooks in the late medieval West probably lent additional credibility to old suspicions about Jews as magicians.

English Amulets for Adam, Osanna, and Lucy

England offers evidence comparable to that of Italy. From the thirteenth to early sixteenth centuries, textual amulets for specific protection coexisted with multi-text amulets offering general protection, largely through standard Christian textual elements. Among the oldest surviving examples are the two textual amulets of the early thirteenth century. They were found folded up inside the Ingelby Arncliffe Crucifix, which was discovered in Yorkshire around 1846. The two textual amulets were housed in an imported Limoges enamel-on-metal crucifix, discussed in Chapter 3. This elegant housing indicates that the original owners were people of financial means. The crucifix was very likely posted on a wall to provide general household protection. There is no way to know how long this apotropaic assembly remained in family use or why it was eventually abandoned or buried, perhaps with its original owners. The larger of the two amulets refers several times to the people for whom it had been prepared. Their Christian names were Adam and Osanna ("famulo famula dei Adam osanna"). Different scribes, both probably local clerics, writing in a clear English Protogothic book hand of the most modest quality, prepared the amulets. The script at this level would have been more appropriate for documents than books. The text was written lengthwise on the recto of two roughly cut strips of unruled parchment measuring approximately 3.8 × 29.0 and 6.0 × 24.1 cm.

These two textual amulets were designed to offer Adam and Osanna general protection against demons, elves, apparitions, and everything evil. Most of the eight-line text is an invocation of the Trinity, Christ and the Virgin Mary, the Apostles, Evangelists, and other elect of God; an abridged list of divine names

30. In the late fourteenth century, for example, the bishop of Salzburg was said to have asked a local Jew to provide a *mezuzah* to be fastened to his castle gate, but the Jew sought the opinion of a rabbi, who rejected this magical use of a religious object for house protection. Venetia Newall, "The Jew as Witch Figure," in *The Witch Figure: Folklore Essays by a Group of Scholars in England Honouring the 75th Birthday of Katharine M. Briggs,* ed. Venetia Newall (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 109. Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition,* p. 3.

("per magna nomina dei AGLA, on, tetragramaton, sabaoth, adonai, et omnia nomina"), which were interspersed with crosses, the Five Wounds of Christ, and a litany of saints, including St. Dunstan of Glastonbury (patron of metalworkers) and St. Margaret of Antioch (protector of pregnant women). The brief text ends with a standard liturgical formula ("✠ Christus vincit ✠ Christus regnat ✠ Christus imperat ✠") and an appeal to protect the couple from evil ("adam osanna ab omni malo defendat amen"). These crosses are special in that the letters of the AGLA acronym are written, one each, in the four spaces formed by the arms of each cross. The smaller of the two Ingleby Arncliffe amulets is comprised of a seven-line list of the names of Christ, beginning "Ave Jesu Christi, verbum Patris, filius virginis sanctae Mariae." The list includes thirty-three divine names and six repetitions of "Ave Jesu Christi," interspersed with crosses. Only the initial cross is written with the AGLA acronym.[31] The text and housing of the Ingelby Arncliffe amulets were appropriate for the early thirteenth century but were probably not dissimilar from amulets used in the previous century.

A fourteenth-century English amulet for a woman named Lucy offers forms of specific protection (London, British Library, Wolley Charters Collection, no. IV: 68). Lucy's amulet is comprised of two brief texts written on the upper two-thirds of the blank dorse (hair side) of a parchment charter measuring 28.2 × 16.5 cm (fig. 4). Issued with a pendant seal during the reign of King Edward I (1272–1307), the charter was a legal instrument by which Robert de Kilburn had granted land to Gilbert Keys in the village of Kilburn, Derbyshire.[32] Probably copied from a commonplace book or collection of exemplars, the amuletic texts were written in a "country" Anglicana documentary cursive datable to the last quarter of the fourteenth century.[33] The first amuletic text is against headache, and the second is against toothache, fever, and gout or other ailments ("gutta uel guttas").[34] Protection is promised to anyone carrying Christ's name on his or her person ("ut siquis nomen domini super se portaverit"). Divine power and healing emanated from Christ; specifically from the Cross, Passion, Five Wounds, and Resurrection. The amuletic text also invokes 134 Christian martyrs, 24 elders of the Apocalypse, 12 Apostles, and All Saints; then uses the

31. Ord, *History and Antiquities of Cleveland,* pp. 136–40; Wordsworth, "Two Yorkshire Charms or Amulets," pp. 401–8. Osanna was used as a woman's name in Yorkshire during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

32. London, British Library, Wolley Charters Collection, no. IV: 68. Adam Wolley bequeathed this document collection to the British Museum in 1828.

33. The script is similar in appearance to a "country" exchequer hand of 1391, reproduced in Charles Johnson and Hilary Jenkinson, *English Court Hand A.D. 1066 to 1500 Illustrated Chiefly from the Public Records* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915), pt. 1, pp. 203–4; pt. 2, plate 29b.

34. For an ecclesiastical conjuration *ad expellendam guttam,* see Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter,* vol. 2, p. 508.

Image not available

Fig. 4 Wolley Charters no. IV: 68 (verso), British Library, London

quasi-liturgical amuletic formula based on three repetitions of the words *agios* and *sanctus*.[35] The first amuletic text employs the fairly uncommon method of providing alternative possessive pronouns, the second pronoun being written above the line for optional use: "Signum sancte crucis domini nostri ihesu christi sit in occulo meo tuo et in capite meo tuo contra dolorem ipsam." When using first person, the amulet would be worn on one's own body as an amulet; in the second person, one could recite it over another family member (perhaps a child) or have someone else recite it over one's own head in the manner of a blessing or verbal charm. The twofold approach of hearing and binding powerful words was thought to enhance magical efficacy.

35. Three repetitions of the Greek word αγιος may be found in Orthodox liturgy, the *trisagion* or *trishagion,* as previously discussed, and also in Byzantine amuletic text. See Laurent, "Amulettes byzantines et formularies magiques," pp. 309–10.

The second text on Lucy's amulet offers protection against evil and enemies. It invokes the Virgin and several saints, including King Sigismund of Burgundy, Archbishop William of York, St. Thomas à Becket, and St. Barbara. One of the names is Theobald (Theusbaldus), which probably refers not to St. Theobald (d. 1066), but rather to Simon Theobald or Simon of Sudbury (d. 1381), archbishop of Canterbury, who was murdered during the Peasant's Revolt under Wat Tyler, in the reign of King Richard II. Perhaps considered to be another St. Thomas à Becket, Simon Theobold was venerated locally as a "popular saint." The second text twice refers to a female supplicant named Lucy ("salvet me luciam and libera hanc famulam luciam"). In turning an amuletic exemplar into a textual amulet, the scribe merely had to insert Lucy's name where the exemplar indicated *N* (that is, *nomen*). Since the Keys family would have kept the Kilburn charter in a muniment chest, it is very likely that Lucy was a member of the Keys family, who were landholders in Kilburn, Horsley, and Denby (north of the East Midlands town of Derby).[36] The charter folded down twice vertically and twice horizontally to dimensions of approximately 5.5 × 9.5 cm, so that the unused blank dorse offered a writing support for a folding amulet, which was most likely worn on the body in a small sack. When no longer needed as an amulet, the charter was restored to the Keys family archives and thus was preserved. In fact, this is probably the only reason that the item survived. There is evidence that magico-medical amulets were considered disposable or were actually supposed to be destroyed after use. Among the fever amulets recommended in the Thornton family's *Liber de diversis medicinis* (Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS A.5.2), probably written in Yorkshire in the second quarter of the fifteenth century, was a parchment amulet that one was to throw into the fire after the person had recovered, so that the amulet, made for a specific person, could not be used by anyone else.[37]

As with contemporary Italian amulets, a wide array of different people, using various written exemplars, could have prepared amulets for Adam, Osanna, and Lucy. A wide range of clerics, from parish priests to itinerant friars, could

36. Isaac Herbert Jeayes, *Descriptive Catalogue of Derbyshire Charters in Public and Private Libraries and Muniment Rooms* (London: Bemrose and Sons, 1906), pp. 118, 179, 187. Members of a knightly family named de Kilburn appear in local documents for Kilburn and Horsley. Reginald R. Darlington, ed., *The Cartulary of Darley Abbey* (Kendal: Titus Wilson and Son, 1945), vol. 2, pp. 481–85.

37. Margaret Sinclair Ogden, ed., *The Liber de diversis medicinis in the Thornton Manuscripts* (*MS. Lincoln Cathedral, A.5.2*), Early English Text Society, Original Series, no. 207 (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society, 1938), p. 63: "Or tak iij obles & write first in ane ✠ Pater est Alpha & O ✠ Filius ✠ vita ✠ Spiritus sanctus remedium ✠ & tak & write in perchemyn ✠ Agios ✠ Otheos ✠ Atanatos ✠ yskiros ✠ imas ✠ eleson ✠ Ego sum Alpha ✠ & O ✠ Christus vincit ✠ Christus regnat ✠ Christus imperat ✠ and, when he es hale, caste þe charme in the fire."

have copied such an amulet from a written exemplar. A good English example of such an exemplar is the miscellany kept by the Worcestershire monk John Northwood from 1384 to 1410 (London, British Library, Additional MS 37787), which includes lists of divine names, a Middle English version of the Heavenly Letter, prayers to be recited and worn on the body, an amuletic text or verbal charm against toothache, and a version of the common narrative charm about Christ coming upon a feverish St. Peter at the Jerusalem Gate (fols. 174v–180r). Instructions recommend writing out this narrative charm as a fever amulet and wearing it on the body ("quicumque hoc scriptum super se portauerit").[38] Other versions of this amuletic text can be found in an unknown thirteenth-century English cleric's collection of sermons and other texts, including a conjuration against *gutta maledicta,*[39] and in a commonplace book kept in the 1470s by Robert Reynes of Acle, a minor manorial administrator in Norfolk, whose level of practical literacy would have made it possible for him to prepare amulets for local landholders or peasants.[40]

A medical handbook could also have provided exemplars for Lucy's amulet. Some English medical practitioners in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries kept small portable codices or *vade mecum* folding books for medical reference when seeing patients.[41] Physicians might turn to a popular medical manual like the *Rosa anglica,* written around 1314 by John of Gaddesden (ca. 1280–1361), an English physician educated at Merton College, Oxford, in medicine and theology. He attained the degree of *doctor in medicinis* in 1309 and held various ecclesiastical benefices. In his manual, Gaddesden shows wide reading of Latin

38. For a discussion of the manuscript and its compiler, see Baugh, *Worcestershire Miscellany,* pp. 14–23. Internal references to written use are found in both the Heavenly Letter ("who-so berit this letter wyth hym he thar not drede") and the standard amuletic text for fevers, wherein St. Peter addresses Christ ("Obsecro domine quicumque hoc scriptum super se portauerit ei febres nocere ualeant Et ille petro dixit fiat uerbum tuum Amen").

39. London, British Library, Sloane MS 1580, fols. 44v–45r: "Sanctus petrus super marmoream petram sedebat manus suas ad maxillam tenebat desuper perueniens dominus dixit. Coniuro te gutta maledicta neque mossa neque dentes neque in ulla parte corporis istius." The text invokes the nine orders of angels, evangelists, and other sources of Christian power.

40. Louis, *Commonplace Book,* pp. 167–69, 384–85, no. 27: "Domine, peto ut quicunque uel quecunque hec vera super se portauerit uel super caput infirmi legerit, non habeat febres" (pp. 168–69). In the other version (pp. 173–74, 389, no. 31), St. Peter says, "Domine, rogo te ut quicunque ista verba nomine meo super se portauerit scripta, non noceant illi febres." Concerning Reynes and the village of Acle, see Louis's introduction, pp. 27–39. Similar amuletic texts are also found interspersed in an English astrological and medical compilation of the late fifteenth century (San Marino, The Huntington Library, HM 64). C. W. Dutschke, *Guide to Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Huntington Library* (San Marino, Calif.: The Huntington Library, 1989), vol. 1, p. 136.

41. James K. Mustain, "A Rural Medical Practitioner in Fifteenth-Century England," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 46, no. 5 (September–October 1972): 419–76; C. H. Talbot, "A Mediaeval Physician's *Vade Mecum,*" *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 16, no. 5 (July 1961): 213–33.

texts (ancient, medieval, and Islamic). Herbal remedies, oral benedictions, signs of the cross, and other treatments were not always sufficient. Gaddesden also recommended treating toothaches by means of textual amulets and prayers. A prayer to St. Apollonia, the third-century deaconess whose teeth were broken before her martyrdom in Alexandria, was thought to prevent toothache on the day the prayer was said. The physician or other caregiver could write out a textual amulet based on the Trinity, Christ's name, and a rhyming magical formula ("✠ Rex ✠ Pax ✠ Nax ✠"), and then place it on the afflicted person's jaw. Gaddesden advises the reader to "draw characters on parchment or panel and let the patient touch the aching tooth with his finger as long as he is drawing, and he is cured. The characters are made in the shape of running water by drawing a continuous line, not straight but up and down. Three lines are to be drawn in the name of the Blessed Trinity and this is to be done often."[42]

Some physicians kept commonplace books in which they copied useful texts, which could later be used as exemplars for single-purpose textual amulets. The commonplace book of Thomas Fayreford (London, British Library, Harley MS 2558) shows how an itinerant physician might have prepared textual amulets for people not unlike Lucy. Fayreford could read and write in Latin and possibly had some formal medical education at Oxford. He was active in the counties of Devon and Somerset, especially the towns of Tiverton and Bridgewater, during the first half of the fifteenth century. Fayreford filled his book with extracts from standard Latin and Anglo-Norman medical texts, and he cited Arab medical authorities. At the same time, he picked up "secrets" orally and included traditional verbal charms, some called *oraciones,* to deal with fevers, dental problems, epilepsy, and childbirth. Like other country physicians, he regarded textual amulets as legitimate medical tools, and he prepared textual amulets on slips of parchment or paper as confidently as a modern physician would write out medical prescriptions on preprinted forms. Fayreford used textual amulets as one treatment option, along with more academically acceptable medical therapies and surgical procedures. His mix of patients covered the social spectrum. Over 60 percent of the hundred or so cases recorded in Fayreford's commonplace book concerned males (including children). Whether based on scripture or magic words like *ananizapta,* Fayreford had acquired his knowledge of useful amuletic texts and verbal charms from a combination of textbooks, other medical practitioners, and personal experience.[43] Like other physicians, Fayreford

42. H. P. Cholmeley, *John of Gaddesden and the Rosa medicinae* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), pp. 48–49.

43. Jones, "Thomas Fayreford," pp. 156–83; Peter Murray Jones, "Harley MS. 2558: A Fifteenth-Century Medical Commonplace Book," in *Manuscript Sources of Medieval Medicine: A Book of Essays,* ed. Margaret R. Schleissner (New York: Garland, 1995), pp. 35–54.

used traditional magic to supplement other treatment options, just as amulets overlayed textual elements to intensify magical efficacy and insure that something would work.[44]

Medical dispensing of textual amulets invited imitation by unlettered and semiliterate quacks. In 1382, for example, Roger Clerk of Wandsworth was tried before the mayor and aldermen of London in the Chamber of the Guildhall for impersonating a physician when he sold Roger atte Hacche a fever amulet for use on his ailing wife Johanna. Upon close inspection, the London court discovered that the amulet was a parchment leaf cut from an unidentified old book. Roger Clerk rolled up the parchment leaf, placed it in a piece of gold cloth, and then put it on Johanna's neck. He claimed that it contained a brief Latin invocation of the body and blood of Christ. The London court did not doubt the medical efficacy of these words, if properly dispensed, but Roger Clerk was neither a physician nor literate in Latin (despite his surname). As in some moralistic tales about charlatans tricking ignorant peasants, the false amulet had no text. So the court sentenced him to punishment of the pillory. As part of Roger Clerk's public disgrace, he was paraded around the city, the false amulet festooned around his neck.[45] Literary and anecdotal evidence would suggest that local quacks like Roger Clerk were not uncommon in late medieval England, though archival documentation of their activities does not become plentiful until the second half of the sixteenth century. But such a quack, charlatan, or healer would not have been able to prepare Lucy's amulet, which was the work of a literate person, even though written in an unrefined "country" script.

Local clergy were a likely source of the amulets for Adam, Osanna, and Lucy. Late medieval manuals for English parish priests and mendicant preachers contained warnings against textual amulets. These warnings were probably intended

44. Peter Murray Jones, *Medieval Medical Miniatures* (London: The British Library in association with the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1984), p. 29: "We do however occasionally find charms written out in medical books, particularly in antidotaries or herbals. We must assume that they were employed alongside more rational methods on the principle that if both rational and magical means are available, it is as well to try both." Ibid., pp. 129–30: "Most charms, and doubtless all the invocations of the saints (of whom there was at least one for each part of the body likely to be afflicted), were more like a form of additional insurance, on the principle that no potentially useful agency of healing should be neglected . . . both rational and magical means were used together—rather than magic being seen as an alternative to rational medicine."

45. Henry Thomas Riley, ed., *Memorials of London and London Life, in the XIIIth, XIVth, and XVth Centuries; Being a Series of Extracts, Local, Social, and Political, from the Early Archives of the City of London, A.D. 1276–1419* (London: Longmans, Green, 1868), pp. 464–66. Riley cites "Letter-Book H, fol. cxlv." The amuletic text was supposed to have read "Anima Christi, santifica me; corpus Christi, salva me; isanguis Christi, inebria me; cum bonus Christus tu, lava me." Not finding these words, the court concluded, "a straw beneath his foot would be of just as much avail for fevers, as this said charm of his was." Discussed briefly in Carole Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society in Later Medieval England* (London: Sandpiper Books, 1999), p. 95.

as much to remind clerics not to produce textual amulets as to be vigilant against charlatans and lay healers peddling amulets based on forbidden elements. John Mirk (fl.1403), a canon regular and sometimes prior of the Augustinian abbey of Lilleshall in Shropshire, wrote a versified Middle English manual, in part based on a William de Pagula's *Oculus sacerdotis* (compiled in Berkshire in the 1320s), for use by the parish priests who preached, heard confession, and instructed those "þat have no bokes of here owne, and oþer þat beth of mene lore." Mirk argued that witchcraft, sorcery, and conjuring were clever tricks of the Devil and forms of idolatry violating the First Commandment. Charms undermined faith and placed Christians in the Devil's grip. As used by Mirk, the word "charm" could include illicit incantations and textual amulets involving magic seals, and *characteres*. In such cases, the excommunication service found in some Mirk manuscripts informs us, violators should be removed from the church and cursed by God and the heavenly firmament.[46]

The *Fasciculus morum,* an anonymous fourteenth-century English Franciscan manual for preachers, condemned *tilsters* who tried to heal by the laying on of false charms ("cum fictis carminibus") as witches doing the Devil's bidding. Yet based on the authority of Raymundus of Peñafort's *Summa de poenitentia et matrimonia,* the Franciscan author allowed Christians of good faith to use textual amulets ("scribit in cartis et ponat super aliquem infirmum"), if they did so in ways that honored God and did not expect automatic results.[47] The Seven Deadly Sins section of Chaucer's *Parson's Tale,* which is probably based on the *Somme le roi* (1279) by the Dominican Frère Laurent du Bois, expressed similar sentiments about God's role in allowing textual amulets and verbal charms to work on occasion: "Charmes for woundes or maladie of men or of beestes, if they taken any effect, it may be peraventure that God suffereth it, for folk sholden yeve the moore feith and reverence to his name."[48]

46. Gillis Kristensson, ed., *John Mirk's Instructions for Parish Priests,* Lund Studies in English, vol. 49 (Lund: C.W.K Gleerup, 1974), pp. 87–88, 186 (ll. 360–71); Edward Peacock, ed. *Instructions for Parish Priests by John Myrc,* Early English Text Society, Original Series, vol. 31 (London: Trübner and Company for the Early English Text Society, 1868), p. 12, ll. 360–71. For the Sentence of Excommunication and the priest's confessional examination about violations of the Ten Commandments, see Peacock, p. 23, ll. 733–37; p. 30, ll. 964–73.

47. Siegfried Wenzel, ed., *Fasciculus morum: A Fourteenth-Century Preacher's Handbook* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989), p. 576. See also Raymundus of Peñafort, *Summa Sancti Raymundi de Peniafort Barcinonensis Ordinis Praedictorum de poenitentia, et matrimonia, cum glossis Joannis de Friburgo* (Rome: Sumptibus J. Tallini, 1603; repr., Farnsborough, England: Gregg Press, 1967), pp. 104–5.

48. Benson, *Riverside Chaucer,* p. 308 (l. 606); Pollard, eds., *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer,* p. 288 (l. 606). Alfred Pollard notes (p. 265n), "The treatise on the Deadly Sins and their cure which is wedged into this account of Penitence is taken from the *Somme de Vices de Vertus* of Frère Lorens, a thirteenth-century writer."

Late medieval English society at the parish level was overflowing with both regular and secular clergy, who provided an endless supply of married clerks in minor orders, men of humble birth who did copying for money.[49] Traditional ways survived with clerical involvement, despite Protestant efforts to forge clear lines of demarcation between religion and magic. "In many country parishes after the Reformation," Keith Thomas has observed, "the minister combined his religious functions with the practice of medicine, and his methods sometimes differed little from those employed by the folk healers of the day." Yet English country curates continued for centuries to provide traditional textual amulets based on Gospel readings and vernacular charms.[50] In the increasingly literate society of late medieval England, there was an abundance of potential amulet producers and a convergence in practice among clerics, physicians, and lay healers. Never before had textual amulets for specific protection been so readily attainable by people at all social levels.

Amulets Mixing Magical Traditions

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, learned magic in the medieval West began to offer new sources of supernatural power and exert a profound influence on textual amulets for general protection. Contemporary accounts by the English philosopher and scientist Roger Bacon (ca. 1214–94) and St. Albans chronicler Matthew Paris (ca. 1200–1259) about the *pastoureaux* in northern France and the Low Countries underscore the challenge posed by Solomonic magic and astrology. In 1251 a shadowy demagogue, known to history as the Master of Hungary or Shepherd Master (*magister pastor*), amassed a large following of shepherds and peasants. He planned to lead them to the Holy Land in order to aid King Louis IX of France (St. Louis), who had been imprisoned there while on crusade. Even Blanche of Castile, the widow of King Louis VIII and regent while her son St. Louis was on crusade, supported the *pastoureaux* until their anticlericalism, hostility to the nobility, and wanton pillaging of Paris made them an embarrassing liability to the crown.

In the *Opus majus,* Roger Bacon likened the Master of Hungary to the Muslims and Tartars, who with their knowledge of astrology were capable of triumphing over the force of Christian words and arms. Bacon believed that astrology had empowered the Master of Hungary to win the large following of the *pastoureaux* and even to deceive Blanche of Castile into supporting him. "I saw him with my own eyes," Bacon noted, "carrying openly in his hand something as

49. Bennett, *Pastons,* pp. 212–14, 218, 224.
50. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* pp. 275–76.

though it were a sacred object, and in the way a man would carry relics, and he went with bare feet, and was always surrounded by a host of armed men, yet so dispersed in the fields that he could be seen by all who met him, making an ostentatious display of that which he carried in his hand. Whatever the case may be regarding the Tartars and Saracens, it is certain that the Antichrist and his followers will employ these means." In Roger Bacon's view, the Master of Hungary object was an astrological talisman like those used in the East. Carried deceptively like a sacred relic, the object was the source of supernatural power threatening the Christian West. However, Matthew Paris explained that the Master of Hungary, in offering to lead his army of peasants on crusade, claimed to have a letter and writ ("chartula et mandatum") of the Virgin Mary, not a powerful talisman. The Master of Hungary's followers might have venerated a letter from the Virgin Mary as a sacred relic, though critics could easily dismiss it as an apocryphal letter and false relic. It is also possible that the powerful object was a textual amulet based on a version of the Heavenly Letter, which Christian warriors prized because they believed that it would offer them divine protection and victory in battle.[51]

Other English writers expressed concerns about the use of forbidden amulets offering general protection. A politically motivated chronicle of the Merciless Parliament by Thomas Favent (fl. 1394) offers evidence about such textual amulets discovered at the time of the 1388 execution of Sir Robert Tresilian, a knight from Cornwall who had risen rapidly under King Richard II to become Lord Chief Justice of King's Bench. Tresilian also served as a justice of the peace in the counties of Cornwall, Kent, and Oxford. Tresilian was one of five royal favorites

51. Bridges, *The "Opus majus" of Roger Bacon,* vol. 1, pp. 401–2: "Similiter in temporibus nostris magister Pastor totam Alemanniam et Franciam commovit, et cucurrit post eum multitudo hominum, et gratiam habuit coram toto vulgo laicorum in contemptu cleri et ecclesiae confusionem. Et dixit Dominae Blanchiae, quod iret ad filium suum ultra mare, talibus verbis sapientissimam mulierem decipiens. Non dubitent sapientes, quin ipsi fuerunt nuntii Tartarorum aut Saracenorum, et quin habuerunt aliqua opera unde fascinabant plebem. Et vidi cum oculis meis patenter in manu sua quiddam tanquam esset res sacra, ac si homo deferret reliquias, et ivit nudis pedibus, et erat circa eum multitudo armatorum, ita tamen dispersa in campis, quod ab omnibus occurrentibus potuit videri cum illo quod portabat in manu cum magna ostentatione." The English translation is from Robert Belle Burke, *The Opus Majus of Roger Bacon* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1927), vol. 1, p. 417. Henry Richards Luard, ed., *Matthaei Parisiensis, monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica majora,* Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores [Rolls Series], no. 57, vol. 5 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1880): "Addidit autem fidem dictis suis eloquentia, et manus suae indissolubilis clausura, in qua se mentitus est beatae Virginis habuisse chartulam et mandatum" (p. 247). Concerning Bacon's astrological beliefs, see Hackett, "Roger Bacon on Astronomy-Astrology," in Hackett, *Roger Bacon and the Sciences,* pp. 175–98 (especially pp. 183–84). On the *pastoureaux,* see William Chester Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade: A Study in Rulership* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 113–16; Gérard Sivéry, *Blanche de Castile* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), pp. 245–48, 270–71.

whom the Lords Appellant charged with high treason. The Merciless Parliament condemned Tresilian to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, along with the king's other friends (Alexander Neville, archbishop of York; Robert de Vere, duke of Ireland; Michael de la Pole, earl of Suffolk; and Sir Nicholas Brembre). In addition, Tresilian's substantial landholdings in Cornwall and elsewhere were to be confiscated. Favent and some contemporary chroniclers agree that before going on trial, Tresilian went into hiding disguised as a poor old man, wearing shabby clothing and a long, false, or "Parisian" beard. Favent wrote that Tresilian appeared more like a pilgrim or beggar than chief justice of the realm. Henry de Wakefield, bishop of Worcester, noted in his register that Tresilian was dressed "in apparatu hermiti." The chronicler Jean Froissart added that Tresilian had tried to pass himself off first as a poor traveling merchant and later as a Kentish peasant ("a farmour of sir Johan of Hollandes"), traveling to Westminster in order to file complaints against men of the archbishop of Canterbury.[52]

Despite his disguises, Tresilian was found, either within the precincts of Westminster Abbey or in an apothecary's shop near Parliament, depending on the chronicler. He was arrested on 19 February 1388. After Parliament confirmed the earlier sentence against him, Tresilian was taken to the Tower of London and from there to the gallows at Tyburn.[53] Favent satirically contrasts Tresilian at Tyburn with Christ at Calvary.[54] It is in connection with Tresilian's execution

52. Thomas Favent, *Historia siue narracio de modo et forma mirabilis parliamenti apud Westmonasterium anno domini millesimo CCCLXXXVI regni vero Regis Ricardi Secundi post conquestum anno decimo, per Thomam Fauent clericum indictata,* ed. May McKisack, Camden Miscellany, vol. 14; Camden Society, 3rd series, vol. 37 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1926), p. 17: "Pocius apparens peregrinus vel mendicus quam justiciarius regis." Henry Knighton, *Knighton's Chronicle, 1337–1396,* ed. G. H. Martin, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 498: "Hic predictus Robertus disfigurauerat seipsum, fingens se pauperum debilem, in tunica hispida et dilacerata et debili, feceratque sibi barbam prolixam et longam artificiose, quam barbam 'barbam Parisiensem' uocabant, et faciem suam exterminabat ne agnosceretur, adeo disfiguratus fuerat quod nullus eum agnouit nisi ex sola loquela." Richard G. Davies, "Some Notes from the Register of Henry de Wakefield, Bishop of Worcester, on the Political Crisis of 1386–1388," *English Historical Review* 86, no. 340 (July 1971): 558. Jean Froissart, *The Chronicle of Froissart, Translated out of French by Sir John Bourchier Lord Berners, annis 1523–25,* The Tudor Translations, no. 31 (London: David Nutt, 1902), vol. 5, pp. 26–27 (chap. 92): "I have sene sir Robert Trivylyen disguised in a vyllayns habytte, in an alehouse here without the gate" (p. 27). The Tudor English translation of Froissart renders the surname Tresilian as Trivylyen (i.e. Trevelyan).

53. Concerning the political crisis and executions, see McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century,* pp. 448–58; S. B. Chrimes and A. L. Brown, *Select Documents of English Constitutional History, 1307–1485* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1961), pp. 139–45; Anthony Goodman, *The Loyal Conspiracy: The Lords Appellant under Richard II* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), pp. 44–45. See also Frank F. Klaassen, "Religion, Science, and the Transformations of Magic: Manuscripts of Magic, 1300–1600" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1999), pp. 15–16.

54. Galloway, "The Politics of Pity in Gower's *Confessio amantis,*" in Steiner and Barrington, *Letter of the Law,* p. 84.

that Favent mentions textual amulets. Ostensibly, the condemned man said, "So long as I do wear something upon me, I shall not die." The executioner had Tresilian stripped naked and discovered that he was wearing one or more textual amulets, which were comprised of certain *experimenta* and *signa* painted in the manner of astrological signs or talismanic seals ("ad modum carecterum celi"), a painted head of a devil, and the names of many demons.[55] This source of magical protection was removed, no doubt because the executioner thought it might be effective, and Tresilian was hanged on the gallows, his throat being cut for good measure. Most translators have agreed that Favent was referring to an amulet of some sort.[56] Favent might have been referring to a small group of parchment amulets or a single multipurpose amulet comprised of separate sections, which in either case would have been worn around the neck in a leather pouch or fabric sack. In late medieval England, the component texts of such an amulet might be called *brevia*. The word *experimentum* had a range of meanings from the twelfth to seventeenth centuries. It could signify manuscript texts of natural magic or collections of *secreta philosophorum,* which guided operations (as in alchemical experiments). It could also refer to a magical charm or recipe, or to a diagnostic procedure.[57] However, based on Favent's negative character-

55. Favent, *Historia,* p. 18: "'Dummodo aliqua feram circa me, mori non possum.' Mox spoliarunt eum et inuenerunt certa experimenta et certa signa depicta in eisdem ad modum carecterum celi; et unum caput demonis depictum, et plura nomina demonum inscripta fuerunt, quibus ablates, nudus suspensus est."

56. An English translation of Favent's chronicle, published as a pamphlet in 1641 because the history of the Merciless Parliament seemed relevant to contemporary English politics, rendered *experimenta* as "exorcising toys." Reprinted as "An Historical Narration of the Manner and Form of That Memorable Parliament," in *The Harleian Miscellany: Or, a Collection of Scarce, Curious, and Entertaining Pamphlets and Tracts, as well in Manuscript as in Print, Found in the Late Earl of Oxford's Library* . . . (London: Printed for T. Osborne, 1746), vol. 7, p. 253: "Wherefore the Executioner stripped him, and found certain Images, painted like to the Signs of Heaven; and the Head of a Devil painted, and the Names of many of the Devils wrote in Parchment; the exorcising Toys being taken away, he was hanged up naked." This translation was largely quoted without citation in Thomas Bayly Howell, ed., *Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason* . . . (London: R. Bagshaw, 1809), vol. 1, cols. 117–18. Andrew Galloway's recently published English translation of Favent's chronicle, in Steiner and Barrington, *Letter of the Law,* pp. 231–52, describes Tresilian's amulet as "particular instructions with particular signs depicted in them, in the manner of astronomical characters, and one depicted a demon's head, many others were inscribed with demons' names" (pp. 246–47). In a note, however, Galloway compares this "life-preserving talisman" to the charter (*carta salvationis*) that the Lollard Margery Baxter claimed in 1429 to have in her womb. Galloway discusses Baxter's charter in "Intellectual Pregnancy, Metaphysical Femininity, and the Social Doctrine of the Trinity in Piers Plowman," *The Yearbook of Langland Studies* 12 (1998): 117–52. Concerning Baxter, see also Shinners, *Medieval Popular Religion,* pp. 490–98.

57. Concerning the mean of the word *experimentum,* see Bruno Roy, "The Household Encyclopedia as Magic Kit: Medieval Popular Interests in Pranks and Illusions," *Journal of Popular Culture* 14, no. 1 (1980): 63–65. Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List,* p. 179, offers a conjectural

ization, Tresilian's *experimenta* were probably textual amulets that included pseudo-Solomonic rituals and seals essential for summoning angels and demons by name to the aid of the person wearing them.

If Favent's description of the execution is accurate, we might wonder who found and identified the textual amulets. An unlettered hangman could probably recognize the presence of magic seals and figures at first glance, but might not have known the difference between the angelic and demonic names of Solomonic magic, and the transliterated Hebrew and Greek divine names of amulets in the common tradition. Literate judicial officials at the execution would have been better able to describe the contents of the amulets. Curiously, other early chronicles do not confirm Favent's account of the use of textual amulets, while a fifteenth-century miniature in a Flemish illuminated manuscript of Froissart's *Chroniques* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS fr. 2645, fol. 238v) depicts a fully clothed Tresilian about to be beheaded by the executioner's sword, while three officials dispassionately observe the proceedings.[58] But one contemporary source offers suggestive evidence in support of Favent's account. The monk John Northwood noted in his devotional miscellany, probably kept from 1386 to 1410 at Bordesley Abbey, Worcestershire, that Tresilian was executed after an otherwise-efficacious textual amulet had been removed from his

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definition of the word *experimentum:* "(?) amulet c. 1390." Among the Dorothea Waley Singer, *Catalogue of Latin and Vernacular Alchemical Manuscripts in Great Britain and Ireland Dating Before the XVI Century* (Brussels: Maurice Lamertin, 1930), vol. 2, pp. 706–31, lists extant manuscripts of alchemical *experimenta*. The fifteenth-century catalogue of St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, described Michael Northgate's miscellany of magical texts as *experimenta diuersa*. M. R. James, *The Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover: The Catalogues of the Libraries of Christ Church Priory and St. Augustine's Abbey at Canterbury and of St. Martin's Priory at Dover* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), pp. 386–87 (MS 1604). A seventeenth-century English manuscript contains magical charms (*experimenta*) for all occasions (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS 3548). Madan, *Summary Catalogue,* vol. 2, pt. 2, p. 678. Experiments are found in a fifteenth-century German manuscript (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 849). See Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites,* pp. 329 (no. 38), 334 (no. 39), 339 (no. 40), 345 (no. 44). Hunt, *Popular Medicine,* p. 250 (no. 113), gives an English diagnostic "experimentum ad probandum utrum homo ut leprosus a natura."

58. Henry Knighton and Jean Froissart do not mention amulets; neither do Thomas Walsingham (d. ca. 1422) of St. Alban's Abbey nor the Monk of Westminster (an anonymous continuator of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*). Contemporary chronicles also differ on the means of execution. The Monk of Evesham asserts that Tresilian was hanged on the gallows. Thomas Hearne, ed., *Historia vitae et regni Ricardi II Angliae regis, a monacho quodam de Evesham consignata* (Oxford: E Theatro Sheldoniano, 1739), p. 101: "quia mox tractus ad furcas, suspensus est, judicio Dominorum." The chronicler Adam de Usk mentions beheading. Edward Maunde Thompson, ed., *Chronicon Adae de Usk, A.D. 1377–1404* (London: John Murray, 1876), p. 6: "et alios quam plures decapitarunt." John Gower mentions Tresilian's execution but not amulet use. Andrew Galloway, "The Politics of Pity in Gower's *Confessio amantis,*" in Steiner and Barrington, *Letter of the Law,* pp. 87–89. For the Flemish miniature depicting Tresilian's execution, see "The Age of King Charles: 1,000 Illuminations from the Department of Manuscripts" (1996) at http://www.bnf.fr/enluminures.

body. Northwood's account was not politically motivated like Thomas Favent's veiled references to Solomonic magic. Instead, Northwood refers to Tresilian's amulet in connection with the efficacy of standard textual elements—a Middle English version of the Heavenly Letter, in which Pope Leo III gave to Charlemagne a fairly common list of divine names in Latin, beginning "Hec sunt nomina dei patris omnipotentis. Messias ✞ Sother ✞ Emanuel ✞ Sabaoth ✞ Adonay" and interspersed with crosses.[59]

Northwood's account differs from that of Favent, who seems to be trying to demonize Tresilian as an enemy of the community of the realm by associating him with a brand of magic that some readers might find suspect or questionable. Favent was emphasizing that Tresilian relied not on divine grace but black magic. Moreover, disguises made it possible for Tresilian to cross social boundaries and thus be in a position to infect the common folk with demonic magic. Favent clearly had direct and intimate knowledge of contemporary political events, but it is possible that he invented or embellished the details of the execution. Thomas Frederick Tout speculated that Favent, probably a Wiltshire native, wrote his antiroyalist chronicle while serving as a clerk or chaplain for one of the Lords Appellant. Tout described Favent's chronicle as "a political pamphlet, written in Latin, and therefore addressed to clerical and educated circles, and aiming at glorifying rather than apologizing for the work of the Lords Appellant."[60] Admittedly, Favent was influenced by baronial propaganda and sought to cast Tresilian in an unfavorable light. But Northwood's reference to a textual amulet might suggest that Favent had not conjured them up out of whole cloth. The textual elements in Tresilian's amulets, as described by Favent and Northwood, may seem very different, but they were not incompatible. By Tresilian's time in England and on the Continent, as we learn from extant artifacts, textual amulets had for more than a century offered protection through an amalgamation of older, traditional Christian textual elements, like those in Lucy's amulet, often

59. London, British Library, Additional MS 37787, fols. 175v–176r: "He þes holy namys of alle my3tty god, seynt leo þe pope of Rome wrote to Kyng Charulse & sayde, who so berit þis letter wyth hym he þar not drede hym of hys enmy to be ouercome, & he schal not be dampned ne wyth findys be cumberyd, ne wyth sekenes day ne nyght be takyn, ne with oust schryfte due, ne in no nede schal myssare, ne in no batel to be ouercome, ne in fire be brende, ne in water be drownde, ne of wykkyd enmy by þe way be assaylyd, ne be smieton with yondur ne layte. And for sothe in þis wryting ar to names ho so nemyth hem þat day he schal not dye þey he were hongud on a tre. And þis was prouyd by syr Robard tresylyan." For descriptions of Additional MS 37787, see Baugh, *Worcester Miscellany,* and the British Library Manuscripts Catalogue at http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/manuscripts.

60. Thomas Frederick Tout, "The English Parliament and Public Opinion, 1376–88," in *Historical Studies of the English Parliament,* ed. E. B. Fryde and Edward Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), vol. 1, pp. 310–12. Tout's article was first published in 1926 and later reprinted in 1934. See also Tout's "Literature and Learning in the English Civil Service of the Fourteenth Century," *Speculum* 4, no. 4 (October 1929): 380.

including divine names and a version of the Heavenly Letter, with newer Christian traditions of magic influenced by pseudo-Solomonic texts, including names of demons, magic seals and figures, and *experimenta*.

The Canterbury Amulet

Tresilian's textual amulet most likely had some characteristics in common with Canterbury Cathedral Library, Additional MS 23, which is the earliest extant multipurpose textual amulet based on an amalgamation of old and new magic (Appendix 1, figs. 5 and 6).[61] The Canterbury amulet is written in a well-formed Gothic *textualis* book hand of the mid-thirteenth century on a sheet of parchment (51.2 × 42.7 cm) with two original sewing repairs. One scribe—almost certainly a cleric, not a lay professional scribe—was responsible for copying the dense text and the many magical seals and figures found on each side. Yet unlike the writing rituals often specified in pseudo-Solomonic texts, the writing support of the Canterbury amulet is far too large and thick to be "virgin parchment," and the text and images are clearly written in brownish iron-gall ink rather than blood. The sheet was ruled in lead point, with prickings still visible along the right side (as viewed from face or recto). Contemporary scribal corrections and interlinear additions of missing words underscore that the amulet was carefully produced from one or more exemplars. The scribe laid out the text eighty-four lines deep in eight columns of more-or-less equal width (5.3 to 5.5 cm). The folded parchment sheet has seven vertical and three horizontal creases—sacred numbers—so that when fully folded it was a long rectangle measuring approximately 12.8 × 5.3 cm.

The Canterbury amulet must have been quite portable, despite its thirty-two thicknesses of parchment when folded. Judging from discoloration, the dorse of column 5 faced out when the amulet was fully folded. It is possible that the folded amulet would have been rolled slightly so that it could fit more easily into a pouch, sack, or other container.[62] In terms of readability, the writing direction reverses from front to back, so that the user would have looked at the figures in the upper quadrant of the face, either gazing at them singly or collectively, and then turn the amulet over to continue with the figures in the upper left side of the flipped-up dorse.[63] The dense text of the Canterbury amulet is in a relatively

61. There is a brief description in Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries,* vol. 2, pp. 306–7.

62. The notion of both folding and rolling a single manuscript item was not unprecedented. For a brief discussion of the fifteenth-century English roll-codex, which was folded concertina-style, see de la Mare, *Catalogue of Lyell Manuscripts,* p. 82.

63. Certain contemporary English rolls were made up of a stack of parchment *rotuli* or rotulets, which had to be turned up in this way in order to read the dorse. The direction of writing was

Image not available

Fig. 5 Additional MS 23 (recto), Canterbury Cathedral Library

Image not available

Fig. 6 Additional MS 23 (verso), Canterbury Cathedral Library

clear and readable script, though there are many indecipherable *characteres,* textual losses on its face between columns 2 and 3, and badly abraded text along the right side, only partially readable under ultraviolet light. The composite text is organized as an almost seamless web of more than fifty brief magical or prayer-like texts, which are concatenated, one after another, without formal rubrics or separation between them. Perhaps the density of written words served to create a web-like shield to ward off demons.

Many of the textual elements comprising the Canterbury amulet contain explanations of their magical efficacy and intended applications. The user is reminded eight times about the benefits of wearing powerful words and symbols *super se,* and is twice prompted to utter powerful names and to say the Pater Noster three times. In the manner of narrative charms, various brief texts remind the amulet's user of historical or mythological personages who enjoyed divine protection through heavenly letters (*epistolae*), magical script (*characteres*), or Solomonic seals and magical figures (*signa, figurae*), which the user was to wear (*portare*) on the body (*super se*) for personal protection. The text mixes standard amuletic texts firmly rooted in Christian ritual practice with pseudo-Solomonic elements circulating in the West. The text includes brief scriptural quotations such as scattered lines of the Seven Last Words (Matthew 27:46) and "Agnus dei qui tollit peccata mundi" (John 1:29) in column 5; prayers (e.g. "aperi occulos tuos . . . per infinita secula seculorum amen," col. 2); and litanies of the saints (especially in col. 2). Other scriptural references are paraphrases, for example, "Lutum fecit dominus ex sputo et liniuit oculos . . . uidit et redidit deo," column 5, which recalls one of Christ's miraculous cures of a blind man (John 9:7).

The Canterbury amulet includes a version of the Heavenly Letter beginning "Incipit epistola saluatoris domini nostri ihesu christi ad abgarum regem" (col. 3), which has the same incipit but otherwise differs textually from versions in two late Anglo-Saxon manuscripts (London, British Library, Royal MS 2.A.xx; Cotton Galba, MS.A.xiv). There are also references to the Heavenly Letter in sections of the Canterbury amulet beginning "Angelus dedit Ca[rolo regi prope]ranti ad bellum" (col. 2) and "Dominus Leo papa misit istas litteras karolo magno properanti ad bellum" (col. 5). These relate to a variant version of the Abgar Legend in which Pope Leo III gave the Heavenly Letter to Charlemagne for protection in battle. Another reference to Charlemagne is found in a magic seal on the dorse. The text also includes multiple references to a magic seal or sacred sign that the Archangel Gabriel delivered to St. Columba (or Columcille), who

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reversed from front to back. The reader would go from the face of a rotulet to its flipped-up dorse (much like a legal note pad today). See Don C. Skemer, "From Archives to the Book Trade: Private Statute Rolls in England, 1285–1307," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 16, no. 2 (Autumn 1995): 196–97.

is also erroneously called Columbanus. The seal of St. Columba offered general protection to Christians who carried it on their person or looked at it each day. There is a reference to a *gamata,* probably meaning a sacred sign shaped like the Greek letter *gamma,* with the numerical value of three (that is, the Trinity), having been given to St. Columba ("angelus domini dedit sancto columchille gamata"), and other references to the *angelus domini* giving him a *signum* or *figura* for protection. The magic figure is rendered in column 5 as a vertical line surmounted by a cross, below which are inscribed the letter *M* and two crossbars (the first resembling an *obelus*), then at the bottom a lower-case *omega*. The ineffable name *Tetragrammaton* is written vertically within the figure, which resembles some of the magic figures in the upper quadrant of the Canterbury amulet's face far more than the Columban cult's *flabellum,* the disk-headed cross, with pointed tangs for liturgical use.[64]

Looking at the face of the Canterbury amulet, the viewer's eyes are drawn immediately to a dense band of more than twenty magic figures and seals occupying the upper quadrant of the writing surface. The figures and seals incorporate Greek, Latin, and Tau crosses; divine names like *on* and *spiritus sanctus, chi* and *rho, alpha* and *omega, characteres,* and the AGLA acronym. Anyone who carried or looked at them on a particular day would enjoy general or specific protection. One could thus be safe from demons and sudden death. It is possible that the viewable *signa greca* to which the text refers (col. 1) are these figures and seals. Most likely, they were influenced by the images of multi-rayed figures and magic seals in the *Key of Solomon* and other pseudo-Solomonic grimoires,[65] though it is also similar to a much older seal at the center of a figure included in manuscripts of Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion,* a late Anglo-Saxon *computus* text from Ramsey Abbey.[66] Also on the face are two large Celtic-style crosses, inscribed at the top and bottom of columns 7 and 8. Each cross is intertwined with a double roundel, like those in the seals. Again, one could benefit from carrying or looking at them.[67]

64. Raghnall Ó Floinn and Cormac Bourke have discussed the *flabellum* in Bourke, *Studies in the Cult of Saint Columba,* pp. 136–83.

65. Scot, *Discouerie of Witchcraft,* p. 401 (bk. 15, chap. 8), has two such seals with captions "Who so beareth this signe about him, all spirits shall doo him homage," and "Wo so beareth this signe about him, let him feare no fo, but feare God." See also the "planetary pentacles" in *La clavicola del Re Salomone* (*Clavicula Salomonis*): *La vera magia nera. Manoscritto trovato . . . 1750* (Viareggio: Edizioni Rebis, [1976]), pp. 59, 65, 71, 73, 75, 81, 89. Asterisks in ancient amulets were probably a forerunner of multi-rayed figures in medieval amulets.

66. Peter S. Baker and Michael Lapidge, eds., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* Early English Text Society, S. S. 15 (Oxford: Published for the Early English Text Society by the Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 373–74 (Appendix A, no. 3, J 7v, "De concordia mensium atque elementorum").

67. The *Enchiridion* figure represents the seasons and elements, as in a manuscript of 1110–11 (Oxford, St. John's College, MS 17, fol. 7v). Baker and Lapidge, *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion,* pp. 10–11.

Straddling one arm of the large Celtic cross near the top are two magical figures, respectively shaped like a lozenge and a mandorla, both of which resembled the apotropaic Side Wound of Christ. Each of these figures contains a word series based on the magical word ABRACALABRA, a variant form of ABRACADABRA found in other magical manuscripts beginning in the thirteenth century. In whole or part, ABRACALABRA is found among memorial notes in a thirteenth-century English *ars notoria* manuscript (London, British Library, Sloane MS 1717) and was used on the Continent to drive out demons.[68] The Canterbury amulet's triangular configuration of ABRACALABRA in augmenting and diminishing word series had ancient roots. The Roman physician Quintus Serenus Sammonicus, as previously discussed, had advocated the amuletic use of ABRACADABRA in this way, and this configuration is traceable in amulets at least until the seventeenth century.[69] The two ABRACALABRA series in the Canterbury amulet contain fifteen and twenty-one lines respectively, both numerologically significant, further enhancing their magical efficacy when viewed.

Elsewhere in the amulet, another mandorla-shaped seal, identified as the seal of King Solomon, contains a multi-rayed figure with divine and angelic names (cols. 5–6).[70] Instructions show that the seal could be used in both amuletic and talismanic ways. First, it could be worn on the body for personal protection against evil demons. Second, after demons become visible, presumably because the person with the seal of Solomon had summoned them by name, one could use the seal, a divine gift to the legendary magician for this very purpose, to make the demons compliant and do one's bidding: "Hoc est signum regis salomonis quo demones in puteo signalauit. qui super se portauerit a nocentibus saluus erit. et si demon ei appauerit iubeat ei quicumque uoluerit et obediet ei dominus enim ad hoc opus dedit salomoni: ut demones compelleret."

On the dorse, there are twenty magic seals arranged five deep in four columns, as well as five small figures. The seals and multi-rayed figures clustered in this quarter of the dorse are similar to those found on the amulet's face. Inscriptions around the perimeters of most of the seventeen completed magic seals (three others were left completely blank) offer specific types of protection against fire,

68. Concerning exorcistic use of this magic word in a thirteenth-century manuscript (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 3576), see Enzo Franchini, "Abracalabra: Los exorcismos hispanolatinos en el Códice de la *Razón de Amor,*" *Revista de literatura medieval* 3 (1991): 77–94 (especially 83, 88).

69. Deonna, "Abra, Abraca," pp. 131–33; Simpson, "On a Seventeenth Century Roll," pp. 308–9.

70. In the medieval West, the seal of King Solomon was often displayed as a pentacle, an "endless knot" of five points and lines, which could effectively display apotropaic text and serve as a shield of truth. Ross G. Arthur, *Medieval Sign Theory and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), pp. 26–27, 30–31, 37–39, 68.

storm, flood, and sudden death to anyone who gazes upon them that day. Two other seals are said to have been sent to Charlemagne by Christ by angelic messenger ("Angelus domini dedit hoc signum carolo regi") and to St. Columba ("Angelus domini ostendit sancto columbano hanc figuram"). Another seal will break shackles ("Hanc figuram porta tecum omne uinculum soluet"). Together, the specific promises add up to more-or-less comprehensive protection. In essence, the Canterbury amulet turns the broad promises, most of which are in versions of the Heavenly Letter, into a series of separate seals. The amulet user could more readily absorb the content visually by focusing on the seals, rather than phonetically by reading the equivalent text found elsewhere in the amulet. Viewers could thus gradually imprint their apotropaic power on the heart, the seat of memory. By actively visualizing seals and figures, one could enhance the magical efficacy of the images worn passively on the body. In offering new ways to win supernatural power, the amulet does not offer astrological embellishments of planetary pentacles as in the *Key of Solomon*. The text never claims that the seals had been prepared under particular astral convergences or required particular rituals and materials, in accordance with astrological treatises on talismanic seals.

In addition to powerful names inscribed in magic seals and figures, the Canterbury amulet relies heavily on series of divine, angelic, and demonic names of Greek, Hebrew, and other origins. Nearly every brief text ends with a litany of such names. Some have alternate spellings (e.g. *adonay, athonay, adωnay*). Names such as *anofenaton, cirice, craton, hameth, hebreyel, iothe, mefron, nomos, occinoos, orion, panthon, saday, sampra,* and *usion* are quite similar to those found in the *Sworn Book of Honorius* and other pseudo-Solomonic texts.[71] Other names, however, are more difficult to find in contemporary handbooks of magic. Christians accustomed to traditional amulets comprised of divine names would presumably wear the Canterbury amulet, containing set lists of divine names as well as invoking angelic names and other powerful spirits, in much the same way. Unlike the instructions found in contemporary grimoires, the amulet does not call for elaborate magic rituals, conjurations, and operations involving divine and angelic names. The amulet also includes *voces magicae,* often presented in conjunction with sets of angelic names, such as the extended one in column 6 ("9–c. *a. x. r. a. x. p. x. x. p. x. x. s. x. x.* 9–c. *rr. x. f. x. x. p. x. x. x.* 9–c."). The latter is comprised of two strings of mystic letters (separated by *punctus* between the letters) flanked by three identical *characteres* that look like a combination of an arabic number 9 connected by an en dash to

71. For a very useful compendium of such elements in pseudo-Solomonic manuscripts, see Hedegård, *Liber iuratus Honorii,* pp. 219–91 ("Index vocum mysticarum atque nominum daemonicorum, angelicorum et divinorum").

a lowercase letter C. These letters probably represented sacred or angelic names that were considered ineffable and therefore were not to be articulated, as some pseudo-Solomonic texts explained so that users would understand their special function.[72]

Pairing bits of text with related seals enhanced potency and offered amulet users alternatives. Users could enjoy benefits either by wearing the amulet on their bodies or gazing at the powerful seals. Silently upholding the magical force of repetition, the seals on the dorse repeat or reinforce amuletic elements on the face. Other textual elements also rely on repetition and the sheer force of numbers to overwhelm all things evil. In eight columns of text on the face are seven sizable lists of divine names. Most of these lists have titles, though not written as rubrics: (1) "Ecce nomina Christi," beginning *adonay. athanatos. theos. panthon. tetragramaton.* (cols. 1–2), including more than eighty names; (2) "Hec sunt lxxii nomina dei," by which the user is assured protection from harm ("et quicumque ea super se portauerit nullus malus homo ei nocere potest," col. 2); (3) "Domine deus per hec tria sancta nomina," beginning *on tetragrammaton* (col. 2); (4) "[Hec sunt n]omina christi" (imperfect because of text loss), including ten divine names listed by roman numerals (col. 3); (5) "Hec sunt nomina domini," beginning *on. enofaton. el. eloe. sabaoth. eleon. eloe. adonay. saday* (col. 3); (6) an untitled series of more than a hundred names, beginning *tetragramaton. hel* (col. 4); and (7) "Hec nomina dei sunt apud hebreos," beginning *hel. hele* (col. 5). Beyond these seven sizable lists, there are many other sequences of divine and angelic names, as well as the Hebrew-derived divine names AGLA and *on* (the latter defined as *primum nomen domini*), invocations of the Trinity (which could be abbreviated as "In nomine patris & f. & s. s."), and frequent references to *alpha* and *omega*. Christograms and seals were another form of purposeful redundancy, allowing users to visualize divine names and commit them to memory. The ineffable name is often invoked.

The Canterbury amulet was not restricted by gender, although there are multiple references to a male supplicant (*famulus*). While there are no separate amuletic texts relating to childbirth, the text based on the magic sign of St. Columba includes successful childbirth among the litany of benefits ("Et si mulier pregnans super se habuerit non morietur de partu"), somewhat like the general protection offered by the Heavenly Letter. Another amuletic text refers to the Virgin Birth ("Sicut vere credimus quod sancta maria uerum infantem genuit"). The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus (*Septem Dormientes*), whose legend had circulated in England since the Anglo-Saxon period, are invoked to induce sleep,

72. At one point in Turner's *Ars notoria,* p. 117, the reader is told to invoke a series of angelic names, but then "by us not to be pronounced, which are these "*do, el, x p n k h t li g y y.* not to be spoken, or comprehended by humane sense."

which would have been useful to pregnant women and mothers of newborn babies, though the intended user in the Canterbury amulet is not specifically female ("mittere soporem in famulum suum N"). According to Christian legend, the Seven Sleepers were miraculously protected as they slept in a cave near Ephesus between the Decian persecutions (ca. 250 C.E.) and the reign of Theodosius II (408–50).[73] Late medieval English manuscripts underscore the popularity of amuletic texts and verbal charms based on the Seven Sleepers. Instructions called for amulets to be placed on the person's head to induce sleep.[74]

The Canterbury amulet has many blood-staunching charms, which would have been useful to anyone, either in a lay household or a religious house. Some appear related to the gynecological needs ("et perflua mulieris casu mirabili," col. 6) and would have been valuable to women with excessive menstrual bleeding; "spotting," miscarriage, and other complications signaling a termination of pregnancy; and uterine disorders and hemorrhaging after childbirth.[75] There are blood-staunching charms based on the Christian legends of St. Veronica (col. 6), whose name is given Greek-style as *Beronica,* as it had been in an amuletic text found in Bald's Leechbook;[76] and to St. Longinus (cols. 1, 6, 7), whose Holy Lance had pierced Christ's side on the Cross so that blood flowed from the wound. Longinus was invoked in late medieval verbal charms and amuletic texts to staunch bleeding, though occasionally also to draw iron out of wounds and alleviate toothache, while late medieval images of the Side Wound of Christ offered protection to parturient women.[77]

Also in column 6 are blood-staunching charms related to Zacharias being slain in the Temple ("Inter uestibulum et altare occisus est zakarius et coagulatus

73. The names of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus vary in different versions of the Christian legend. This list corresponds to the one in Graesse, *Jacobi,* pp. 435–38 (chap. 101). Concerning Anglo-Saxon versions, see Biggs, Hill, and Szarmach, *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture,* pp. 2–4.

74. An Anglo-Norman French amuletic text in a thirteenth-century manuscript was supposed to help those with fevers or "night labors," which surely included pregnant women ("Ici commence un autre bref qui bon est a fevers e a ces qui sunt travaillez de nuit"). Hunt, *Popular Medicine,* p. 85, no. 12. A similar text and instructions is found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby MS 86, fol. 29r. Wardale, "Some Fifteenth-Century Charms," p. 392.

75. "In the context of uterine magic," Jeffery Spier has argued recently, "bleeding must stop to cure illness or, more likely, to promote or protect pregnancy." Spier, "Byzantine Amulets," in Maguire, *Byzantine Magic,* p. 46. See also Barb, "St. Zacharias," pp. 35–67, and Alfons A. Barb, "*Diva matrix,*" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 16 (1953): 213, no. 23.

76. Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine,* p. 133.

77. Longinus appears in Anglo-Saxon, Latin, Anglo-Norman French, and Middle English texts. W. Sparrow Simpson, "On the Measure of the Wound in the Side of the Redeemer, Most Anciently Worn as a Charm, and on the Five Wounds as Represented in Art," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 30 (1874): 357–74; Gougaud, *Dévotions et pratiques ascétiques,* p. 119 n. 53; Rose Jeffries Peebles, *The Legend of Longinus in Ecclesiastical Tradition and in English Literature, and Its Connection with the Grail* (Ph.D diss., Bryn Mawr College, 1910; Baltimore: J. H. Furst, 1911), pp. 72–79.

est sanguis"), based on Christian legends that grew up about the Hebrew priest Zacharias mentioned by Christ (Matthew 23:35, Luke 11:51), and to St. John the Baptist baptizing Christ in the River Jordan ("dominus ihesus in flumine iordanis baptizatus est"), when it miraculously stopped flowing. In some versions, Christ commanded the River Jordan to stand still, thus offering a sacred precedent for blood staunching. In late medieval England, *Flum Jordan* charms proliferated in Latin, Anglo-Norman French, and Middle English.[78] Pairing these two charms here made sense because St. John the Baptist was the son of Zacharias. Foreshadowing the Annunciation, in a sense, the Archangel Gabriel had appeared before Zacharias in the Temple and told him that his wife Elizabeth would give birth to a son named John (Luke 1:5–25). The murder of Zacharias in the Temple made him something of a martyr in Christian legend.[79] A five-line Anglo-Norman French blood-staunching charm, now badly abraded, is arranged around the arms of the large Celtic cross in the lower right corner of the face (cols. 7–8). This blood-staunching charm refers to the River Jordan ("El flum iurdan") without mentioning St. John the Baptist. Instead, the charm invokes the Virgin Mary and the Christ child, as well as the power of the Lord ("par le dampnedeu command"), to stop the flow of blood.[80] There are also two blood-staunching *experimenta* (cols. 1, 6), which will be discussed later.

Localizing the Canterbury amulet is not easy. Textual references to St. Columba might initially suggest origins in Ireland, Scotland, or northern England rather than Kent or southern England, where one might reasonably expect to see some reference to St. Thomas à Becket. Yet St. Columba was far more widely venerated. Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of the tenth and eleventh centuries invoked his name in magic and liturgy, and he was also invoked in the south of England

78. Olsan, "Charms in Medieval Memory," in Roper, *Charms and Charming in Europe,* pp. 75–76. Smallwood, "The Transmission of Charms in English, Medieval and Modern," in ibid., p. 15: "Altogether, from the period roughly 1370 to 1540 there survive about three hundred copies of charms in English (almost half of them, as it happens, versions of the Flum Jordan and Longinus motifs used against bleeding). From the same period there are also, in England, a much smaller number of copies of charms in Anglo-Norman French, gradually dying out over the fifteenth century."

79. Barb, "St. Zacharias," pp. 35–67. Alfons A. Barb examined Christian legends and Apocrypha related to St. Veronica, whose name was associated with blood staunching not because of the Vernicle, but rather because she came to be confused with the woman whose bleeding Christ had miraculously cured. Barb also traced the relationship between Zacharias and St. John the Baptist and the invocation of their legends. Zacharias was invoked in blood-staunching charms and incantations in the Eastern Orthodox world, especially for nosebleeds, and occasionally in the West, particularly in Germanic lands, against pestilence. In some Christian legends, the blood of Zacharias miraculously turned to stone, and the River Jordan stopped flowing while St. John the Baptist was baptizing Jesus. The Apocryphal Book of James was the original source of Christian legends about the murder of Zacharias in the Temple.

80. The Anglo-Norman French text has similarities to contemporary examples in Hunt, *Popular Medicine,* pp. 89 (no. 34), 94 (no. 61), 284 (no. 155), 316 (no. 11).

and on the Continent in the late Middle Ages for protection against storms and fire.[81] It is possible that the Canterbury amulet was made in the pilgrimage town by a monk or cleric who had mastered or had access to pseudo-Solomonic grimoires and other texts. If the amulet was produced in or near Canterbury, it is conceivable that the scribe was associated with or influenced by the interest in natural magic at St. Augustine's Abbey (founded as the Abbey of St. Peter and St. Paul), a large Benedictine house with upwards of sixty-five monks and a library that came to hold manuscripts on astrology, image magic, and *Ars notoria*. Gifts of eighty-three volumes from the monk John of London at the end of the thirteenth century and twenty-four volumes from the monk Michael of Northgate in the fourteenth century included works of magic, which were still among the more than eighteen hundred manuscripts in the abbey library at the end of the fifteenth century.[82]

81. London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius E.xviii, an Anglo-Saxon manuscript of the mid-eleventh century, probably written in Winchester, includes instructions (fol. 15v) for writing "St. Columcille's circle" to protect against the theft of one's bees ("Þis is sancte columcille circul"). For a description of the manuscript, see Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts,* pp. 298–301 (especially p. 300). Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies of the Saints,* pp. 241, 261, 293, includes three litanies petitioning St Columba (or Columcille): Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud lat. 81; lost Rheims manuscript; Salisbury Cathedral Library, MS 180. According to Lapidge's descriptions of the manuscripts (pp. 78–79, 81, 84), one was possibly from Glastonbury, and the other two were Breton in origin, perhaps arriving in England during the tenth century. The second of the two was in Salisbury Cathedral in the late Middle Ages. A fire-protection charm in John Northwood of Bordesley's Worcestershire miscellany (1386–1410) invokes St. Columba ("Sancte kolumkille remoue mala flamma fauille. Itaque Kolumkyllus seruet ab igne domus. Pater noster ✠ Aue maria"). The next folio refers to the year 1386 (London, British Library, Additional MS 37787, fol. 181v). On the Continent, a German manuscript with instructions for the preparation of textual amulets invokes his name for protection against storms: Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 7021, fol. 158r ("Contra tempestatem isti tres uersus scribantur in cedulas quatuor et ponantur subtus terram in quatuor partes prouincie. ✠ Sancte Columquille remoue mala procelle . . ."). Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter,* vol. 2, p. 63 n. 1. Concerning St. Columba, see Louis Gougaud, *Les saints irlandais hors d'Irlande étudiés dans le culte et dans la dévotion traditionelle,* Bibliothèque de la Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique, no. 16 (Louvain: Bureaux de la Revue, 1936), pp. 68–69. As late as the nineteenth century in the Scottish highlands and islands, St. Columba continued to be invoked in traditional prayers for protection and travel charms and for the blessing of livestock. Carmichael, *Carmina gadelica,* vol. 1, pp. 162–63; vol. 2, pp. 14–15, 136–37; vol. 3, pp. 196–99; vol. 4, pp. 46–47.

82. James, *The Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover,* pp. 331, 348; Neil Ripley Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books,* 2nd edition (London: Royal Historical Society, 1964), pp. 244–45; A. B. Emden, *Donors of Books to St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury,* Oxford Bibliographical Society, Occasional Publications, no. 4 (Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society 1968), pp. 11–12, 14; Klaassen, "English Manuscripts of Magic," in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits,* pp. 3–31 (especially pp. 17–18); Klaassen, "Religion, Science, and the Transformations of Magic," pp. 68–75, 121–24, 263–66. A charm against lightning is found in the margins of a Canterbury manuscript (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 385), which has the ownership mark "Hic liber est monachi cuiusdam Cantuariensis"; and the charms "Coniuro te ordeum per patrem" and "Tres boni fratres unam viam ambulauerunt" are in Canterbury, Christ Church, MS 441. M. R. James, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*

The Canterbury amulet was certainly compact enough to be worn on the body for personal protection. But its text and images were so comprehensive that it could be used as a portable grimoire, perhaps in an ecclesiastical context, providing magic rituals and exemplars for single-purpose amulets. The inclusion of experiments to demonstrate magical efficacy suggests this. For example, Latin instructions in two blood-staunching texts instruct the reader to prepare and use a textual amulet ("scribe hos caracteres in uno breui et super pectus liga et statim restringet," col. 6). In this and another *experimentum* (col. 1), the reader is asked to conduct experiments with a pig to test efficacy; one is to write powerful words on a knife, which perforce will not draw blood. Experiments with blood can be found in medieval texts on natural magic, and pseudo-Solomonic grimoires such as the *Key of Solomon* contain magical operations involving knives and swords inscribed with powerful words and *characteres,* which in some cases were to be written in blood.[83]

Portions of the text would suggest clerical use. In column 5, the person wishing to demonstrate the efficacy of powerful letters is told to chant seven masses, as well as fast daily, give alms 366 times, aid widows and orphans, and read the entire Psalter. The compiler knew his Psalter very well, if not by heart, and referred to particular psalms in the abbreviated way that priests often wrote down pericopes in late medieval manuscripts of sermons. In column 6, for example, the text quotes the first line in Psalm 93 ("Deus ultionum dominus deus"), followed by letters (*u.li.e.*), which stand for the second line ("ultionum libere egit"); and in column 7, the "Super aspidem et basiliscum et cetera" stands for a sentence in Psalm 90 ("Super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis, et conculcabis leonem et draconum"). The text abounds in brief quotations from litanies and other liturgical forms. The reconstructed text in column 8, badly abraded in the manuscript and only partially readable under ultraviolet light, includes a quotation from the Latin mass ("per quem hec omnia . . . dicere pater noster") and a version of the *Nomina archangelorum* ("[michael] cum mane . . . et omnes congaudebunt"). Well represented are liturgical benedictions and formulas, for example, "christus uincit. christus regnat. christus imperat" (col. 6) and "ecce crucem . . . uincit leo de tribu iuda radix david alleluia" (col. 8). So it is possible that a monk or other cleric dabbling in magic compiled the manuscript both for

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), vol. 2, pp. 235. Concerning extant manuscripts from Christ Church and St. Augustine's Abbey, see Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain,* pp. 29–47. In this connection, see Sophie Page's thesis, "Magic at St. Augustine's, Canterbury, in the Late Middle Ages (The Warburg Institute, London, 2000).

83. Singer, *Catalogue,* vol. 2, p. 725. For illustrations of inscribed knives and swords, see Ribadeau Dumas, *Clavicules de Salomon,* pp. 26–29, and Mathers, *The Key of Solomon the King,* plate 13.

his personal protection and as a portable handbook to care for parishioners. Yet the manuscript does not resemble a magus's consecrated codex-format handbook, as prescribed in some versions of the *Key of Solomon*.[84] Moreover, the *mise-en-page* (eight columns of almost seamless text, lacking rubrication and space between sections) makes few concessions to navigability or readability, which was essential to the practical use of a handbook or service book.

Unfortunately, our knowledge of the provenance of the Canterbury amulet is limited. Around 1890, the Canterbury historian J. Brigstocke Sheppard (1827–95) recovered it from the binding of an ecclesiastical court register in the Cathedral Archives. The shelf number Additional MS 23 was assigned after 1948, along with other manuscripts similarly recovered. Local stationers in the 1560s to 1580s had used leaves and fragments of discarded medieval manuscripts as flyleaves, pastedowns, and wrappers in blank volumes sold in the area for record keeping, and some of this binding waste survives in the Cathedral Archives. Since reused parchment was probably local, Neil Ripley Ker reasoned, Canterbury manuscripts discarded after the Dissolution were the likely source. But stationers could also have used parchment manuscripts from other local monasteries and churches or from lay book owners. Whatever its immediate source, there is no evidence that the amulet had been in Canterbury Cathedral or its priory, St. Augustine's Abbey, or any other religious establishment in the Canterbury area or elsewhere in the British Isles before the Dissolution.[85]

84. For example, Ribadeau Dumas, *Clavicules de Salomon,* p. 50, and Mathers, *The Key of Solomon the King,* p. 117 (bk. 2, chap. 21). Mathers's *Key* is an English translation from the French (for the French version, see London, British Library, Lansdowne MS 1203). The reader is instructed: "Make a small Book containing the Prayers for all the Operations, the Names of the Angels in the form of Litanies, their Seals and Characters; the which being done thou shalt consecrate the same unto God and unto the pure Spirits in the manner following. Though shalt set in the destined place a small table covered with a white cloth, whereon though shalt lay the Book opened at the Great Pentacle which should be drawn on the first leaf of the said Book; and having kindled a lamp which should be suspended above the centre of the table, thou shalt surround the said table with a white curtain; clothe thyself in the proper vestments, and holding the Book open, repeat upon thy knees the following prayer with great humility."

85. A typescript guide in the Canterbury Cathedral Library identifies Sheppard's early role in the recovery of this and other Additional Manuscripts. See also Neil Ripley Ker's discussion of the Cathedral Library fragments recovered from manuscript waste in stationer's volumes of the 1560s to 1580s. Related fragments have been discovered in volumes of records at Lambeth Palace, London, and at the Kent County Archives, Maidstone. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries,* vol. 2, pp. 312–15. Once recovered, the Canterbury amulet was not assigned a shelf number or shelved with the Library's manuscripts until William Urry created the series Additional Manuscripts in 1948 as a continuation of the Literary Manuscripts series. At least one other manuscript in the series, a fourteenth-century fragmentary manuscript with French texts relating to astrology and alchemy (Additional MS 18), includes a brief amuletic text (p. 4): "Et quil puise estre defendu de cet pils porte on ly cete psalme. Omnes gentes plaudere ed cete carettes ✠ v. g. ii. y. d. H. H. lnc. lF. fer Λ."

There is some evidence pointing to lay use. The Anglo-Norman French blood-staunching charm was in the language of an English landowning family. One can imagine such a family using it as a textual amulet or even a portable "book of secrets" for itself as well as friends, household, and tenants. Moreover, the Canterbury amulet has endorsements relating to Kentish landowning families. Endorsements in fifteenth-century hands contain references to "Ricardus knyth of Selling" and "Thomas Tymbyrden' de Sandwych." If the latter is an ownership mark, as it appears to be, then the Canterbury amulet was probably not in an ecclesiastical context at the end of the Middle Ages. Tymbyrden lived in or near Sandwich and was probably from a landed family (alternatively spelled Timberden, Tymberden, or Tymberdene) in Kent during the reigns of Henry III and Edward III.[86] The Canterbury amulet also has endorsements in sixteenth-century English hands, so it may have been in the possession of local families for more than two centuries. The key to its longevity was the wide range of potential applications and users. Whatever its original purpose, the Canterbury amulet was a potentially flexible instrument, offering myriad forms of general and specific protection. As a multipurpose amulet against demons and evil, the folding parchment sheet conveniently packaged an array of amuletic texts that might have otherwise required a hefty bundle of small, single-purpose textual amulets. In this way, the Canterbury amulet was an efficient alternative to groups and kits of separate textual amulets.

In later centuries, multipurpose English magic rolls usable at least in part as amulets also incorporated seals and figures to reinforce more traditional Christian textual elements. This can be seen with an English roll of the early sixteenth-century (Bodleian Library, MS 3550, Ms. e Mus. 245[R]).[87] The text is in three long lines of Secretary script written lengthwise along the face of the entire length of a twenty-four-membrane parchment roll (145.0 × 12.8 cm) that is configured like a classical or Hebrew scroll. While relatively long, it is still quite portable when fully rolled. The three lines of text include: (1) Christian prayers, beginning "Domine deus omnipotens pater," from an unnamed male supplicant ("ego indignus famulus tuus"); (2) Gospel sequences beginning with the apotropaic Gospel of John; and (3) prayers and incantations focusing on divine protection, beginning "Signum sancte crucis ✠ defendat nos ab omnibus malis inimicis nostris presentis et futuris Per signum sancte crucis ✠ defende nos christe Jesu." Above and below the text are long lines of encircled red Maltese-style

86. Thomas Philipott, *Villare cantianum,* 2nd edition (Lynn: Printed and Sold by W. Whittingham et al., 1776), p. 329; F.R.H. Du Boulay, *Kent Records: Documents Illustrative of Medieval Kentish Society,* Kent Archaeological Society, vol. 18 (Ashford: Kent Archaeological Society, 1964), pp. 142, 144.

87. For a brief description, see Madan, *Summary Catalogue,* vol. 2, pt. 2, p. 678, no. 3550.

crosses incorporating in the quadrants formed by the arms of the cross either the ineffable name YHWH written in Hebrew script or the divine name AGLA in Latin script. Tau crosses and divine names (most commonly *Tetragramaton*) are written out in red between the encircled crosses. The roll includes many seals and figures. Clustered on the first three membranes of the roll are five seals comprised of multi-rayed figures, pentacles, crosses, and *characteres* similar to those in the Canterbury amulet. A layman who carried the seals or looked at them daily would expect protection against demons, visible and invisible foes, temptation, and death. In addition, there are other seals and figures not explicitly for amuletic use, as well as textual references to magic circles and operations.[88] Early provenance is unknown, though in later centuries the roll was housed in a protective wrapper made from a strip of parchment cut from a deed to estates belonging to Sir William Cecil, second earl of Salisbury (1591–1668).

Similarly, a seventeenth-century English magic roll (London, British Library, Additional MS 25311) contains a wide array of standard textual elements on the face and dorse, including the Gospel of John 1:1–14, the Seven Last Words of Christ, and multiple lists of divine names. Spread along the length of the roll's face are sixty-three seals containing multi-rayed figures, the SATOR AREPO magic square, AGLA interspersed with crosses, and *characteres*. Inscriptions offer protection against evil spirits, sorcery, enemies, fire, death, and other perils, while at the same time helping the viewer attain prosperity, honor, knowledge, and good luck. The text was neatly written on both face and dorse of seven ribbon-like parchment strips measuring about 3.8 cm wide, with folding magic seals at the beginning and end. When tightly rolled, the entire roll measures only 2.7 cm in diameter, so that it could be easily carried in a small pouch. In describing the roll, W. Sparrow Simpson speculated that the seals could be "transcribed singly, on pieces of vellum, and carried about the person; or possibly, they were to be

88. The five seals have the following legends: (1) "✠ hoc est signum filii dei vim in quacumque die videris non peribis in igne nec in aqua"; (2) "✠ contra inimicos visibiles et invisibiles contra demones et omnibus aliis periculis"; (3) "✠ Qua die hoc signum videris ab omni temtacione diaboli et ab omni impedimento"; (4) "✠ Qui hoc signum super se portauerit mala morte mori non poterit"; (5) "✠ Qui hoc signum super se portauerit [subithanea?] morte non morietur." A large seal near the end of the roll includes a ring of twelve subsidiary seals containing many multi-rayed figures but no text. Possible use of the roll in connection with ceremonial magic is suggested by three textual references to the supplicant enjoying divine protection and conducting operations inside or outside a circle or *locus,* perhaps the *locus magistri:* (1) "Benedictio sancte trinitatis custodiat nos protegat nos et defendat nos in omnibus operibus operationibus et laboribus nostris infra circulum et extra circulum et locus istum per spatium mille miliarias"; (2) "hoc signaculo ✠ prosternantur omnes adversarii nostri et fugiant a nobis infra circulum et locus istum per milia miliaria per virtutem sancte crucis ✠ per hoc signum"; and (3) "salua nos et custodi nos in omnibus operibus et laboribus nostris in circulo et loco iste sancte deus . . . saluator noster expella a nobis omnes fantasias diaboli infra circulum et extra circulum et locus istum ut non habeant potestatem michi nocendi."

engraved on places of metal, and worn as medals."[89] Given its portability, this magic roll could have been used both as a multipurpose textual amulet and as an exemplar for the preparation of amulets and seals, like the Canterbury amulet.

Italian Amulets for Francesco and Ilioneo

Late medieval Italy also offers evidence of textual amulets that intermixed magical traditions. Comparable to the Canterbury amulet in comprehensiveness and inclusion of magic seals is an Italian illuminated amulet of the early sixteenth century (London, British Library, Additional MS 15505, fol. 22r) (fig. 7).[90] The script is essentially documentary, incorporating elements of semi-Gothic and Humanistic *cursiva,* while the painted images are clearly the work of a professional artist or book illuminator. This amulet contains a complex assembly of brief texts (many called *orationes*) and painted images appropriate for both general protection and private devotion. Now measuring approximately 45.0 × 31.0 cm (about 2.0 cm was trimmed away along the left margin), the parchment sheet has six vertical and five horizontal folds, so that it would have folded down to a rectangle measuring approximately 7.0 × 4.5 cm. Despite forty-two thicknesses when fully folded, the amulet would have been quite portable. The dense text includes 106 lines of Latin and some Italian text in a frame-ruled area. The scribe wrote across the folds, without confining text to rectangular areas formed by folding the parchment sheet. An unidentified Italian man named Francesco ("Franciscus"), probably a person of some financial means, to judge from the relatively high level of presentation, was the primary user of this textual amulet. But other family members could also benefit from carrying it on their persons or having it read to them, as the text indicates ("franciscus vel illa persona qui istam orationem super se portabit vel sibi legi faciet").[91] Portions of the text and

89. Simpson, "On a Seventeenth Century Roll," p. 314. British Library records show that the roll was acquired in 1863 from "Dr. M. Heidenhaim." This name probably refers to Dr. Marqah Heidenheim (1824–98), a German scholar who studied Samaritan liturgy, in part based on manuscripts in the British Library. He was the author of *Die samaritanische Liturgie (eine Auswahl der wichtigsten Texte) in der hebräischen Quadratschrift aus den Handschriften des Britischen Museums under andere Bibliotheken* (Leipzig: Schulze, 1885–87).

90. This Italian amulet is mounted on paper in London, British Library, Additional MS 15505, a folio-size album of miscellaneous manuscripts, plans, and drawings dating from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, which were originally in the collection of Sir Hans Sloane. The volume is labeled "Drawings of Antiquities of Isle of Salset" (that is, Salsette Island, near Bombay, in British India). According to a handwritten nineteenth-century label in English, the Italian amulet contained "certain seals, pentacles, signs etc which carried about are thought to preserve the bearer against devils, diseases, etc."

91. The many internal references to Francesco include "famulo tuo francisco; a francisco et ab illa persona qua istam orationem super se portabit; libera domine famulum tuum franciscum; liberet famulum franciscum" (in the inscription on the center seal); "cum plena devotione amore pace et

Image not available

Fig. 7 Additional MS 15505 (fol. 22r), British Library, London

instructions in Francesco's amulet are written in Italian to facilitate reading by Francesco and other lay users.

Textual elements include a list of seventy-two divine names ("Hec sunt nomina domini nostri yhesu christi. deus sabaoth deus exercituum hemanuel adonay ego sum qui sum") and other smaller series of names, the Seven Last Words of Christ, litanies of helpful angels, prayers to be recited and written down for protection against demons, praises of the cross ("✞ christus mecum ✞ istam crucem adoro ✞ crux est certa salus mea"), and the Measure of Christ ("hec est mensura longitudinis corporis domini nostri yhesu christi ✞ que fuit quindecim vicibus replicata. Rex ✞ venit in pace ✞ deus homo factus est ✞ libera domine famulum tuum franciscum ✞"). At the four corners of the amulet, clockwise from the upper left, are pen-and-ink Evangelist portraits (with their identifying symbols) in medallions, lightly tinted in red and ochre. Each Evangelist portrait is accompanied by a Gospel reading, which is written in a confined area and labeled *sequentia* in the nearest outer margin. The Gospel readings begin in the upper left corner of Francesco's amulet with the most apotropaic words, "In principio erat verbum." The sequences move from the Incarnation (John 1:1–14) to the Annunciation (Luke 1:26–38), Adoration (Matthew 2:1–3), and Resurrection (Mark 16:14–20). All the readings relate to the life of Christ and have obvious associations with divine protection and the power of the word.

This textual amulet presents a well-designed viewing experience, like other multipurpose examples combining text, illustrations, and magic figures. The viewers' eyes are drawn to a ring of nine seals, which the text equates with *characteres* against demonic evil ("cum presentibus superscriptis circulis uel caracteribus"). At the center of the ring is a larger seal with the letters AGLA arranged around a cross that is held together by interlacing, a combination certainly serving to repel or trap demons. The inscription around the perimeter of this central seal calls on the archangels Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and Uriel to protect Francesco ("custodiet et liberet famulum tuum franciscum") from danger and attack. Written around this central seal is the name ANTONIUS, probably a reference to St. Anthony of Egypt, a helper-saint whose name was commonly invoked against the plague in the late Middle Ages. The Antonine Congregation was founded by Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) and named after St. Anthony of Egypt to treat victims of St. Anthony's Fire (*ignis sacer*), which modern scholarship has identified as ergotism, a deadly affliction caused by eating rye bread made from flour contaminated by *claviceps purpurea* mold.[92] It is less that likely

gloria super famulum tuum franciscum"; "il corpo del servo tuo francisco"; and "in digno famulo tuo francisco."

92. Husband, "Winteringham Tau Cross," pp. 23–24.

the name Antonius referred to St. Anthony of Padua (1190/5–1231), the Franciscan helper-saint and patron saint of that northern Italian city.

The surrounding eight seals, smaller than the central seal, were drawn in brown, red, and purple ink, incorporating figures based on crosses, circles, pentacles, word squares, *characteres,* and other symbols. The seals reinforced, made visible, and provided shortcuts to textual sources of supernatural power and protection. Inscriptions written along the perimeters of the seals promise the bearer protection against all demons, enemies, evil, and misfortune.[93] The SATOR AREPO formula (part of the vocabulary of textual amulets since antiquity) appears twice, in physical configurations that support the formula's efficacy. In the fourth seal (from the top) the formula is arranged more traditionally as a magic square, and in the fifth the five words are arranged between the points of a pentacle. Each of the eight seals is flanked by the Greek letters *chi* and *rho* to invoke the Holy Name. A pseudo-Solomonic grimoire was most likely the ultimate inspiration for the seals, though they avoid conjurations and magic rituals requiring expert assistance. Just above the ring of seals on Francesco's amulet is a Crucifixion miniature, with the Triumphal Inscription surmounting a Tau-like cross. Both had apotropaic associations at the time. Mixing the conventional Christian iconography of the Crucifixion and Evangelists with magic seals is not unknown in late medieval Italy. A fourteenth-century Italian *Ars notoria* manuscript has text arranged in concentric circles around a Crucifixion image at the center, with Evangelist portraits and symbols at the corners.[94]

Professionally produced illustrated amulets like Francesco's, which were based on written exemplars and artist's pattern books, contrast markedly with cruder fare in physical presentation. A good example of the latter is an Italian multipurpose amulet of the late fifteenth century for a man named Ilioneo (Princeton University Library, John Hinsdale Scheide Collection of Documents, no. 7923) (Appendix 3, fig. 8).[95] This textual amulet was written in what is essentially a

93. The central seal in London, British Library, Additional MS 15505 reads "✠ sancte michael ✠ sancte gabriel ✠ sancte raphael ✠ sancte uriel custodiet et liberet famulum tuum franciscum ab armis ab insidiis et ab omni periculo." Moving clockwise, the eight surrounding seals have the following legends: (1) "✠ ualet contra captionem ✠ hoc signum si tecum habebit"; (2) "hoc pentaculum ualet contra ignem et contra aquam"; (3) "siquis hoc signum super se portabit in manis inimicorum suorum non perebit"; (4) "✠ hoc quatratum siquis hoc signum multum ualet contra demones"; (5) "✠ hoc signum habebit super se et demones non potuerint nocere"; (6) "✠ hoc signum multum ualet contra malam grandinem si credederis yhesum christum"; (7) "✠ In qualcumque die hoc signum inspexeris in bellum nec non peribis et ab omnibus periculis liberaberis"; and (8) "✠ hoc signum ualet contra inimicos et aduersarios si tecum habebit."

94. Michael Camille, "Visual Art in Two Manuscripts of the *Ars notoria,*" in Fanger, *Conjuring Spirits,* pp. 113–14 (fig. 1, Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS E.V.13, fol. 1r).

95. Not much is known about the provenance of Ilioneo's amulet because the Scheide collection was acquired piecemeal from different dealers and auction houses, selling items that were originally

Image not available

Fig. 8 John Hinsdale Scheide Collection, no. 7923, Princeton University Library

documentary hand, incorporating elements from both semi-Gothic cursive script (pointed *a,* short *s,* occasional hooks and loops) and Humanistic cursive script (straight-backed *d, ct* ligature, occasional capitals and ampersand). The undistinguished cursive hand gives the amulet the appearance of a manuscript draft, with innumerable abbreviations, interlineal additions, and corrections by crossing out rather than erasure; for example, the crossed-out ~~*gla*~~ at the end of line 2 was rewritten in full as *gladium* at the beginning of line 3. The inaccuracies in the text go far beyond common scribal errors that were the product of corrupt exemplars and mechanical problems in copying.[96] This can be seen in the Latin phrase "christus volui vincula" (line 3), by which the writer probably meant "Christus vincit vincula" or more fully "Christus vincit vincula aeternae mortis." While the producers of textual amulets did not consciously desire to alter sacred text, odd alterations were all but inevitable when writing was based on imperfect memory, as was probably the case with Ilioneo's amulet.[97] With expanded literacy in Italian towns, writing at this basic level would have been within the capacity of an increasing number of people, and the actual purveyor could have enlisted the aid of someone more literate, such as a parish priest to prepare it. Given the number of errors, it is possible that Ilioneo's amulet

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in ecclesiastical archives, business records, family papers, and other contexts. The Scheide family also purchased artificial collections of documents amassed by other collectors, who had acquired items of unrelated provenance. The materials were then rearranged by date in a misguided effort to facilitate paleographical study. As a result, Ilioneo's amulet was relegated to the last box in the collection (reserved for unidentified and undated items), where it was left uncataloged. William T. Scheide (1847–1907) and his son John Hinsdale Scheide (1875–1942) acquired this collection of European documents between the 1890s and 1930s, chiefly from the Florentine publisher and antiquarian dealer Leo S. Olschki (1861–1940). Included in the collection are approximately five thousand Italian notarial documents and other items dating chiefly from the period 1200–1650 and pertaining to Fabriano, Vicenza, Bergamo, and other northern Italian cities and towns. Concerning the Scheide documents, see Don C. Skemer, "Partners and Protocols: Sources of Italian Economic and Social History, 1200–1650," *Princeton University Library Chronicle* 54, no. 1 (Autumn 1992): 24–38. John Hinsdale Scheide continued to acquire from Olschki and other dealers, then deposited the bulk of the document collection in the Princeton University Library in 1938. Nine years later William H. Scheide formally donated the collection to Princeton in the memory of his father John Hinsdale Scheide.

96. Eugène Vinaver, "Principles of Textual Emendation," *Studies in French Language and Literature Presented to Professor Mildred K. Pope by Pupils, Colleagues and Friends,* Publications of the University of Manchester, no. 268 (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1939), pp. 351–69. Concerning texts known from written exemplars and oral tradition, see Edgar M. Stotkin, "Medieval Irish Scribes and Fixed Texts," *Eigse: A Journal of Irish Studies* (1977–79): 437–50.

97. Failures of memory are not uncommon in informally copied text. Brief quotations from the Gospel of St. John are incorrect in the text of an amulet transcribed in Dold, "Ein christliches Amulett," p. 161. Several garbled and mislabeled New Testament extracts, along with a verbal charm against the plague and other ailments, are found in a detached bifolium that once served as the flyleaf and paste down from an unknown French manuscript of ca. 1500 (Princeton University Library, Princeton MS 138.40).

was self-produced by the owner from imperfectly remembered scripture or prayer formulas.

Ilioneo's amulet was written in long lines on the flesh side of an unruled piece of writing material, in this case parchment (probably goatskin) of mediocre or document-grade quality, somewhat thick but appropriate for an ephemeral item. At its widest points, the parchment measures 29.5 × 18.25 cm. As with ordinary legal documents of the time, a left margin was created by rubbing the parchment sheet against the edge of a slant-top desk or other writing surface to make a vertical crease, which here extends from 1.5 cm at the top to 2.0 cm at the bottom. The text area was limited to the upper two-thirds of the sheet, from the left margin to the right edge, leaving blank the bottom third of the recto and the entire verso. The parchment sheet was initially folded down in thirds to form a rectangle measuring 18.2 × 7.5 cm with the text on the outside. Judging from the permanence of these folds, Ilioneo's amulet was initially used in this configuration. But the amulet seems to have remained in use over a period of time, so that a family member might have folded it down two more times, leaving the blank lower panel exposed. The amulet was thus reduced to a rectangle measuring 4.0 × 9.5 cm. The lightness of the secondary folds suggests that the amulet was used much less in this configuration.

The text twice refers to the supplicant as *famulus,* indicating male ownership (lines 9, 11).[98] Also included twice is the first name Ilioneus (spelled "Illjoneus"), a derivative of Ilion (the Greek name for ancient Troy). Though found in classical texts (for example, a Trojan warrior in the *Aeneid*), the name Ilioneus (or Ilioneo in Italian) was exceedingly uncommon in Renaissance Italy. There is no way to identify him with a particular individual.[99] Ilioneo traveled enough to need inclusion of part of the travel charm "transiens per medium illorum" (Luke 4:30). If he had been a traveling merchant, he might have been literate enough to write out the amulet without assistance. However, a local cleric, scrivener, or charlatan could also have prepared it. The raised initial *I* of the *In nomine patris* invocation on line 2 (extending about a centimeter into the left margin) is reminiscent of the *mise-en-page* in contemporary Italian legal documents on single

98. On the use of the words *famulus* and *famula* to indicate ownership, see Adelaide Bennett, "A Thirteenth-Century French Book of Hours for Marie," *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 54 (1996): 23, 31.

99. Virgil mentions this Trojan warrior in the *Aeneid* (1.521, 559; 7.212, 9.569). For other classical references, see *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft,* ed. Georg Wissowa and Wilhelm Kross (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler Sohn Buchhandlung, 1914), vol. 17, p. 1066. The warrior Ilioneus was the son of Niobe and Amphion and is portrayed as a kneeling male figure believed to belong to the Niobean group of Hellenistic sculptures in Munich, Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek; see Karl Hasse, *Antike Bildwerke,* Zur Kunstgeschichte des Auslandes, vol. 86 (Strassburg: H. E. Heitz, 1911), pp. 10–14, plate 5.

sheets.[100] The text of the amulet was general enough to have been used by a wide cross section of the laity.

While Ilioneo's amulet must have been carried for general protection, it was also used in conjunction with other forms of private devotion. Parchment bronzing and ink abrasion in the upper left portion of the sheet probably resulted from the amulet's being frequently unfolded and held in the owner's left hand for prayer, meditation, and religious guidance, like well-worn prayer books and rolls. Carried in a pouch or sack for easy access, Ilioneo's amulet both served as an aide-mémoire for prayer and as protection against evil and misfortune, somewhat like the rosary.[101] It is possible that Ilioneo could read little of the Latin text, believing that he could derive benefit by merely gazing upon its text, just as people might look at a holy icon, without decoding the individual words. Many crosses, written rapidly with equilateral arms and hence looking more like Greek crosses than Latin ones, offer evidence of the coexistence of oral and written traditions textually because crosses served both to protect the owner and prompt devotional gestures. Embedded instructions in Italian on lines 7–8 ("Nota che ai a dire ogni di cinque ave marie et cinque pater nostri") remind the owner to recite common prayers from memory. Vernacular instructions set them off from the text, like rubrics in a liturgical book, and also suggest that the owner could read only Italian. If he read the Latin text at all, it was because he already knew what it said and could recite it from memory.

For all its crude simplicity, Ilioneo's amulet offers general rather than specific protection. The text begins with the invocation of the Trinity and divine names (some rendered simply as majuscule letters), combined with petitions for divine protection (lines 1–12). Christ is invoked as a personal protector against the Devil and other perils: "christus est semper ante me et postea me communiter maleditus diabolus me vidit" (lines 3–4). Set down from memory, the formulaic invocations of Christ as a font of divine power, standing by the faithful to overcome life-threatening dangers and turn demons to flight, are a much-truncated version of contemporary charms that include as many as twelve praises of the apotropaic powers of Christ and the Cross.[102] The next section (lines 13–16) is

100. Attilio Bartoli Langeli, *Scrittura e parentela: Autografia collettiva, scritture personali, rapporti familiari in una fonte italiana quattro-cinquecentesca,* La ricerca folklorica, Testi no. 4 (Perugia: Grafo Edizioni, 1989), passim. Several documents from Perugia begin with a raised *I* for the word *Io* and YHS for *Yhesus,* sometimes prefaced by a cross: see p. 18, fig. 8 (1508); p. 39, fig. 15 (1493); p. 49, figs. 22c-d (1498).

101. Anne Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose: The Making of the Rosary in the Middle Ages* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), p. 116.

102. The praises are on lines 2–4 of Ilioneo's amulet: "✠ christus est uera salus ✠ christus superat gladium ✠ christus sit semper mecum ✠ christus voluit vincula ✠ christus nobis signum ✠ christus sit semper sit semper ante me et postea me comuniter maledictus diabolus me vidit ✠." Compare the

in effect a litany of powerful helpers. Ilioneo seeks the intercession and protection of the Apostles and several saints, as well as that of St. Michael and the Virgin Mary. Each was associated with some aspect of protection, helping, or healing. St. Barnabas was associated with book magic in that he was believed to have healed by placing the Gospel of Matthew on the bodies of the afflicted.[103] Wearing these powerful names offered personal protection, though it is possible that Ilioneo recited suffrages or short prayers from memory. The closing benediction (lines 31–32) is similar to the beginning of the pseudo-Bede prayer "De septem verbis Christi in cruce" but ends abruptly without the final *Amen.*[104] Ilioneo's amulet also has a potpourri of Gospel quotations. The Seven Last Words of Christ make an appearance, but in an order that is random (4, 5, 3, 7, 2) relative to the traditional medieval order and incomplete (omitting 1 and 6). Also misquoted is John 1:1–14 (lines 12–13, 16–31). Whoever prepared this amulet for Ilioneo seems to have relied on memory rather than a written exemplar, an approach consistent with the crude execution. But despite differences in level of presentation, Ilioneo's amulet offered general production like Francesco's more elegant one.

Printed Amulets for Everyone

In the fifteenth century, printed amulets took their place beside written amulets for general and specific protection. Decades before the revolutionary application of movable type to printing, block prints were being produced in quantities from wooden printing blocks and could be displayed devotionally or carried amuletically like brief handwritten prayers. At the same time, pilgrimage badges and other religious articles were being mechanically batch-produced in quantities. Block prints that served as images for Christian veneration were at the same time emblems of sacred power, which could function apotropaically as well. While woodblocks had been used in the West since the twelfth century to stamp designs on fabric, the earliest examples of paper block prints date no earlier than the final years of the fourteenth century and more likely from the 1420s. In fact, the West was late to embrace the possibilities of printing. Centuries earlier in the Islamic Near East, Arabic textual amulets had been printed on paper, possibly by means of xylography, and sold commercially. Scores of examples survive in libraries.[105]

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apotropaic text beginning "Crux ✠ Christus sit mecum," in Sparrow, "On the Measure of the Side of the Redeemer," p. 369.

103. Duchet-Suchaux and Pastoureau, *The Bible and the Saints,* pp. 57–58.

104. *Patrologia latina,* vol. 94, cols. 561–62.

105. As early as the eleventh or twelfth century, Arabic textual amulets were being block printed in carbon-black ink on paper by means of a printing plate (*tarsh*). This practice was based on

In Western Europe, early devotional woodcuts or block prints of sacred images were sometimes hand-tinted or had brief prayers and popular jingles written on them by hand. Block printing in the first half of the fifteenth century paved the way for the implementation of movable type and printing technology in the second half in order to meet growing Western demand for textual amulets and other Christian printed materials.

After Gutenberg, printed amulets and devotional broadsides coexisted with woodcuts and metalcuts incorporating brief devotional or amuletic text. Broadside amulets are often specific about the range of afflictions and calamities from which they offered specific or general protection. In the wake of the Black Death and recurrent plagues, German printers produced sizable numbers of *Pestblätter* and *Seuchenblätter.* These could be displayed domestically to remind the faithful of the blessings, miracles, and healing possible through divine power. For example, vernacular instructions in a 42.9 × 33.2 cm hand-tinted German broadside of around 1500 offer personal, family, and household immunity from the plague on days when a person looks upon the broadside's Crucifixion scene with a Tau cross (associated with protection from the plague, as previously discussed) and recites specific prayers with sincere devotion. These include a brief

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technology long established in East Asia but did not influence Western block printing in the fifteenth century. It is possible that the Arabs used xylography (that is, woodblock printing) or perhaps plates made of stone, clay, or molded lead and other metals. The result of this early printing technology was production of batches of textual amulets on Arabic paper of varying sizes and qualities, sometimes hand tinted, especially using the Prophet's favored color green. Textual amulets were then rolled or folded and put in a suspension capsule or other container for portability and personal use. Probably most of the approximately sixty examples extant of block-printed Arabic amulets, varying widely in dimensions and text, are from Egypt. There are twenty-four in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek; eleven in the Cambridge University Library; and additional examples in other libraries and private collections. On block-printed Arabic amulets, see Richard W. Bulliet, "Medieval Arabic Tarsh: A Forgotten Chapter in the History of Printing," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 107 (1987): 427–38; Richard W. Bulliet, "Printing in the Medieval Islamic Underworld," *Columbia Library Columns* 36 (1987): 13–20; Karl Schaefer, "The Scheide Tarsh," *Princeton University Library Chronicle* 56, no. 3 (Spring 1995): 401–19; Karl Schaefer, "Eleven Medieval Arabic Block Prints in the Cambridge University Library," *Arabica* 48 (2001): 210–39; and Bosworth, *Mediaeval Islamic Underworld,* vol. 1, p. 147. In Arabic printed amulets, generally, rectangular page-like sheets are more common than narrow rolls; texts are most often in Kufic, an ornamental script used in early Qur'āns. Embedded instructions in particular block-printed amulets refer to them as *al-kitāb*. Like Arabic handwritten examples, block-printed amulets were based on standard textual elements such as Qur'ānic verses associated with protection and healing, particularly the *Basmala,* the divine invocation that opens each *Sūra* ("In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful"); the *Fātiha,* the fundamental Islamic prayer (beginning with the *Basmala*) that opens the Qur'ān; and the invocation of Allah through lists of divine names and prayers for protection from specific perils. But unlike handwritten amulets, Arabic block-printed amulets did not contain the owner's name, instead using phrases like "whoever hands upon himself this writing." Artisans continued to produce these printed amulets until the fourteenth century, perhaps for sale by Arab peddlers.

prayer based on divine names, in Latin and German; and a reminder to recite the Pater Noster and Ave Maria three times daily, presumably from memory. Beneath the Tau cross is a depiction of the Measure of Christ ("Hec est vera longetudinis forma Claui Christi"), which was also common in late medieval amulets.[106] Any devotional broadside or print could be used as a textual amulet, as long as people believed that wearing or looking at them offered protection and healing. Given the proliferation of devotional broadsides and prints, it is almost inevitable that many Christians used them as amulets.

Particularly revealing are the circumstances surrounding the production and use of a unique 1499 broadside amulet (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Einblatt-Handschrift, VII: 23), which contains Giovanni Mercurio da Correggio's *Oratio ad sanctam crucem,* printed in Rome by Eucharius Silber.[107] Giovanni Mercurio was a native of Correggio in northern Italy who became a charismatic preacher and self-professed prophet of the Quattrocento. From 1484 to 1506, he attracted a sizable popular following and an entourage of disciples in Italy and France. His disciple Ludovico Lazzarelli (1450–1500), a fervent believer in the real power of words over things, wrote the *Epistola Enoch* about Mercurio. For obvious reasons, the church was hostile to laymen who claimed to have intimate knowledge of divine secrets. Mercurio's religious hermeticism was a danger because it promised supernatural benefits and prophecy outside the church. He is supposed to have distributed small rolls that proclaimed his special powers as a latter-day disciple of Christ and Hermes Trismegistos. Deeply influenced by hermetic magic and Jewish Cabala, Mercurio thought himself a Christ-like healer with special divine knowledge about how to deal with the plague. He sometimes dressed in a black-silk toga. On his back was the

106. Paul Heitz, ed., *Pestblätter des XV. Jahrhunderts,* 2nd edition, published as vol. 2 of *Einblattdrucke des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts,* ed. Paul Heitz (Strassburg: J.H.E. Heitz, 1918), pp. 1–8; reproduced in facsimile on plate 1 from an original (Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinet, Inv.-Nr. 90-1): "Das is das zeichen T thau das got der herr Moysi in der wuestin gab das das volck nyt sturb an der pestilentz. Unnd wo das zychen yn eynem huiss nyt was, do starb das volck alles." The prayer based on divine names is "Agyos otheos agyos yschyros agyos athanos eleison yman sanctus deus sanctus fortis sanctus et immortalis miserere nobis" (that is, the romanized form of the Greek *trishagion* or *trisagion*). Charles Nisard, *Histoire des livres populaires ou de la littérature du colportage,* 2nd edition, revised (Paris: E. Dentu, 1864), vol. 1, pp. 151–52 n. 1. See also Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Ex voto Zeichen Bild und Abbild in christlichen Votivbrauchtum* (Zurich: Atlantic Verlag, 1972), p. 76.

107. Nine Miedema, "Die *Oratio ad sanctam crucem* des Johannes Mercurius Corrigiensis: Ein Einblattdruck als Apotropäum?" in *Einblattdrucke des 15. und fruhen 16. Jahrhunderts: Probleme, Perspektiven, Fallstudien,* ed. Volker Hohnemann, Sabine Griese, Falk Eisermann, and Marcus Ostermann (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2000), pp. 325–47. Konrad Haebler, ed., *Einblattdrucke des XV Jahrhunderts: Ein bibliographisches Verzeichnis,* Sammlung Bibliothekswissenschaftlicher Arbeiten, 35/36 Heft (Halle: Verlag von Ehrhardt Karras, 1914), pp. 267–68, no. 1002.

ever-apotropaic Tau cross, which he considered to be the "name and sign of the highest God."[108]

Printed as a broadside amulet in 1499, probably during Mercurio's third visit to Rome, the *Oratio* offered protection against the plague and misfortune. For all his hermetic learning, much of Mercurio's text included standard amuletic elements such as a long list of divine names, chiefly of Hebrew origin. The eighty-eight lines of text are physically configured in cruciform, printed in red and black ink on a piece of paper measuring 29.2 × 20.2 cm. The shaped text served to facilitate visualization and enhance magical efficacy.[109] The introductory text (lines 1–21) is in red ink, forming the upper arm of a standard Latin cross. The actual *oratio* (lines 22–88) is in black ink, forming a Tau cross (that is, the lower three arms of a Latin cross). In this section, red ink is used for the initial *E,* all but one of ninety-nine interspersed crosses, and the colophon (line 89). Christian numerology also enhanced the apotropaic power of the cross. While a broadside like this could easily be posted on a wall to protect a family and household, the three vertical and seven horizontal creases indicate that the one extant copy was worn on the body. The broadside would have folded down to a small rectangle of approximately 4.0 × 6.0 cm, making it ideal for amuletic use. The printer Eucharius Silber (or whoever actually commissioned the printing job)

108. Concerning Giovanni Mercurio da Correggio, see Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letterature, 1956), pp. 249–57; Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 171 n. 2, p. 339; Donald Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence: Prophecy and Patriotism in the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 89, 199–201; David B. Ruderman, "Giovanni Mercurio da Corregio's Appearance in Italy as Seen Through the Eyes of an Italian Jew," *Renaissance Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 309–22. In the small rolls, Mercurio was said to have identified himself rather immodestly: "Ego Joannes Mercurius de Corigio, sapientiae angelus Pimanderque in summo ac maximo spiritus Jesu Christi excessu, hanc aquam regni pro paucis, sic super omnes magna voce evangelizo." Mercurio's use of the title Pimander is a reference to the *Poemander* or *Pimander,* the *corpus hermeticum* by Hermes Trismegistos (Hermes Mercurius Trisgemistus), which Marsilio Ficino had translated into Latin (1471). Poemander (Pimander) ostensibly passed on his Hermetic wisdom to Hermes Trismegistos. Concerning this ancient teacher of magic, see Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes,* pp. 33–34. In a fourteenth-century depiction of Hermes Trismegistos in Siena Cathedral, the Egyptian magician is described as a contemporary of Moses, who was also considered an ancient master of the magical arts (reproduced in King, *Magic,* fig. 8). Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic,* pp. 68–69, wrote about Lazzarelli, "Divine creation is accomplished by the mystic utterance of words, which are made up of letters and elements. This is again the analogy with the divine creation through the Word, but in the cabalistic version according to which God created the universe through the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. It confirms what was already apparent from the preamble to the hymn [*Asclepius*]—that Lazarelli hold as magical theory of language, that he believes that words have a real, not conventional connection with things and can exert power over them."

109. Concerning cruciform and other forms of shaped text in Byzantine codicology, see Jeffery C. Anderson, *The New York Cruciform Lectionary* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press for the College Art Association, 1992), pp. 75–76.

must have seen a ready market in the crowds of people attracted to Mercurio's ministry. Yet this early broadside amulet would have appealed not only to his followers but also to other Christians seeking protection from the plague.

Early printed amulets could often serve as devotional aids and indulgences, like some fifteenth-century textual amulets. In late medieval canon law, an indulgence constituted a commutation of ecclesiastical penalties in purgatory for particular abuses and infractions. Christians were supposed to be fully penitent and confessed of their sins. While indulgences in written or printed form were church-mediated promises of divine remission for sins, they also became commercially available religious articles, promising remission of sins for thousands of years. Such indulgences could work in a mechanical way, not unlike textual amulets. Some books of hours included suffrages offering indulgence to those who said a prayer while meditating on a miniature of the Virgin Mary. English, Flemish, and German woodcuts offered years of indulgence to those who each day meditated on devotional images related to the Passion and recited common prayers in multiples constituting sacred numbers. But while people might conveniently display such printed sheets on the interior walls of dwellings for daily viewing, they could carry them around just as easily as they could amulets. In the popular mentality, carrying devotional broadsides could bring divine protection by physical proximity to sacred words and images.[110]

For example, a German woodcut of ca. 1490, based on images of the *Vulnera Christi* and *Arma Christi* (instruments of the Passion, which were in effect the weapons of his triumph over death) could serve equally as a devotional aid, indulgence, and textual amulet. Vernacular instructions in the woodcut explained how to use the sign of the cross in the middle of the image of the almond-shaped Side Wound to calculate the Measure of Christ. The user was also instructed to kiss the image in good devotion in order to win divine protection from sudden death or misfortune.[111] Similar in its three-part function was a macaronic English broadside amulet of about 1520. The broadside includes conventional amuletic text in Latin and a Crucifixion woodcut by the printer Wynken de

110. On indulgences, see Bernd Rill, *Die Inquisition und ihre Ketzer* (Puckheim: Idea Verlag, 1982), p. 395; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* p. 214, plate 85; and Swanson, "Passion and Practice," pp. 1–30 and plates 1, 3, 4.

111. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1943.3.831 (B-3384). David S. Areford, "The Passion Measured: A Late Medieval Diagram of the Body of Christ," in Macdonald, Ridderbos, and Schlusemann, *The Broken Body,* pp. 210–38: "While the inscriptions of the Washington woodcut specifically promised protection and an indulgence, the print should be seen as more than simply a talisman or an amulet. Through its pictorial assembly of the body of Christ by way of the side wound, the wounded hands and feet, and the Veronica veil—the Washington woodcut is a diagram which clearly illustrates its function as a devotional aid used to reconstruct Christ's body through meditation" (p. 237).

Worde (d. 1534?). Those who looked upon, blessed themselves with, or wore the broadside amulet's long list of names of God, the Three Kings, Apostles, and Evangelists would be protected from evil spirits, disease, sudden death, and all manner of misfortune, at the present time or in the future. The broadside also offered a false indulgence to those supporting an apparently nonexistent Hospital of Pity in the diocese of Norwich.[112]

Another interesting aspect of broadside amulets was the reuse of common medieval amuletic texts for a varied audience of both the literate and unlettered. The result was a curious mingling of oral, written, and print traditions. In the West, the apocryphal Sunday Epistle found renewed life as a broadside, in which medieval versions of the apocryphal letter of Christ were fortified by the addition of magic charms. Apotropaic texts of recent origin, such as prayers for protection against syphilis, were disseminated as broadsides.[113] Written amulets provided early printers with textual exemplars, physical models, and a commercial inducement to batch-produce broadside amulets along with devotional images, religious songs, vernacular prayers, indulgences, almanacs and bloodletting calendars, prophecies, and other cheaply printed forms of popular literature.[114] Printed ephemera (like textual amulets) were produced in considerable volume but rarely survive.[115]

112. Kenneth W. Cameron, *The Pardoner and His Pardons: Indulgences Circulating in England on the Eve of the Reformation* (Hartford: Transcendental Books, 1965), p. 24n: "mihi assistent in omnibus necessitatibus meis ac me defendant & liberent ab omnibus periculis, temptationibus, & angustiis corporis et anime: & ab universis malis presentibus preteritis & futuris, me custodiant nunc & in euum. Amen." For a brief discussion of this broadside, see William A. Jackson, "Three Printed English Indulgences at Harvard," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 7, no. 2 (Spring 1953): 229–31.

113. For example, *Gebet zu S. Dionysius um Schutz gegen die Franzosen-Krankheit* (Nuremberg: Georg Stuchs, ca. 1497) and *Gebet gegen die platern Mala frantzosa* (Vienna: Johann von Winterburg, ca. 1500). Haebler, *Einblattdrucke,* p. 167, nos. 645, 648.

114. Ottavia Niccoli, *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy,* trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 5: "These texts were not only 'popular' in the sense of aiming at a wide audience; they also enjoyed a large distribution thanks to their low price and their low technical demands. They were subject to rapid deterioration, however, so that they are now quite rare." In pre-Reformation England, for example, thousands of "images of piety" of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and particular saints were sold at cathedrals and shrines, yet only twenty-seven examples actually survive. Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640,* Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 131.

115. Gisela Ecker, *Einblattdrucke von Anfängen bis 1555: Untersuchungen zu einer Publikationsform literarischer Texte* (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1981), pp. 53n, 254. Paul Needham, *The Printer and the Pardoner: An Unrecorded Indulgence Printed by William Caxton for the Hospital of St. Mary Rounceval, Charing Cross* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1986), pp. 28–33: "Broadside items such as indulgences have a particular risky gauntlet to run if they are to survive at all. They would normally have been kept not in libraries or on bookshelves but in chests of family papers. Even there—unlike, for example, title deeds and other legal records, which were passed down from one generation to another—they would not have been thought of as papers to be permanently preserved."

Unlike handwritten amulets, which had been custom-produced one at a time like manuscript books, often on parchment, broadside amulets could be printed less expensively on paper. The printing plate or chase filled with movable type set for a large broadside amulet might produce only one printed item out of a full sheet of paper. However, a printing plate or chase of the same size could also be set up to produce multiple impressions. A single sheet could yield five, ten, or more impressions of a smaller textual amulet. In a typical press run of a few hundred sheets of paper, a printer could produce several thousand nearly identical printed amulets. After the full sheets had been printed, the printer would have each sheet cut apart to yield a number of smaller textual amulets. Printers were willing to batch-produce broadside amulets in this way on speculation, confident that there was a ready market and a mechanism for commercial distribution. Printing technology clearly revolutionized the production of textual amulets. But the immediate textual consequences were minor because printing was too localized to result in the standardization of amuletic texts.[116] One observable textual difference between handwriting and printing is that owner-specific references made no sense in broadside amulets. In order to personalize identical copies and thus focus their power on particular individuals, printers left a blank space, the printed word *nomen,* or the letter *N*. This practice was similar to the way that exemplars for amuletic texts and legal formularies indicated that a name was to be written. With their substantial investment in printing type and presses, early printers would have logically tended to use mainstream Christian texts rather than texts based on demonic magic, which would have been likely to arouse the ire of inquisitors and church courts.

Some early printing of amulets took place in religious houses and in a few cases has left archival documentation. The most important evidence is from Florence. Between 9 December 1476 and 30 April 1482, the ecclesiastical press established at the Dominican convent of San Jacopo di Ripoli in Florence printed some twenty-five different devotional broadsides, including amuletic texts. The Ripoli daybook (*diario* or *giornale*), chiefly kept by Fra Domenico di Pistoia, the convent's prior, to document printing operations, often undertaken in partnership with other people, preserves a detailed record of titles, press runs, and sales. Most numerous were unspecified prayers (*orazioni*), prayers to the Virgin Mary and various saints, the *Orazione della misura di Cristo* (Measure of

116. Halliday, "A Note upon the Sunday Epistle," p. 75: "The accurate preservation of the traditional form was not promoted by the invention of printing and by the wider circulation of the charm among a more numerous and less cultivated clientele. The modern examples tend to differ more widely than the mediaeval from the original model, and the German specimens suggest to me that it is probably that investigation would show them to fall into a series of groups, each descending from its own immediate parent, a debased version of the original."

Christ) and the *Epistola della domenica* (Sunday Epistle), *Qui habitat* (probably Psalm 90, long popularly believed to offer protection against demons),[117] the Lord's Prayer, and two versions of the *Vangelo di S. Giovanni* (John 1:1–14, if not the entire Gospel). Judging from the titles in the daybook, many of the devotional broadsides and even some prayer leaflets might have functioned as amulets. The nuns of San Jacopo di Ripoli set type in such a way that as many as thirty identical broadsides could be printed from each sheet of paper, which had been made in Fabriano, Prato, Colle, and other Italian production centers. Press runs could vary from a few hundred to a thousand. Such broadsides were among the first items printed by this Florentine press.[118]

Though thousands of broadside amulets were printed there, only one of them possibly survives. The Pierpont Morgan Library has a late fifteenth-century broadside of the *Orazione della misura di Cristo,* which is printed on a piece of paper measuring 10.5 × 22.0 cm (New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, PML 16529). This broadside contains an Italian version of the Measure of Christ text, which in Latin versions would begin with "Hec est mensura domini nostri Jesu Christi" or something similar (fig. 9). It cannot be assigned with certainty to the printing office of San Jacopo di Ripoli, but the text and amuletic function must have been quite similar to the example printed there. The broadside's vertical fold marks leave little doubt as to how it was used.[119] The text

117. Doris Ruhe, *Gelehrtes Wissen, "Aberglaube," und pastorale Praxis im französischen Spätmittelalter: Der Second Lucidaire und seine Rezeption, 14.–17. Jahrhundert: Untersuchung und Edition* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1993), p. 50. "Psalm von alters her von der Kirche als Gebet gegen die Wirkung der Dämonen empfohlen wurde. Bei Walafried Strabo heisst es: *Est enim psalmus iste hymnus contra daemones.*"

118. Haebler, *Einblattdrucke,* p. 282n; Pietro Bologna, "La stamperia fiorentina di Ripoli e le sue edizioni," *Giornale storico della letterature italiana* 20, no. 60 (1892): 349–78; Emilia Nesi, ed., *Il diario della stamperia di Ripoli* (Florence: Bernardo Seeber, 1903), pp. 23, 30–54; Mary A. Rouse and Richard H. Rouse, *Cartolai, Illuminators, and Printers in Fifteenth-Century Italy: The Evidence of the Ripoli Press,* UCLA University Research Library Occasional Papers, no. 1 (Los Angeles: UCLA University Research Library, 1988), pp. 37–38 n. 40; imprints listed in pp. 70–94 include the following broadside prayers: nos. ii–vi, viii, x, xii, xiii, xvii–xix, xxix, xliii, xlvii, xlviii, l, liv, lix, lxi, lxvii, lxix, lxxv. "While such minor publications were not terribly lucrative," Melissa Conway has observed, "they were never produced at a loss." See Melissa Conway, ed., *The Diario of the Printing Press of San Jacopo di Ripoli, 1476–1484: Commentary and Transcription,* Storia della Tipografia e del Commercio Librario, no. 4 (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1999), pp. 16, 32 n. 77, 51 n. 7, 53; appendix 2, "Chronological Listing of Works Published by the San Jacopo di Ripoli Press," pp. 289–303.

119. For other broadside prayers, see Haebler, *Einblattdrucke,* pp. 97–98, 127, 166–68, 267, 280–82, 399–400; Frederick R. Goff, ed., *Incunabula in American Libraries: A Third Census of Fifteenth-Century Books Recorded in North American Collections* (New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 1964), p. 452 (item 0-72); and Curt F. Bühler, "An Orazione della misura di Cristo," *La bibliofilía* 39 (1937): 430–33. This broadside was also described and reproduced in a *Catalogue of Rare and Early Books and Manuscripts* (Berlin: Paul Gottschalk, 1907), p. 5, no. 14.

begins with an invocation of the Holy Trinity (interspersed with crosses) and ends with quotations from the Seven Last Words of Christ. Like some fifteenth-century rolls combining devotional and amuletic functions, it includes a figure representing the Measure of Christ. The text and figure are printed in red ink. Bearing a personal copy written on a single sheet was a convenient way to have unlimited access to the sacred power of the image, not to mention the apotropaic text with which it was coupled. But even when the image was inscribed in a devotional book rather than a textual amulet, people would look at the Measure of Christ and kiss it with reverence like an icon in pious expectation of divine protection.[120] Other fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century broadsides also combined the Measure of Christ and the Seven Last Words.[121]

Spain offers equally interesting archival evidence of the quantity production of broadside amulets. In the Archivo de Protocolos de Sevilla is a notarial inventory of Jacopo Cromberger's printing establishment in Seville at the time of the German-born printer's death in 1528. Still in the shop were more than 150,000 *pliegos sueltos* (single printed sheets folded up to produce small booklets of popular reading), among a total of 229 different titles. The inventory includes large numbers of what were probably broadside amulets, such as 21,000 comprised of

Image not available

Fig. 9 PML 16529, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York

120. Peter Schmidt, "Beschrieben, Bemalt, Zerschnitten: Tegernsee Mönche interpretieren einer Holzschnitt," in Volker Hohnemann, "Vorformen des Einblattdrucken: Urkunden, Schrifttafeln, Texierte, Tafelbilder, Anschläge, Einblatthandschriften," in Hohnemann et al., *Einblattdrucke des 15. und frühen 16. Jahrhunderts,* p. 256, plate 8.

121. For example, Uzielli, "L'orazione della misura di Christo," pp. 333–45, and Llompart Moragues, "Longitudo Christi Salvatoris," pp. 107–8.

prayers (*pliegos de oraçiones*) and 9,250 comprised of sacred writings and names of saints (*priegos de nomynas*), of which 1,250 were probably tinted (*pintadas*). Broadside amulets were probably produced in sizable press runs intended to fill the "down time" between printing books. Like the broadside amulets batch-produced at San Jacopo di Ripoli, few if any copies of the Cromberger broadsides have survived.[122] Archival evidence from the Spanish Inquisition would suggest that the volume of printed amulets churned out by Cromberger and other printers was not an aberration. Even after printing technology made batch production feasible, people continued to prepare amulets manually.[123] Spanish inquisitional records from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries help provide insight into the production, dissemination, and use of textual amulets.[124]

122. Clive Griffin, "Un curioso inventario de libros de 1528," in *El libro antiguo español: Actas del primer Coloquio Internacional (Madrid, 18 al 20 de diciembre de 1986),* ed. Maria Luisa López-Vidriero and Pedro M. Cátedra (Madrid: Ediciones de la Universidad de Salamanca, Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, Sociedad Española de Historia del Libro, 1988), pp. 189–224, especially pp. 193, 216. In connection with the *priegos de nomynas,* Griffin quotes Covarrubias (p. 216, no. 157) concerning the use of amulets carried in small purses: "Usavan antiguamente traer unas bolsitas cerradas, y dentro della algunas escrituras y nombre de santos . . . de donde se dixo nómina." See also Clive Griffin, *Los Cromberger: La historia de una imprenta del siglo XVI en Sevilla y Méjico* (Madrid: Ediciones de Cultura Hispánica, 1991), pp. 62, 64. Concerning *pliegos sueltos,* see Roger Chartier, "Reading Matter and 'Popular' Reading: From the Renaissance to the Seventeenth Century," in Guglielmo and Chartier, *A History of Reading in the West,* pp. 273, 278–79, 435.

123. Handwritten Hebrew or Arabic amulets found in the possession of New Christians (*conversos*) immediately aroused the ire of the Holy Office of the Inquisition. Therefore, possession of textual amulets was severely prosecuted as evidence of practicing one's ancestral religion (that is, "Judaizing"), and the amulets or written prayers seized were often appended to the case files. In 1484, to cite an early case, the Inquisition in Ciudad Real, Kingdom of Castile (including the Archdiocese of Toledo), charged the Jewish *converso* Catalina de Zamora with preparing a Hebrew amulet ("nomyna escripta en hebraico") for her daughter Graçia in order to draw her back to Judaism. Haim Beinart, ed., *Records of the Trials of the Spanish Inquisition in Ciudad Real* (Jerusalem: The Israel National Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974), vol. 1, pp. xxxii, 367, 369, 372, 389, 390, 393, 420.

124. Moriscos (forced converts to Christianity) furtively used paper amulets, often dispensed by physicians and healers of Moorish ancestry. The Arabic amulets, called *cédulas* or *cedulillas* in Spanish, were comprised of quotations from the Qur'ān, lists of powerful names that the inquisitors routinely condemned as *nóminas diabólicas,* brief invocations and prayers, and other textual elements. Islamic amulets were remarkably similar in textual structure and function to Christian examples. In the Kingdom of Aragon, textual amulets (*alhirzes*) account for nearly a quarter (98 of 409 cases) of Arabic books and related written materials that officials of the Spanish Inquisition discovered in the possession of Moriscos from 1568 to 1620. Concerning Arabic amulets and the Spanish Inquisition, see P. S. van Koningsveld, "Andalusian-Arabic Manuscripts from Christian Spain: A Comparative Intercultural Approach," *Israel Oriental Studies* 12 (1992): 82–84; P. S. van Koningsveld, "Andalusian-Arabic Manuscripts from Medieval Christian Spain: Some Supplementary Notes," in *Festgabe für Hans-Rudolf Singer zum 65. Geburtstag am 6. April 1990,* ed. Martin Forstner, Publikationen des Fachberichs Angewandte Sprachwissenschaft der Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz in Germersheim, series A, vol. 13 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991), pt. 2, p. 815; Luis García Ballester, *Historia social de la medicina en la España de los siglos XIII al XVI* (Madrid:

Broadside amulets were not custom-produced like written amulets, nor sold like printed books to stationers and booksellers for resale. Instead, as we learn from the San Jacopo di Ripoli daybook, most broadside amulets were sold to *cerretani,* obscure local street peddlers specializing in the sale of religious articles and trinkets; and also to clerics, chiefly Dominicans and the occasional parish priest, who probably wanted broadsides (especially in Italian) for lay devotional use, though once distributed it would have been difficult to control how the broadsides were used by the laity. The daybook tells us little about the *cerretani* other than their names, gender (all men), and the fact that one of them was blind. Similarly, Cromberger's printed items would have been sold to peddlers at a unit price of one maravedí.[125] Itinerant peddlers moved broadside amulets from urban centers to the surrounding countryside, where churches could purchase quantities so that they could be dispensed to parishioners, in effect preserving the "consecrated" status of clerically prepared textual amulets. Many broadside amulets were sold directly to local people. Some peddlers might have resembled "underworld" figures like the old witch and peddler Fabia at the traditional Spanish market fair that Lope de Vega (1562–1635) depicted unflatteringly in his play *El caballero de Olmedo*. In a Spanish town located about a hundred kilometers northwest of Madrid, Fabia peddled her wares from a basket filled with scented papers, cures for common ailments, toilet articles, cheap trinkets, and *algunas oraciones*.[126] The latter were most likely broadside prayers, which could serve as devotional aids and as textual amulets. Such printed items offered humble folk the possibility of divine protection and healing without having to travel for the miraculous cures associated with pilgrimage shrines and

AKAL Editor, 1976), vol. 1, pp. 165–72; Ana Labarta, ed., *Libro de dichos maravillosos,* Misceláneo morisco de magia y adivinación, Fuentes Arábico-Hispanas, no. 12 (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto de Cooperación con el Mundo Árabe, 1993), pp. 0.34–0.43.

125. Peddlers were active agents in the European proliferation of amulets and played a vital role in Reformation Germany. R. W. Scribner has described a veritable "free market economy in sacred power," which could be readily satisfied by "the priest, the cunning man or woman who practiced white magic, and the sorcerer who practiced black magic and knew how to operate with demonic powers." R. W. Scribner, "The Witch of Urach," in *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1987), p. 265.

126. Celsa Carmen García Valdés, ed., *De la tragicomedia a la comedia burlesca: El caballero de Olmedo de Lope de Vega y F. Monteser* (Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 1991), p. 95 (act 1, ll. 347–66): "Papeles son de alcanfor y solimán. Aquí secretos están de gran consideración para nuestra enfermedad ordinaria. . . . Polvos de dientes, jabones de manos, pastillas, cosas curiosas y provechosas. . . . Algunas oraciones." It is possible that such wares were sold separately or packaged together, like an extant Spanish broadside amulet of that time used to enclose a selection of religious trinkets, herbs, and other protective articles. Such a Spanish amulet, dating from the seventeenth or eighteenth century, is reproduced in Hansmann and Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Amulett und Talisman,* p. 121, fig. 305. For a study of Spanish popular religion at the time, see William A. Christian, Jr., *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

sacred relics. Commerce in broadside amulets continued for centuries and offered a model for the commerce in popular printed materials of all sorts in early modern Europe.[127]

This survey of extant textual amulets from the thirteenth to early sixteenth centuries shows how disparate textual elements were actually strung together, internally organized, and materially structured to facilitate multiple uses, from general protection to innumerable specific purposes. By studying extant physical evidence, we can better appreciate the artful marriage of textual elements, writing formats, and functions. Vernacular literature and other contemporary sources help contextualize this physical evidence and show areas of continuity from early centuries. Viewed comparatively, extant late medieval amulets show considerable similarity in textual elements, production, and use. Changes in the content, presentation, and use of textual amulets came as a result of growing lay literacy, which allowed more extensive texts compiled from diverse sources, oral and written; new ways of enhancing and tapping the power of words, symbols, and images; the increasing influence of learned magic on the common tradition of magic; a growing market for professionally prepared amulets appealing to a socially elite clientele; and the application of new printing technology to multiplying copies of textual amulets. Like books, textual amulets made a slow transition from scribal production to the mechanical multiplication of identical copies, from clerical production to a mixed economy of clerical and lay producers. With the advent of printing, we have for the first time a quantitative measure of popular demand for textual amulets.

127. Just as textual amulets quoted scripture and appropriated liturgy, the *Bibliothèque bleue* in France and the penny chapbook trade in England were often based on older texts, which had been simplified and abridged for popular consumption. Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France,* trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 240–342; Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries,* trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 12–14; Chartier, "Reading Matter and 'Popular' Reading," in Cavallo and Chartier, *History of Reading in the West,* p. 274. In later centuries, street peddlers would continue to be among the principal vendors of printed amulets. Goodspeed, *Modern Apocrypha,* p. 70, notes, "My first acquaintance with a complete text of The Letter from Heaven in its modern form was when a man came down our street peddling copies of it at fifteen cents each. I am sure he was never so welcomed in his life as he was at my door, for I had been looking for a complete text of this curious work for years."

5
Textual Amulets for Women

From the patristic era to the end of the Middle Ages, some theologians and social critics viewed women, especially "old women" and those of low social status, as gender-prone to use textual amulets in ways unfairly characterized as "superstitious."[1] Behind misogynist stereotypes lay the stark realities

1. As we have seen, St. Jerome complained about Christian "old wives" who used small rolls (*parvula evangelia*), and St. John Chrysostom about women and children in fourth-century Antioch wearing textual amulets based on the Gospels. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt,* p. 269. On women and magic in late antiquity, see Brown, *Cult of the Saints,* p. 28; Todd Breyfogle, "Magic, Women, and Heresy in the Late Empire: The Case of the Priscillianists," in Meyer and Mirecki, *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power,* pp. 435–54 (especially pp. 448–49, concerning a multilingual amulet of the fourth century). Early medieval penitentials present village wise women as among the principal practitioners of magic. Elizabeth Tucker, "Antecedents of Contemporary Witchcraft in the Middle Ages," *Journal of Popular Culture* 14, no. 1 (1980): 72–73. In the thirteenth century, Stephen of Bourbon argued that peasant women were particularly prone to superstition. "Only noble women deserved flattering portraits," notes Jean-Claude Schmitt in The *Holy Greyhound,* p. 34. The French physician Guy de Chauliac (ca. 1300–68) thought "women and idiots" were particularly interested in using verbal charms and incantations along with traditional remedies. Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages,* p. 112 n. 43. The French theologian Jean Gerson (1363–1429) considered old women to be among those most prone to superstition. Bonney, "Autour de Jean Gerson," p. 93. Giovanni Boccaccio's satirical *Il Corbaccio,* presented as a misogynist diatribe against women, accused women of consulting astrologers and necromancers as part of a strategy to deceive, rob, and humiliate their husbands. Tauno Nurmela, ed., *Giovanni Boccaccio, Il Corbaccio: Introduzione, Testo critico et note,* Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae, series B, vol. 146 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1968), p. 77 (pt. 236): "Da questo gli astrologhi, le nigromanti, le femmine maliose, le 'ndevine sono da loro visitate, chiamate, avute care, e in tutte le toro opportunita di niente servendo se non di favole, di quello de' mariti cattivelli sono abbondevolmente sovvente e sostentate." Michel de Montaigne (1533–92) urged his readers to avoid the *simple femmelette* with her textual amulets (*brevets*). Michel de Montaigne, *Essais* (Paris: Éditions Fernand Roches, 1931), vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 260, 265–66 (bk. 2, chap. 37): "Il n'est pas une simple femmelette de qui nous n'employons les barbotages et les brevets; et, selon mon humeur, si j'avoy à en accepter quelqu'une, j'acepterois plus volontiers cette medecine qu'aucune autre, d'autant qu'aumoins il n'y a nul dommage a craindre" (p. 260). Women (especially the poor) were increasingly held responsible

of reproduction and childbirth before the age of modern medicine. Christianity had long encouraged expectant mothers—who had justifiable anxieties about fertility, birthing pains, complications, and sudden death during delivery—to pray to helpful saints for divine intercession. Medieval women used birth girdles of sacred relics associated with powerful Christian virgins, especially the Virgin Mary, whose delivery of Jesus was a model of perfection, or from other holy virgins. Pregnant women were also able to turn to the church for benedictional formulas and prayers, which offered the hope of a successful delivery.

Outside the church, women could enlist the services of village midwives and lay healers, who mixed standard prayers (like the Pater Noster) with an assortment of relics, precious stones, herbal remedies, verbal charms, and other protective measures. Midwives long continued to borrow the methods of priests, physicians, and magicians. Ecclesiastical benedictions with rubrics like *Oratio pro dolore partus, Benedictio nocturnalis mulieris in partu,* and *Benedictio post partum* had offered aid before, during, and after childbirth.[2] From the thirteenth century such formulas became less common in liturgical books, and textual amulets used in connection with childbirth begin to survive. In this chapter, we will focus on fifteen small rolls and complex folded amulets of the thirteenth to early sixteenth centuries from England, France, and the Low Countries. These extant manuscripts, chiefly for women, provide physical evidence about the material assembly and packaging of disparate textual elements to deal with gender-specific health issues and in other ways. We will trace the growing conflation of textual amulets with lay devotional books and rolls.

Birthing Charms and Amulets

From the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, recorded verbal charms and extant textual amulets often include Christian models of successful childbirth, similar to the Latin charm found centuries earlier in Anglo-Saxon England (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius MS 85), which invoked the Virgin Birth, a sterile St. Elizabeth giving birth to St. John the Baptist, and the raising of Lazarus from the dead as Christian models to guarantee successful delivery. Narrative charms and brief Gospel readings relating to divinely blessed births could either be read aloud over the woman or spoken directly into the woman's ear, like a priestly blessing or "verbal relic."[3] In a Middle English prose translation of the Latin

for magic practices of all sorts, and witches grew from a minority of accused sorcerers to as many as four-fifths of the accused. Bailey, "From Sorcery to Witchcraft," pp. 964–66, 984–87.

2. Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter,* vol. 2, pp. 176–245.

3. Raymond Van Dam has used the term "verbal relics" in connection with practices in early Merovingian Gaul. St. Gregory of Tours described miraculous cures affected by reading aloud stories

Historia trium regum (ca. 1425), the Virgin Mary was attended by two midwives, Salome and Zelony, whose successful prayers for safe and painless childbirth of Christ included the birthing charm "Virgo verbo concepit, virgo peperit, atque post partum virgo permansit."[4] The narrative charm *Ut mulier pariat* in a late medieval Carmelite manuscript from Milan tells a story about Christ on the Mount of Olives with his disciples. To a parturient woman nearby, he offered three births as a sacred number of precedents—St. Elizabeth and St. John the Baptist, St. Anne and the Virgin Mary, and the Virgin Mary and Christ. Users of this charm were supposed to say it three times in the woman's right ear, together with a Pater Noster and Ave Maria, in order to assure a successful and painless childbirth.[5] Some textual amulets included instructions to apply it to the woman's body during labor, most commonly over the abdomen but occasionally to her right knee, back, or side.[6] There were alternative birth rituals. One might be told to write prescribed benedictional formulas on small pieces of parchment that were to be used like birth girdles, or carried around the home, rinsed off so that the woman would literally swallow the words like medicine, or even placed in a fire.[7]

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, women could readily obtain simple birthing amulets locally from clerics, family members and friends, charlatans, midwives, country scriveners, and even physicians, who could use written exemplars or rely on memory.[8] The use of birthing amulets was recommended in the

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from the life of St. Martin. Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles,* p. 90: "Many of the miracles of healing that Gregory recorded occurred during one of the two annual festivals of St. Martin. Some even happened precisely during the reading of selections from the saint's *Vita* . . . so the reading of his *Vita* marked a moment when St. Martin might reenact the miracles of healing that as bishop he had once performed during his lifetime." Ibid., p. 138: "Stories were 'verbal relics,' and as such they and other relics were gifts that the bishops of Tours and others exchanged in order to establish and maintain networks of friendship and influence."

4. Schaer, *The Three Kings of Cologne,* p. 52.

5. Helm, "Mittelalterliche Geburtsbenediktionen," p. 210.

6. An Anglo-Norman French amulet text directs the user, "Escrivez in parchemyn 'Sancta Maria peperit et mater illa non doluit, Christum regem genuit qui nos sanguine suo redemit.' Cest chose lyer entour le destre flank de la femme." Hunt, *Popular Medicine,* p. 92 (no. 46).

7. Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter,* vol. 2, pp. 186–203; Forbes, *Midwife and the Witch,* pp. 80–90; Walter J. Dilling, "Girdles: Their Origin and Development, particularly with Regard to Their Use as Charms in Medicine, Marriage, and Midwifery," *Caledonian Medical Magazine* 9 (1912–14): 337–57, 403–25; Lea T. Olsan, "The *Arcus* Charms and Christian Magic," *Neo-Philologus* 73, no. 3 (July 1989): 438–47. Weston, "Women's Medicine," pp. 291–92.

8. Historical evidence in later centuries suggests that a wide range of people could prepare birthing amulets. Spanish inquisitional records mention some birthing amulets. During legal proceedings of 1482–92 against a Jewish converso named G. R. Esplugues, Spanish inquisitors entered into evidence a Hebrew-language birthing amulet, which he had obtained for his wife from a Jewish physician in the Valencian city of Játiva. Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1966), vol. 2, pp. 360, 496. In eighteenth-century Italy,

Trotula, an important handbook of women's medicine that began in twelfth-century Salerno as a group of three Latin texts, which had been influenced by Graeco-Roman and Arabic medicine and circulated throughout Europe in many Latin and vernacular versions by the fifteenth century. The midwife or other caregiver consulting the *Trotula* could facilitate childbirth by writing a charm including the SATOR AREPO formula on a piece of cheese or butter for the woman to eat.[9] A birthing amulet figures in Franco Sacchetti's moralistic tale of the 1390s about an unnamed lay brother from the hospital of San Jacopo d'Altopascio, founded in the Tuscan hill town of Valdinevole at the end of the eleventh century. For five florins, the lay brother, whom Sacchetti presents unflatteringly as a country charlatan, agreed to provide a birth girdle to a young Sienese woman, then in her seventh month of pregnancy and apprehensive about once again experiencing the pain and difficulties that had marked her previous deliveries. The lay brother subcontracted the preparation of the amulet to an equally disreputable local monk. The amulet (*brieve* or *cedola scritta*) was written on a piece of very thin kidskin, folded up, and given to the woman, who wore it beneath her robes and presumably over her abdomen. If her delivery two months later was truly painless, as Sacchetti claimed, it must have been a happy coincidence or due to the placebo effect; for when the amulet was later opened, it contained a worthless five-line vernacular jingle about a hen.[10] Behind this moralistic tale lay the reality of easy access to textual amulets at a time of increased literacy.

Some medical manuscripts contained instructions for the preparation of birthing amulets promising safe and expeditious delivery, while offering procedures to overcome sterility, hasten conception, predict the child's gender, and deliver a stillborn child.[11] Family members and household staff with a basic

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birthing amulets were used in conjunction with saints' relics or images. David Gentilcore, *Healers and Healing in Early Modern Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 191.

9. Monica H. Green, *The Trotula: A Medieval Compendium of Women's Medicine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), p. 100, no. 98: "Vel scribantur hec nomina in caseo uel butyro: ✠ sa. e. op. ab. z. po. c. zy. e. pa. pu. c. ac. sator arepo tenet opera rotas, et dentur ad manducandum." Concerning dissemination and use, see Green, *Trotula,* pp. 1–67 (Introduction). For a Middle English *Trotula* manuscript, see Beryl Rowland, *Medieval Woman's Guide to Health: The First English Gynecological Handbook* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1980).

10. Sacchetti, *Il trecentonovelle,* pp. 765–71 ("Novella CCXVII"). The text reads, "Gallina, gallinaccia, / Un orciuolo di vino e una cofaccia / Per la mia gola caccia. / S'ella il può fare, sí 'l faccia, / E se non, sí si giaccia." See Franco Cardini's analysis of the story in "Il 'breve' (secoli XIV–XV)," pp. 69–70.

11. For example, there is an Anglo-Saxon metrical charm related to breastfeeding. Weston, "Women's Medicine," p. 290. Various charms and procedures related to childbirth and other reproduction issues are found in the fifteenth-century Thornton family medical miscellany (Ogden, *Liber de diversis medicinis,* pp. 56–57), and in the "Book of Secrets" kept by the Tollemache family of Helmingham Hall, Suffolk, around 1500. *The Tollemache Book of Secrets: A Descriptive Index and Complete Facsimile with an Introduction and Transcriptions together with Catherine Tollemache's*

level of literacy could copy amuletic text from written exemplars. A fourteenth-century English manuscript includes a birthing charm (quite different from that in the *Trotula*), which was to be written on bread or cheese, and then eaten to derive benefit from the words.[12] A contemporary French remedy prescribed placing on the woman's abdomen a very brief textual amulet based on the three standard biblical childbirth precedents, as well as St. Celina (sometimes "Enclina") and St. Remigius or Rémi (ca. 437–530).[13] A fifteenth-century English collection of medical recipes recommends placing similar words on a parturient woman, or saying "Quicumque vult," the opening words of the Athasanian Creed (here misidentified as a psalm), over her body three times.[14] An English devotional manuscript of ca. 1430 includes a brief amuletic text in Latin, in part based on the Measure of Christ, promising that labor would be quick and the baby baptized.[15] A magic square based on the SATOR AREPO formula, promising successful childbirth, is among innumerable charms in an English astrological and medical miscellany of the late fifteenth century, whose early owners included a certain John Eccam (or Ekam).[16] Such practices survived into the modern era. As Keith Thomas has noted, "The use of girdles and measures to relieve labour pains, the opening of chests and doors, and the pronunciation of charms and prayers, were all common features of the country midwife's repertoire."[17]

French Birthing Amulets and Kits

Much birthing magic was related to the life and passion of St. Margaret of Antioch, a virgin who had endured an excruciating martyrdom, perhaps during the

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Receipts of Pastery, Confectionary etc., ed. Jeremy Griffiths; completed by A.S.G. Edwards (London: The Roxburghe Club, 2001), p. 48. Hazlitt, *Brand's Popular Antiquities of Great Britain,* vol. 2, p. 379.

12. London, British Library, Sloane MS 3564, fol. 55r–v: "Si mulier laboret in partu. Scribe in pane vel in caseo Ogor, secor, vagor, exi foras. In nomine patris etc."

13. Francesca Canadé Sautman, *La religion du quotidien: Rites et croyances populaires de la fin du moyen âge,* Biblioteca di "Lares," new series (monographs), vol. 50 (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1995), pp. 162–63. The text of a birthing amulet (*escrig*) in a fourteenth-century southern French medical miscellany in Limousin dialect (Princeton University Library, Garrett MS 80) reads: "Maria peperit Jhesum Christum, Anna peperit Maria, Elisabeth peperit Ihonnanem, Celina Remegium, Sator. Arepo. Tenet. Opera. Rotas." Corradini Bozzi, *Ricettari,* vol. 1, p. 176.

14. London, British Library, Sloane MS 962, fol. 35v: "For Womman þat traueles of childe. Sey iii over þo womman þat traveles þo psalme Quicumque wult and she shal have childe if her tyme be comen. . . . An oþer. Bynde to hir wombe ✠ maria peperit christum ✠ anna mariam ✠ Elisabeth Johannem ✠ enclina remigium ✠ Sator ✠ arepo ✠ tenet ✠ opera ✠ rotas."

15. Princeton University Library, Kane MS 21, fol. 1v: "Et si mulier in parturiendo laboverit cito liberabitur et infans baptizabitur. amen."

16. For a description of San Marino, Calif., The Huntington Library, HM 64, see Dutschke, *Guide,* vol. 1, pp. 130–39.

17. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* p. 188.

reign of the emperor Diocletian. During the Middle Ages, many versions of her passion spread in Christian legend and iconography. In one version St. Margaret was swallowed by the Devil (in the form of a dragon) but managed to escape by using a small crucifix to cut her way out of the wicked dragon's back. Though temporarily triumphant over the Devil, St. Margaret was later tortured and decapitated.[18] A textual amulet was one type of supernatural assistance that one might need before bravely battling the dragon, which (like the serpent) symbolized the Devil.[19]

Latin versions of the *passio* of St. Margaret, derived from Byzantine lives of St. Marina, as she is known in the Greek world, circulated in the West as early as the eighth century. Early evidence of the amuletic possibilities of her passion is found in the Pseudo-Theotimus or Mombritius version, named for the Renaissance editor Boninus Mombritius (b. 1424). A copy of this text is preserved in an Anglo-Saxon manuscript of the early tenth century (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 5574). St. Margaret petitions Christ that anyone who reads, hears, or carries a copy of the book of her passion ("codicem passionis mee") should be forgiven for all sins and have children who are born neither lame, blind, nor dumb. Old English lives of St. Margaret, based on this Latin version, survive in two eleventh-century manuscripts (London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A.iii; and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 303). In the Old English versions, St. Margaret successfully petitions Christ in much the same terms. In whatever house the book of her passion is kept, she asks, no child should be born deaf, dumb, blind, or lame, or should suffer from "unclean spirits." Wherever your relics or books of your martyrdom are kept, she is told, neither evil nor demons can approach.[20] Similar promises are found in *Seinte Marherete, Þe Meiden ant Martyr,* a Middle English prose passion written in the West Midlands in the early thirteenth century. St. Margaret prays for Christians

18. Duchet-Suchaux and Pastoureau, *The Bible and the Saints,* p. 228. On occasion her legend was confounded with that of the princess rescued from the dragon by St. George.

19. In John Metham's *Romance of Amoryus and Cleopes,* dating from the mid-fifteenth century, a Medea-like figure named Cleopes equips her beloved knight Amoryus of Thessaly with various forms of magic in order to battle against the dragon. Cleopes assures him that one needs magic, not just force, to engage a dragon in battle: "Strength off man alone may nought preuayl with-owte charmys" (stanza 188, line 1300). Amoryus's magic aids include a "Phylactery" (stanza 206, line 1423). Hardin Craig, ed., *The Works of John Metham, including the Romance of Amoryus and Cleopes,* Early English Text Society, Original Series, no. 132 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1916), pp. 48, 53.

20. Mary Clayton and Hugh Magennis, eds., *The Old English Lives of St. Margaret,* Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, vol. 9 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 132–35, 168–71, 214–15. For a discussion of the Latin and Old English versions, see chapters 2–5 and Hugh Magennis, "Margareta, passio," at http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/research/saslc/volone/marg.htm.

(especially pregnant women) who cherish her memory and invoke her aid. The benefits included divine protection in childbirth and even promises protection against birth defects and sudden death. The Devil could not enter or afflict any house (including rooms where women were lying in labor) that was protected by her relics or a written account of her passion.[21] The relative brevity of these passions, in codex format, would have facilitated the portability and amuletic use of the books.

In the late medieval France, far more than in the British Isles, St. Margaret attained cult status in the popular religious imagination as a Christian martyr whose legend offered the hope of divine aid. Pregnant women sought divine aid in reading, contemplating, or hearing of her passion, and one could always place a copy on a parturient woman's abdomen or chest to prevent difficult pregnancies, ease labor pains, and facilitate safe childbirth.[22] While codices with appropriate text could be used as birthing amulets, as we shall discuss later, small textual amulets were obviously less costly to produce and easier to use, without fear of damaging a valuable object during delivery. Small parchment or paper birthing amulets must have been very common, though few if any artifacts survive. But the most common birthing amulets that survive in France are larger and more textually complex amulet rolls or folding amulets, many (but not all) dedicated to St. Margaret of Antioch. Those late medieval examples that survive were for noble women and members of the landowning class, who were in a better position to pass them down to their daughters and later generations.

One of the earliest extant amulets for a woman is a French roll dating from the end of the thirteenth century (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Nouvelles Acquisitions Françaises, no. 4267 [3rd piece]). Measuring 55.2 × 16.4 cm, it was the work of two relatively unskilled scribes working in Northern France. In some hundred lines of Old French verse prayers, a portion of which are so badly soiled and effaced that they are unreadable, the text promises protection to the pregnant woman who wears the amulet on her body ("Quant fame enfantera metés ces brief sour lui / Celle escapera vive. et ses frus autresi"). In this way

21. Frances M. Mack, ed., *Seinte Marherete, Þe Meiden ant Martyr: Re-edited from MS. Bodley, Oxford, and MS. Royal 17A xxvii, British Museum,* Early English Text Society, Original Series, no. 193 (London: Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society, 1958), pp. 46–48, 79. Concerning this Middle English text and its possible relationship to *Ancrene Wisse,* the Katherine Group legends of virgin martyrs, and other Middle English texts of 1190–1230, see Bella Millett and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Medieval English Prose for Women: Selections from the Katherine Group and Ancrene Wisse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. xi–xx.

22. Sautman, *La religion du quotidien,* pp. 81–82; Forbes, *Midwife and the Witch,* pp. 88–89; Jean-Pierre Albert, "La légende de Sainte Marguerite: Un mythe maieutique? *Razo: Cahiers du Centre d'Études Médiévales de Nice,* no. 8 (1988): 19–31 (especially 27–28); M. Dominica Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and Its Background* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 258.

she can give birth just as the Virgin Mary gave birth to Christ, safely and without pain. Below the vernacular verses are three columns of divine names interspersed with crosses. This standard list of divine names begins "✠ Messyas ✠ Sabaoth ✠ Otheos ✠ Eleison ✠ Eloy." At the bottom of the roll is a French rubric leading into an oddly spelled Latin charm offering the Three Kings as protection against epilepsy ("Des trois rois. / Jaspart fert mirram. thus Melcio. Batasar [sic] aurum. / Hec tria qui secum portabit nomina regum / Solvi secundum pie cate [sic] caduco").[23]

Birthing amulets must have proliferated in all formats and levels of presentation. But extant examples appear to be the work of professional scribes. Whether simply rolled or folded in unusual physical configurations, such examples tended to combine devotional and amuletic functions and offered multiple means to harvest amuletic benefits. Textual amulets for women sometimes survive in groups of individual amulets, together with devotional objects. Such groups of amulets have been called birthing kits because of their use in connection with childbirth. A good example of a birthing kit is a group of handwritten and printed amulets, together with an array of devotional objects and other items, which a family in the south-central French town of Aurillac kept together in a small rectangular linen sack (12.5 × 9.5 cm) for centuries. One of the pieces in this birthing kit, described when it was in a private collection in Toulouse, is a complex folding amulet of the late thirteenth century, which when open measured 23.0 × 27.0 cm. It appears to have been produced by professional trained scribes and illuminators. The amulet is made up of thirty medallions laced together by parchment strips to form a repeating cross pattern, no doubt intentional, in the middle of each square of four medallions.

Written in Gothic *rotunda* book hand appropriate to less luxurious devotional manuscripts, the composite text is spread over twenty-six of the medallions to be read from left to right in five rows. The text includes an abridged life and passion of St. Margaret, versified in Auvergne dialect; relevant Gospel readings in Latin from the Gospels of John (1:1–14), Luke (11:21, 11:27–28), and Matthew (20:17–19); a charm based on the names of the Three Kings, offering protection against epilepsy; a list of approximately forty-two divine names, beginning "✠ Agios ✠ Sator ✠ Heyas ✠ Hemanuel," interspersed with crosses in alternating red and blue ink, prefaced by a promise of protection against death and misfortune (in childbirth as well, like the Heavenly Letter) to all those who carry it on their persons; and finally a common Latin amuletic text against fevers

23. Meyer, "Un bref superstitieux." For a description, see Léopold Delisle, *Manuscrits latins et français ajoutées aux fonds des nouvelles acquisitions, pendant les années 1875–1891: Inventaire alphabétique* (Paris: H. Champion, 1891), vol. 2, p. 505; the birthing amulet is the third item in this manuscript volume.

("Ante portam Jherusalem jacebat sanctus Petrus"), under the rubric *breve contra febres*. Four of the medallions are miniatures: a Crucifixion scene with the Virgin Mary and St. John the Evangelist; the Madonna and Child; St. Margaret cutting her way out of the dragon; and her beheading. The images illustrated the text, served as the focus of meditation, and summoned up devotional memory.[24]

This birthing kit also contains a second multipurpose amulet, which appears to be the work of professional book artisans active in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. A parchment sheet measuring 47.5 × 44.0 cm was folded five times in each direction to form thirty-six nearly square cells, within which writing is confined in the manner of a folding book.[25] Cells could not be removed for separate use, and the complex text continued from one cell to another.[26]

24. Aymar, "Le sachet accoucheur et ses mystères," pp. 273–347. The birthing amulet dedicated to St. Margaret is reproduced as plate 2 (between pp. 292 and 293), discussed on pp. 293–304, and transcribed on pp. 323–25. See also Clovis Brunel, "Une nouvelle vie de Sainte Marguerite en vers provençaux," *Annales du Midi* 38 (1926): 385–401. Reinburg, "Popular Prayers," p. 320, refers to this kit as a "prayer bundle."

25. The configuration of text into cells is a *mise-en-page* also found in Islamic amulets, quite coincidentally, as we can see in a parchment amulet of around 1200–1400, probably from Egypt (Princeton Islamic Manuscripts, Third Series, no. 315). The text is confined to the flesh side of an irregularly cut piece of parchment measuring approximately 47.5 × 18.5 cm. The upper two-thirds is comprised of a series of identical incantations repeated innumerable times in an arrangement of four columns of cells written in alternating black or red ink. Below these are the ninety-nine names of God, beginning with *Ar-Rahmān* and *Ar-Rahīm* ("The Compassionate, The Merciful"). Muslims were supposed to recite these "beautiful or excellent" names daily, sometimes with the help of an equal number of beads on Muslim rosaries. There appear to be traces of highlighting in green. The Arabic amulet has three vertical and eight horizontal creases, suggesting that it was probably folded down to around 5.5 × 6.5 cm. It was opened and closed so many times that there are breaks and resulting losses in the parchment, which should be far more durable than less inexpensive writing supports like paper. The organization of Arabic amuletic text into cells was a form of presentation that survived for centuries. A striking example of a later textual amulet comprised of cells is a linen protective amulet vest worn like a poncho, dating from the first half of the nineteenth century. The magical vest measures approximately 100 × 90 cm when fully unfolded and is comprised of 216 squares (approximately 4.0 × 4.0 cm) surrounded by 32 roundels. The text includes Arabic and some Ottoman Turkish, as well as numbers. Garment amulets of this variety were produced in the Arabian peninsula and Iraq. Reproduced and described in *Smitskamp Catalogue 635: Islamic Manuscripts* (Leiden: Smitskamp Oriental Antiquarium, 2002), pp. 271–72, no. 299: "A sort of instruction for use is inscribed in a circle drawn on the inside of the part which covers the back, roughly in the position of the wearer's heart. It claims that the talisman will protect he who wears it 'during strife and travel' from the wounds inflicted by 'arrows, sword and lance.'"

26. For example, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Borgia MS 355, is a folding book of the late thirteenth century. It is comprised of a series of parchment sheets bound on one side to a ring that was to be hung from the belt for portability. The leaves were folded once in one direction and twice in the other to form six separate writing surfaces or cells, on both sides of which text was written. The text begins with the Office of the Virgin and the Seven Penitential Psalms, followed by several long reference works in canon law. In another folding book, a French monastic breviary from Cîteaux (Dijon, Bibliothèque Publique, MS 115), the text was written in long lines across the folds, more in the manner of a folded amulet, but also intended to be worn from the belt in the same way.

Once folded down to a small square of approximately 7.5 cm, the corners were cut off diagonally with a knife to facilitate folding the amulet or draping it over a pregnant woman's abdomen. When the amulet is opened, the diagonal cuts result in a pattern of lozenge-shaped openings in the parchment. The cells of text are arranged sequentially front and back, reading from left to right, from the first rank of cells at the top of the sheet, down to the sixth at the bottom; recto cells are numbered (i–xxxiv, and two blank cells without text or numbers), and verso cells are labeled with letters. In each cell there are twelve lines of text written in a Gothic *rotunda* book hand with some rubrication. The physical organization and ordering of the text in sequential cells, like the use of rubrics and labels, might have facilitated reading and memory. Like the Canterbury amulet, this textual amulet offers general protection and safe childbirth through brief Latin amuletic texts (each called a *breve*), including a birthing charm, the Heavenly Letter, and lists of divine names. Whoever keeps the amulet *super se* will not perish from fire, sword, drowning, or poison, and pregnant women will not die in childbirth.

On the verso are four Evangelist symbols at the corners. Combining sacred numbers and architectural details, the bases of seven Gothic columns, drawn in ink at the lower edge as though supporting a small altarpiece for devotional meditation, serve as the foundation for the two lower Evangelist symbols (Luke and Mark) and for a group of twelve magic circles (three rows with four seals across). Each of the seals has a band of written instructions along its perimeter, with crosses, Christograms, and *characteres* at the center. The magic seals offer comprehensive protection, like the Heavenly Letter. Carry this figure on your person ("hanc figuram porta tecum"), the instructions explain to users, and you will be protected from all enemies, dangers, and evil. Arranged around the arms of a Greek cross, AGLA offered protection against fevers. One was supposed to show a magic circle incorporating the SATOR AREPO formula to parturient women ("Hanc figuram mostra mulierem in partu et peperit"). The final magic circle was largely based on divine names. In addition to offering broad amuletic protection, the text also served as an exemplar for the preparation of other amulets by writing out particular *characteres* on small pieces of virgin parchment, which both men and women could wear around the neck for specific protection.[27]

Garand, "Livres de poche medievaux," pp. 18–24, plates 7–8. There are later examples of amulets repeated in separate cells within a single sheet so that individual pieces could be cut out and used in separate amulets. Forbes, *Midwife and the Witch,* p. 88, describes such an example in a nineteenth-century German manuscript. "Tucked among its leaves was a piece of paper with the SATOR square written on it twelve times. The paper was already partly cut into pieces so that a square could be quickly torn off."

27. Aymar, "Le sachet accoucheur et ses mystères," pp. 325–47, plates 3–4. The birthing kit also contains a quaternion prayer amulet of the early sixteenth century in booklet form, a broadside

Similar in physical configuration is another French textual amulet based on the legend of St. Margaret. Acquired in 1977 by the Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires (Paris), this textual amulet is written on a parchment sheet measuring 59.0 × 56.0 cm, folded four times in each direction to form twenty-five nearly square cells of sixteen to twenty-two lines. Each line begins with a capital letter that is slightly separated from the line and highlighted, like professionally copied verse manuscripts. The script is a French Gothic book hand of modest quality dating from the fourteenth century. Again, the corners of the folded amulet were cut away to facilitate use, resulting in lozenge-shaped openings between the cells. Textual components include a version of the legend of St. Margaret in French verse, occupying twenty-five cells on the recto and four on the verso, where are also found Gospel readings (John 1:1–14; Luke 11:27–28, 2:21), a version of the well-known Three Kings charm against epilepsy ("Contra morbum caducum"), two common prayers in French and one in Latin, crude pen-and-ink sketches (perhaps by the scribe) of St. Margaret and her persecutor Olybrius (the Roman governor of Antioch), a list of some forty-five divine names separated by crosses, and an extract from the Heavenly Letter. The last two cells (48–49) of this multipurpose textual amulet have embedded French instructions telling users of either gender ("famulus vel famula") to carry this amulet (*bref* or *brief*) on their person when traveling or suspended from the neck when ill.[28] Similar in configuration is an amulet from France or the Low Countries, composed of sixty-four conjoined cells. It has a French versified legend of St. Margaret ("La vie de la tres glorieuse vierge et martyr madame saincte Margarite") spread over fifty-six of the cells, most of which contain twelve lines of text each. The remaining eight cells have small colored vignettes illustrating the principal events in her life. The physical configuration and inclusion of miniatures points to professional production, as does the rendering of majuscule letters in gold, red, or blue.[29]

Specific prayers related to childbirth might occupy relatively few lines in amulets for women, as is the case in a six-membrane French parchment roll of 1491 (New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, M1092), probably of Parisian origin. A single professional scribe writing in a neat Gothic book cursive copied the text, to which were added red and blue penwork initials, decorative line-fillers, and rubrication. Prickings and frame ruling in brown ink are visible throughout

amulet of the early sixteenth century based on the Measure of Christ, two printed silk ribbons, one with the inscription "Longhezza di Nostro Signore Giesu Christo," and religious articles including a reliquary, oval medallion, and rosary.

28. Carolus-Barré, "Un nouveau parchemin amulette," pp. 256–75.

29. Léon De Herkenrode, "Une amulette: Légende en vers de Sainte Marguerite, tirée d'un ancien manuscrit," *Le bibliophile belge* 4 (1847): 2–23.

the roll, which measures 397.0 × 9.8 cm. It opens with a badly rubbed miniature of St. Margaret safely emerging from the dragon's back. Repeated opening of the roll and perhaps vigorous devotional fingering contributed to its present worn condition. Below the miniature is a well-known *Vie de Saincte Marguerite* in 666 octosyllabic verses, beginning "Après la saincte passion," arranged in a numerologically significant number of rhyming couplets to enhance efficacy and facilitate memory.[30] Toward the end of the roll, there are three brief Latin and French prayers appealing for the intercession of St. Margaret, St. Geneviève (patron saint of Paris), and the Virgin Mary; and an eight-line Latin prayer related to childbirth ("Pro muliere parturiente"). The female supplicant ("ancilla tua") was probably a woman of relatively high social status. While the prayer does not include instructions for amuletic use, it begins about 43.0 cm from the end of the roll and therefore could have been comfortably placed face down on the abdomen.[31]

The 1491 roll is comparable in text, illustration, and dimensions (10.5 × 392.0 cm) to a six-membrane parchment roll of fifteenth-century French or Netherlandish origin (New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, M779).[32] Rolls based on the life of St. Margaret could serve as textual amulets even when they contained no amuletic text to be used during birthing, for her life was believed powerful enough to guarantee safe childbirth, free from pain and complications. For example, an imperfect St. Margaret roll of the early fifteenth century, now including only an Old French version of the saint's life (London, Wellcome Historical Medical Library, MS 804A) has at the top of the dorse an eighteenth-century inscription identifying the roll as a "Ceinture de Sainte Marguerite [pour] les femmes Grosses." Pregnant women had learned from childhood to expect

30. In Revelation 13:18, 666 was the number of the beast: "Hic sapientia est. Qui habet intellectum, computet numerum bestiae. Numerus enim hominis est: et numerus eius sexcenti sexaginta sex." For a brief discussion, see J. R. Porter, *The Illustrated Guide to the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 255–56.

31. For descriptions of the roll, see von Arnim, *Katalog der Bibliothek Otto Schäfer,* pp. 709–12; Joachim M. Plotzek, *Andachtsbücher des Mittelalters aus Privatbesitz* (Cologne: Schnütgen-Museum, 1987), pp. 246–47, no. 86; *The Collection of Otto Schäfer. Part II: Parisian Books, London, Tuesday, June 27, 1995* (London: Sotheby's 1995), no. 192: "The prayer to St. Geneviève, patron saint of Paris, suggests that it was written in Paris. The flanking of St. Margaret's image on the case with St. John the Baptist and St. Peter possibly implies that the pregnant woman was called Jeanne and her husband Pierre." The prayer related to childbirth reads as follows: "Pro muliere parturiente. Presta quaesumus omnipotens deus qui humanum genus multiplicans: quique ancille tue uterum dignanter fecundasti da ei cum salute anime et corporis in pariendo virtutem et ad sacrum baptisma tu me scientis uteri fructum pervenire. Per christum dominum nostrum amen."

32. *The Pierpont Morgan Library: Review of the Activities and Acquisitions of the Library from 1930 through 1935: A Summary of the Annual Reports of the Director to the Board of Trustees* (New York: The Pierpont Morgan Library, 1937), pp. 93–94: "St. Margaret is considered the patroness of parturient women, and such a roll as this may have been regarded as a talisman." The roll is unfortunately incomplete at the end, so it is impossible to know whether it originally included a childbirth-related text.

benefits from reading or gazing at text and images related to St. Margaret's life, especially when they combined an amuletic approach with prayer and supplication for divine intercession, not to mention magic rituals and practices.

Conceptually related in its reliance on text and image is another French amulet that was once part of a birthing kit (Princeton University Library, Princeton MS 138.44) (fig. 10 a-b).[33] The parchment amulet is a roughly trimmed inner bifolium, which had been removed from a small bound devotional manuscript dating from the last quarter of the fifteenth century, with page dimensions of approximately 16.5 × 12.0 cm. The bifolium was folded twice in one direction, down to about 12.8 × 7.0 cm, and then placed inside a single leaf from the same manuscript (the blank verso of the folio facing out) to protect the amulet inside from being soiled. The birthing amulet (with its wrapper) was folded once again, down to a square measuring approximately 7.0 × 6.4 cm. This was probably kept in a sack or purse, perhaps the embroidered silk purse (no longer extant) in which it was found centuries later. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, later users of the amulet added several items to the birthing kit, including a piece of paper (now fragmentary and incomplete) that has a transcription of the amulet's text and a copy of its apotropaic images, perhaps to serve as a back-up copy; two printed pieces ("Oraison très devouté à la glorieuse Vièrge Marie" and a representation of the Side Wound of Christ); and a 90.0 cm printed ribbon with a Spanish inscription related to the measure of Our Lady of Montserrat ("Medida de neustra s[eñ]ora de Montserrate"), the so-called Black Virgin of Catalonia.[34] The amulet was probably used in southwestern France, not far from Spain, to judge from the place-name Nogaro in the surname LaCroix de Nogaro, the woman who was a later owner of the birthing kit. An undated dealer's description describes the birthing amulet and accompanying pieces as a "relique de Mademoiselle LaCroix de Nogaro à l'usage des ses amis."

33. Princeton MS 138.44. Dealer's descriptions are on file in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

34. By this time, there were already Spanish broadside amulets for birthing and other purposes. In the northwestern Spanish city of Zamora around 1485, Antonio de Centenera printed two multipurpose parchment broadsides, serving as letters of indulgence and amulets, to raise funds for Oviedo Cathedral. Flanking a handwritten cross in red ink at the bottom of the parchment sheet are two-line typeset Latin inscriptions, expressed in the first person, promising protection against demons, fevers, storms, and danger, and during childbirth ("In pressura partus sum adiutrix"). Maggs Brothers, *Catalogue No. 656: Bibliotheca incunabulorum: A Collection of Books Printed in the Fifteenth Century from over 250 Presses in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France, The Netherlands, Austria, Spain, England, Czecho-Slovakia, and Portugal* (London: Maggs Brothers, 1938), p. 230 (nos. 377–78): The catalog noted concerning the second broadside, "From the way this printed charm has been folded it has obviously been worn on a person as an amulet." Copies of these broadsides survive in the Cambridge University Library; Oxford, Bodleian Library; and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Image not available

Fig. 10 Princeton MS 138.44 (amulet and wrapper), Princeton University Library

The manuscript leaves of Princeton MS 138.44 are in an attractive book hand, twenty-four long lines per page. The text on the bifolium begins with a French charm related to the measure of Christ ("Cy est la mesure et longueur de Nostre Seigneur Jesu Crist"), offering general protection to those who in good Christian devotion look at the representation of the measure and meditate about the Passion. Any women who could not bear children was instructed to place a Latin prayer, which followed the French charm, on her body with a candle and say the Pater Noster. The prayer included the Seven Last Words and the apotropaic formula "Spiritus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat." Accompanying the charm is the standard representation of the Measure of Christ. A second French *orayson* is based on the Side Wound of Christ and offers general protection, in the manner of the Heavenly Letter, to all those born under its rendering of the wound. The *orayson* explains how Charlemagne had transported the original from Constantinople in a golden reliquary. The marginal illustration of the almond-shaped wound, vividly painted in red, promised the parturient woman an easy and uncomplicated birth (*legierement*), one of many apotropaic benefits attributed to the Side Wound of Christ during the late Middle Ages.[35] But the text of Princeton MS 138.44 also allowed men to use the amulet, which promises the man who wears it in battle and recites a brief Latin benediction protection from sudden death. The leaf serving as a wrapper includes a Latin amuletic text (called a *brevet* in the prefatory French explanation) that Joseph of Arimathea had allegedly found on the right hand wound of Christ. While its text and image offer general protection, the amulet would have been used primarily for birthing. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this amulet is that it shows an unorthodox way in which a professionally produced devotional book containing amuletic texts could be dismembered to produce textual amulets. The amulet gave centuries of useful life to folios deliberately ripped from a fifteenth-century manuscript, most likely a book of hours that included a section of apotropaic texts and images, and it underscores the close connection between devotional books and textual amulets.[36]

35. For example, a fourteenth-century amuletic text in Oxford, Bodleian Library (Rawlinson MS C.814, fol. 7b), claims that Joseph of Arimathea, who enjoyed legendary status in England for ostensibly transporting the Holy Grail (used to collect Christ's blood) to Glastonbury, found a *breve* (with the names of Christ written in golden letters) on the Side Wound of Christ as he descended from the Cross. Whoever kept a copy of the *breve* on their person would not suffer sudden death by fire or flood. Bozóky, *Charmes et prières apotropaïques,* pp. 51–52 n. 71. Julian of Norwich envisioned the Side Wound as a physical refuge offering protection in Christ's body. Some scholars have noted a visual similarity to female genitalia. See Friedman, *Northern English Books,* p. 165.

36. A fifteenth-century book of hours (London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 545) includes a *Vie de S. Marguerite* as well as amuletic texts and images related to the Side Wound of Christ. Sparrow, "On the Measure of the Wound," pp. 357–58, 368.

Whether part of a small devotional book, removed to facilitate portability, or even copied on a new piece of writing material, a bifolium of the appropriate apotropaic text could serve as a birthing amulet. Evidence suggests that small devotional codices, without being dismembered like this late medieval French example, could be pressed into service as birthing amulets. In 1389 the sacristan of the Abbey of Saint-Vivant de Vergy provided the Gospel of John in book format to Margaret of Flanders, wife of Duke Philip the Bold of Burgundy (1342–1404). The book was placed on the abdomen of the pregnant duchess, who was lying-in at Villaines before giving birth to a son Philip, count of Nevers (d. 1415). The beginning of the Gospel of John was standard fare in textual amulets used as birth girdles, and during the Middle Ages the entire Gospel could also be used amuletically. An inventory of valuables of the duchess and her chapel, made after she died in 1405, surveys chests filled with nearly fifty devotional books in Latin, French, and Flemish. Among the many books were six books of hours and prayer books kept in purses (*bourses*) of red, green, and black velvet and silk; two in sacks (*sachets*) of white linen; and a sack containing several prayer rolls and other writings (*escriptures*).[37] The practice of using of devotional books as birthing amulets was not restricted to late medieval France and Burgundy. In late medieval Italy, for example, small illuminated devotional codices dedicated to St. Margaret were produced for pregnant women of elevated social status. A physician or midwife might have placed the book on a pregnant woman's abdomen, or she herself might have sought protection either by reading the book devotionally, which would have been thus positioned near her abdomen, or by placing the book in a purse or sack with drawstrings, worn from the neck or girdle, in effect binding it to her body.[38]

37. Étienne Picard, "La dévotion de Philippe le Hardi et de Marguerite de Flandres," *Mémoires de l'Académie des sciences, arts et belles-lettres de Dijon,* series 4, 12 (1910–13): 60: "Nous voyons le sacristain de Saint-Vivant de Vergy apporter à Villaines le livre de Saint-Jean, pour le mettre auprès de la duchesse lorsqu'elle accoucherait, comme elle le fit, d'un fils qui fut nommé Philippe l'an 1389." Picard found a reference to this in the Archives Départmentales in Dijon but unfortunately provided no citation in his article. The inventory of books is found on pp. 113–16: "avec plusieurs roles dorisons, une viese paternostre et aultres escriptures mises oudit sachet."

38. Musacchio, *Art and Ritual of Childbirth,* p. 142. A fourteenth-century Northern Italian copy of Theotinus's *Passio Sanctae Margaritae* measures only 8.0 × 6.0 cm (Princeton University Art Museum, y1952–56). The text and twenty-two miniatures emphasize the triumph of St. Margaret over the Devil. Adelaide Bennett, Jean F. Preston, and William P. Stoneman, *A Summary Guide to Western Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts at Princeton University* (Princeton: Princeton University Library, 1991), pp. 23–24, no. 65: "Although a virgin saint, Margaret was patron saint of pregnant women. The tiny size of this manuscript suggests that it may have served as an amulet of intercessory powers." Another fourteenth-century Italian *Passio Sanctae Margaritae* (Princeton University Art Museum, y1952–57) is also a small codex, measuring 12.0 × 9.0 cm.

A Multipurpose Amulet Roll

Valuable textual and physical evidence about the textual composition of a multipurpose amulet roll is offered by a Burgundian or French example that the London-based antiquarian dealer E. P. Goldschmidt once succinctly described as an "amulet against disease and demons. French MS of the late XIV or early XV cen[tury]" (Appendix 2, fig. 11).[39] The single-membrane roll has eighty-seven long lines of Latin text written on the flesh side of a strip of good-quality parchment measuring 39.0 × 10.5 cm, similar in its dimensions to other portable rolls. The text appears to be the work of professional scribes (not local clerics or scriveners) active in the early fifteenth century. A single scribe copied the text, which was then rubricated and corrected by another scribe (a full transcription can be found in Appendix 2). Both scribes wrote in a Gothic cursive script close to *cursiva libraria,* which was common in late medieval books from France, Burgundy, and the Low Countries.[40] Aside from script, there are many indications of professional production, such as the use of standard abbreviations; extension of first-line ascenders (especially *I* in the word *Incipit*) into the upper margins; frame-ruling in light-brown ink; rubrication for five sections and initials at the beginning of particular charms (for example, the *S* in "Si mulier" on line 41) to help the user navigate through the text; the conventional Gothic scheme of alternating red and blue (almost cyan) initials; in some cases clearly written over guide letters (for example, the *L* of *Longinus* on line 53); and decorative line-fillers in blue at the ends of lines 1, 8, 28, and 46. Moreover, the text was corrected in a few places. At the end of line 11, the scribe wrote *Con,* but the rubricator wrote over the first two letters in blue. On line 52 the scribe wrote a

39. The description probably dates from the 1930s, when E. P. Goldschmidt's business was at 45 Old Bond Street, London. The author is grateful to the owner of the roll for permitting me to photograph it for the purpose of transcription and publication. For a study of the amulet roll and a full edition of its text, see Skemer, "Amulet Rolls and Female Devotion," pp. 197–227, plate 51.

40. The main scribe tended to use a very round single-compartment *a,* tall *s* and *f* curving to the right (like the more refined and angular *cursiva formata* or French Secretary), and the letters *b, h,* and *l* written with looped ascenders. The scribe used a round *s* at the end of words and wrote *d* either with its ascender angled back (with or without a loop) or looped with an angular bow (as in the word *demonia* on line 29). Yet the same scribe could also form the letters *b* and *l* with straight ascenders, in the manner of *hybrida currens.* The script shows similarities to that described by G. I. Lieftinck as *écriture de transition.* Lieftinck discussed script characteristics in *Manuscrits datés conservés dans les Pays-Bas: Catalogue paléographique des manuscrits en écriture latine portant des indications de date* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1964), vol. 1 (*Texte*), pp. xiv–xv. For an example of transitional script, see Lieftinck, vol. 1, pp. 75–76, no. 172, and *Planches,* plate 252 (Leiden, Bibl. univ. B.P.I. 105; Paris, 1428). Compare Charles Samaran and Robert Marichal, *Catalogue des manuscrits en écriture latine portant des indications de date, de lieu ou de copiste* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1981), vol. 4, pt. 1, *Planches,* plate 53 (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Nouv. Fonds. lat. 2469; 14 April 1404).

Image not available

Fig. 11 French or Burgundian Amulet Roll, private collection

dash instead of leaving a space for the rubricator to make a sign of the cross between the names "johannes" and "seraphyon"; seeing this, the rubricator corrected the dash to form a cross, though doing so in blue rather than red.

Multiple texts offered both general and specific amuletic protection to a noble or bourgeois woman, married and of childbearing years. Her name is not given; the text refers simply to *lator* (indicating the bearer of a letter or other object) rather than *famula,* the most common expression in books of hours and other private devotional books. If not literate in the sense of being able to read Latin with full comprehension, she could probably find her way to particular sections of the text (especially the divine names) and recite portions of them. To ensure safe childbirth through divine intervention, the woman put a birthing charm just below her right breast: "Si mulier laboret in partu ponat hec breue sub dextra mammula et illico deo auxiliante liberabit se." In order to facilitate use, this charm is located near the midpoint of the various texts, so that it was perfectly positioned for childbirth when the amulet roll had been unrolled and placed text down, curling over the woman's abdomen. Perhaps the parchment's 39.0 cm length had been custom-fitted to the woman's abdomen before she conceived in accordance with European folk practices related to "girdle-measuring."[41] Making the amulet roll user-specific focused its apotropaic power on the individual to enhance efficacy. Potentially useful to a pregnant woman was a blood-staunching amuletic text related to legend of St. Longinus (lines 52–55). An amuletic text based on the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus (lines 50–52) would have been useful to a woman trying to cope with a kicking fetus or a crying newborn baby. Crosses separate the names of the Seven Sleepers, using the Western version (Maximian, Malchus, Marcian, Dionysus, Johannes, Serapion, and Constantine). The woman (or women) who owned this amulet roll may have read other portions of the text or had them read to her in the manner of benedictional formulas and portable lives of St. Margaret.

While impossible to localize precisely, the amulet roll includes a brief prayer "Oratio sancti sigismundi regis et martyris contra febres" (lines 56–62). This prayer seeks the intercession of a "local saint," King Sigismund of Burgundy (516–24), so that the woman and her family can enjoy divine protection against fevers and restoration of good health. Though actually an Arian, St. Sigismund had died near Orléans at the hands of the Merovingian King Clodomir and came to be honored as a Christian martyr and was given a feast day. A popular cult arose based on his posthumous reputation for healing powers, especially protection against fevers. Early devotion to St. Sigismund was centered at the Benedictine abbey of St. Maurice in Agaune, near Geneva in Savoy, which had been part

41. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* pp. 184–85.

of the ancient Burgundian realm. The *Missa sancti sigismundi regis,* originating in that abbey for the liturgical cure of fevers, found its way into sacramentaries, missals, and other service books from the seventh to fifteenth centuries. From versions of the mass circulating widely from the eighth to twelfth centuries, the Oratio and other apotropaic prayers to St. Sigismund can ultimately be traced. As early as the eleventh century, monks at the Benedictine abbey at Saint-Bénigne of Dijon copied a *carmen ad febres* that contains conjurations based on St. Sigismund's healing powers, into a manuscript (Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 448).

Since one could enjoy St. Sigismund's curative powers through the mass without having to visit his relics, the cult of St. Sigismund could spread far beyond the lands that once constituted the kingdom of Burgundy.[42] Devotion spread with the translation of his relics, as in 1366, when Emperor Charles IV had St. Sigismund's head moved from Agaune to Prague. According to legend, prayers at the Prague shrine were answered by miracles that alleviated fevers and also repelled demons, healed wounds, restored sight, and cured paralysis.[43] St. Sigismund was especially venerated in late medieval Burgundy, Franche-Comté, Savoy, southern France, the Low Countries, and other places for his powers against fevers. Calendars and litanies in some later books of hours added his name.[44] While St. Sigismund was venerated in other French-speaking areas,

42. Concerning St. Sigismund, see Paul Guérin, ed., *Les petit Bollandistes: Vies des saints de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament,* 7th edition (Paris: Bloud et Barral, 1888), vol. 5, pp. 184–89; Robert Folz, "Zur Frage der heiligen Könige: Heiligkeit und Nachleben in der Geschichte des burgundischen Königtums," *Deutsches Archiv fur Erforschung des Mittelalters* 14, no. 2 (1958): 317–44; J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-Haired Kings and Other Studies in Frankish History* (London: Methuen, 1962), pp. 131, 200, 238n; Lucien Musset, *Les invasions: Les vagues germaniques,* Nouvelle Clio: L'histoire et ses problèmes, no. 12 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), pp. 114–15; and Frederick S. Paxton, "Liturgy and Healing in an Early Medieval Saint's Cult: The Mass in Honore Sancti Sigismundi for the Cure of Fevers," *Traditio* 49 (1994): 23–43 (especially p. 41). Victor Leroquais, *Les sacramentaires et les missels manuscrits de bibliothèques publiques de France* (Paris: n.p., 1924), vol. 1, pp. 46, 50, 52, 56, 73, 91, 93, 113, 116, 119, 144, 158, 178, 196, 236, 238, 305; vol. 2, pp. 93, 134, 211, 297. St. Sigismund is included in the *Antiquum martyrologium gallicanum,* in *Patrologia latina,* vol. 72, col. 613, and also in sequences of St. Gall. Kehrein, *Lateinische Sequenzen,* p. 476, no. 707. For the text of the *Missa sancti sigismundi regis,* see *Sacramentarium gallicanum,* in *Patrologia latina,* vol. 72, col. 523, and the appendix to the *Libri miraculorum* of Gregory of Tours, in ibid., vol. 71, col. 1183.

43. The manuscript *Miracula sancti Sigismondi martyris* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 1510), dating from the late fourteenth century, records thirty-one miracle stories from the Prague shrine: *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum latinorum antiquiorum saeculo XVI qui asservantur in Bibliotheca Nationali Parisiensi ediderunt hagiographi Bollandiani* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1893), vol. 3, pp. 462–69, no. DCCCVI (*Appendix ad cod. 1510*). Males accounted for more than two-thirds of supplicants whose gender was recorded in the *Miracula.*

44. St. Sigismund's official feast day was usually 1 May, but to avoid conflict with other saint's days, it was celebrated in some places on 27 April, 30 April, and 2 May. Under the feast days of 30 April and 2 May, St. Sigismund is found in the calendars of French and Flemish books of hours, ca.

a Burgundian provenance is still possible and would be consistent with paleographic evidence.

Lay devotions to St. Sigismund, St. Sebastian, and St. Roch were not surprising after the Black Death and recurrent plagues had been ravaging the population of Western Europe.[45] Beyond specific prayers and charms related to childbirth and fevers, the roll includes text offering the user general protection through the inclusion of a plethora of divine names, arranged in recognizable series. The longest of these in the amulet roll is the *Nomina sancta Ihesu Christi* (lines 1–8), a widely circulated list of forty-two names beginning "Messias ✞ sother ✞ emanuel ✞ sabaoth ✞ adonay." The list is nearly identical to those in a Christian hymn by Prudentius and in the sequence *De sancta trinitate* by Notker the Stammerer (840?–912).[46] Almost as many divine names of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin origin are added elsewhere in the text (lines 24–28 and 43–45). Some names repeated those in the opening lines, using repetition to achieve magical efficacy. The almost-incantational invocation of divine names, from the Holy Trinity to the so-called seventy-two names of God, found parallels in monastic prayer

1490–1530. For example, New York Public Library, MS 60; New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, M390, M1039; Princeton University Library, Garrett MS 57; Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, W178, W426, W433. St. Sigismund appears in the litanies of a book of hours from Savoy or Lyon, ca. 1470 (Christie's, New York, 6 January 1991, lot 9). St. Sigismund is also in found calendars of several books of hours (Use of Rome) printed in Paris (for example, Philippe Pigouchet, 1490 and 1494). St. Sigismund is also included in calendars of books of hours (Use of Rome) from northern Italy, ca. 1490–early sixteenth century (New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, M80, M1030; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 1378). The author is grateful to John Plummer for providing information from his database (compiled from personal inspection, published catalogs, and auction catalogs) of saints in calendars and litanies found in books of hours. The name Sigismund, interspersed with crosses, was invoked on fol. 84v of an English prayer book (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Lat. Liturg. F9) of Katherine of France, wife of King Henry V of England. Madan, *Summary Catalogue,* vol. 6, pt. 1, p. 67 (no. 31537). St. Sigismund was invoked in the previously discussed English amulet for a female supplicant named Lucy (London, British Library, Wolley Charters Collection, no. IV: 68).

45. Relatively uncommon were devotions to St. Adrian of Nicomedia. A sixteenth-century parchment prayer sheet (16.5 × 13.4 cm) has on the recto—the verso is blank—a small miniature of St. Adrian and three Latin prayers, two with French rubrics (Princeton University Library, Princeton MS 138.45). The prayers are addressed to St. Adrian, petitioning him for protection against the plague and sudden death ("libera nos ab omni peste tristi et subita morte"). In the sixteenth century this prayer sheet, possibly of South Netherlandish origin, was added to a German devotional book of ca. 1524. Though there are no folding lines, a prayer sheet of this size could either be used devotionally or amuletically.

46. Prudentius, *Prudentiana sive prolegomena in editionem romanam operum M. Aurelii Clementis Prudentii,* chap. 24, in *Patrologia latina,* vol. 59, col. 733, note C: "Messias, Sother, Emmanuhel, Sabaoth, Adonay / Est unigenitus, via vita manus omousion / Principum, primogenitum sapientia, virtus / Alpha caput finisque simul vocitatur et est / Fons et origo boni Paraclitus, et Mediator / Agnus ovis vitulus serpens aries leo vermis / Os verbum splendor sol, gloria lux et imago / Panis flos vitis mons janua petra lapisque." Kehrein, *Lateinische Sequenzen,* p. 119, no. 140, ll. 2–9. A version

and lay devotion to the Holy Name.[47] Lines 11–14 constitute an appeal for a veritable army of potential helpers in the unending battle against misfortune and demonic assault: thirty thousand angels and equal numbers of archangels and martyrs, the twelve Apostles, and all confessors.

Sacred numerology contributed to the protective power of this heavenly host. While physical use is not expressly recommended in the text, contemporary textual amulets sometimes explain that a person armed with such divine names would be protected against sudden death by fire, drowning, storm, lightning, or poison, and of course in childbirth.[48] Crosses separate individual divine names and the names of the Seven Sleepers. The sign was both an apotropaic symbol and a reminder to the user to make the appropriate devotional gesture as she read or at least fingered her way through the lists of names. The invocation of God by the acronym AGLA (line 23), common in textual amulets, is written here in alternating red and blue letters. Serious loss of ink on lines 2–8 and brown ink stains over lines 10–27 would suggest that the first third of the roll was used more heavily and differently than the remainder, which is in good condition despite the presence of amuletic text to be used during childbirth. Severe wear with loss of text probably resulted from someone rubbing or fingering the text during private devotions. But this section is also cockled and stained, which may have resulted from the modern application of a chemical reagent, probably in the nineteenth century, before the advent of ultraviolet lamps, in an effort to make the worn text readable. It is also quite possible that a medieval user of the roll intentionally washed the ink with water in order to turn sacred words into a

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of Notker's hymn found in an eleventh-century manuscript from Besançon, Franche Comté. *Patrologia latina,* vol. 59, col. 733. Concerning versions in French and English liturgy, see Simpson, "On a Seventeenth Century Roll," pp. 319–20.

47. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* p. 41: "Confessors required penitents to repeat a stated number of Pater Nosters, Aves and Creeds, thereby fostering the notion that the recitation of prayers in a foreign tongue had a mechanical efficacy. The chantries of the later Middle Ages were built upon the belief that the regular offering of prayers would have a beneficial effect upon the founder's soul: they presupposed the quantitative value of masses, and gave, as their most recent historian [K. L. Wood-Legh] puts it, 'almost a magical value to mere repetition of formulae.' Salvation itself could be attained, it seemed, by mechanical means, and the more numerous the prayers the more likely their success." Catherine A. Carsley, "Devotion to the Holy Name: Late Medieval Piety in England," *Princeton University Library Chronicle* 53, no. 2 (Winter 1992): 157–72 (especially 158–59).

48. Aymar, "Le sachet accoucheur et ses mystères," pp. 273–347. The birthing amulet dedicated to St. Margaret is reproduced as plate 2 (between pp. 292 and 293), discussed on pp. 293–304, and transcribed on pp. 323–25: "Quicumque hec nomina portaverit Dei patris et filii et spiritus sancti, cum bona fide et vera in igne nec in aqua nec in bello nec in judicio nec incarceratus, nec in armis nec potione mortifera nec placito nec fulgure nec tonitruo nec tempestate nec morte subitanea morietur nec per aliis et si mulier pregnans secum habuerit non morietur de partu." See also Brunel, "Une nouvelle vie de Sainte Marguerite."

potable medicine. This would be consistent with the custom of swallowing wafers inscribed with prayer formulas, and even with the destructive practice of washing the texts of sacred books to turn iron-gall ink into medicine.

Among other sections of the roll, there is an amuletic text based on the Heavenly Letter (lines 17–23), offering general protection. The roll also includes petitions against enemies (lines 39–41): "ut absoluare me a peccatis meis et da me domine ihesu christe in manus tuas de celo ut vincat omnes aduersarios meos contrarios meos in nomine dei patris et per virtutem sancte ✠ crucis libera me de inimicis mei." Ultimately based on the third-century *Commendatio animae,* and possibly further on an ancient Jewish prayer, the litany on lines 31–37 enumerates acts of divine deliverance in the Old Testament (with the addition of the first-century virgin martyr St. Thecla, much venerated in the Greek Church). Centuries before it was incorporated into this textual amulet, the *Commendatio animae* had been used liturgically. The litany calls upon Christ to deliver the amulet's user from all evil and specific dangers, just as the three Hebrew children (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) had been delivered from the fiery furnace, Daniel from the lion's den, Jonah from the whale's belly, Susanna from false accusation, St. Thecla from the monster's maw, St. Paul from prison, and other instances of divine protection and salvation through faith. The text of the amulet also invokes the Virgin Mary (lines 10–11), who lay down in the manger and cried out to God because of her labor pains, and Mary of Bethany (or Mary Magdalene) and St. Martha (line 37), whose appeals to Christ resulted in the miraculous raising of their brother Lazarus from the dead.[49]

These acts of deliverance enumerated in the *Commendatio animae* in Christian liturgy offered the faithful the possibility of attaining divine mercy, protection, and salvation through faith and obedience. Textually repackaged in an amulet roll worn on the body, these acts offered divine protection in a more mechanical way, just as narrative charms and *historiolae* based on sacred and legendary personages, including strong women and virgin martyrs, offered Christians the hope, if not certainty, of an almost-magical replication of past miracles. Finally, the amulet roll also includes four Gospel extracts or readings (lines 29–31, 45–50, 62–87), including the beginning of the Gospel of John (1:1–14) and brief extracts from the Gospels of Mark (16:17–18), Luke (11:27–28), and

49. Robin Flowers, "Irish High Crosses," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17 (1954): 91–92; Colum Hourihane, "De camino ignis: The Iconography of the Three Children in the Fiery Furnace in Ninth-Century Ireland," in *From Ireland Coming: Irish Art from the Early Christian to the Late Gothic Period and its European Context,* Index of Christian Art Occasional Papers, vol. 4 (Princeton: Department of Art and Archeology, 2001), pp. 62–63. Concerning St. Thecla's symbolic role in the birth of Macrina, as recounted by Gregory of Nyssa, see Brown, *Cult of the Saints,* 58. Old Testament heroes such as Daniel and Jonah are figures in both Jewish prayers and textual amulets. See Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols,* vol. 2, pp. 222–27.

Matthew (8:14–17). Carefully selected, these readings relate to divine healing, miraculous cures, and casting out demons.[50] In eighty-seven lines of text, the amulet roll offers a birthing charm and other forms of specific protection appropriate to a woman of childbearing years; general protection for the woman or her family against the ever-threatening world of demons, disease, and danger; and perhaps even prayers for private devotions. Familiar textual elements were packaged into a woman's personal protector.

While it is impossible to localize this amulet roll with certainty to Burgundy, one should bear in mind that textual amulets were widely used there, from the parish level to the Burgundian court. The theologian and mystic Denis the Carthusian (1402–71), an adviser to the dukes of Burgundy, suggests that the arts of magic were locally widespread. In his treatise *Contra vitia superstitionum,* he complains about priests, presumably at the parish level, who sinned grievously before God by encouraging foolish, superstitious folk to believe that wearing some combination of sacred words and diabolical symbols in amulets suspended from their necks ("verbis sacris ad collum suspensis") could protect them from danger and bring good luck. Those who prepared, sold, disseminated, or used textual amulets were sinners, unless simple-minded and ignorant enough to be excused.[51] Laurens Pignon wrote his moralistic treatise *Contre les devineurs* (1411), a work dedicated to Duke John the Fearless of Burgundy, to counteract the popularity of astrology, divination, and other magic practices at the princely court. While Pignon's effort at lay instruction was heavily based on Thomas Aquinas and literary examples, he seems to have been carefully observing French and Burgundian practices around 1400, such as the preparation and circulation in the Dijon area of *cedules* containing prognostications. It is reasonable to assume that Pignon would not have devoted as much discussion to the amuletic

50. The same Gospel readings (John 1:1–14, and Luke 11:27–28) are found in the previously mentioned textual amulet from Aurillac and in another French amulet based on the legend of St. Margaret and now in Paris, Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires. Aymar, "Le sachet accoucheur et ses mystères," pp. 323–24; Carolus-Barré, "Un nouveau parchemin amulette," pp. 256–75.

51. Dionysius the Carthusian, *Contra vitia superstitionum,* vol. 4 of *Opera minora* (vol. 36 of *Doctoris ecstatici D. Dionysii Carthusiani opera omnia*), p. 218 (art. 5): "Conformiter errant qui credunt verbis sacris ad collum suspensis inesse certam virtutem praeservandi a periculo quovis, aut obtinendi quodcumque bonum. Sacerdotes vero seu alii qui idiotas ad talem credulitatem inducunt, enormius peccant." In an effort to draw the line between faith and superstition, according to Johan Huizinga's interpretation of the treatise, Denis the Carthusian concedes that "in folk practices all those blessings, amulets, and the like appear to have evident worth, but he denies their value and voices the opinion that clerics should rather prohibit all things." Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages,* trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 292–93. Dionysius the Carthusian, *Contra vitia superstitionum,* vol. 4 of *Opera minora* (vol. 36 of *Doctoris ecstatici D. Dionysii Carthusiani opera omnia*), pp. 216–19 (arts. 3–5).

use of *brieves et cedules* containing sacred words and divine names if the practice were not common and easily observable.[52]

English Rolls for Protection and Prayer

Several extant late medieval English rolls also managed to offer both general and specific protection and could serve as birth girdles without reference to St. Margaret of Antioch. An interesting English example is a multipurpose amulet roll dating from the end of the fifteenth century. The text is written on both sides of a four-membrane parchment roll measuring about 9.5 × 322.0 cm (London, Wellcome Historical Medical Library, MS 632). The text is written across the face and along the dorse. On the face are Latin and Middle English prayers to the martyrs St. Cyricus and his mother St. Julitta; the measure of the drops of Christ's blood; the *Arma Christi* (figures of the Three Nails of the Passion, cross, crown of thorns, hammer, pincers, chalice, and other instruments of the Passion); the XP IHS monogram; the names of Christ, almost entirely undecipherable but for interspersed crosses in red ink; a litany of angels and saints, including the Virgin, St. Anne, and St. Catherine; prayers to the Virgin and Christ; and an inscription mentioning the beginning of the Gospel of John. On the dorse is an imperfect Middle English version of the Heavenly Letter and instructions explaining that pious Christians who use the roll and gaze upon its Measure of Christ ("by vertu of thys holy length our Savyor Ihesu criste") were guaranteed protection from sudden death, triumph over one's enemies, and safe childbirth ("and yf a woman travell' [i.e. travail] wyth chylde gyrde thys mesure abowte hyr wombe and she shall' be safe"). Portions of the text were written in red ink, with some initials in blue. Like some other amulet rolls, Wellcome MS 632 is badly rubbed, worn, stained by use, and has possibly suffered major text losses, perhaps because it was washed to turn text into medicine.[53]

Similar in text and imagery is an English amulet roll, formerly in the collection of St. John's Seminary at Wonerth but now privately held. This amulet was made around 1435–50, possibly in Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire. It was written in an Anglicana book hand on the face and dorse. It was made from four membranes of parchment and measures 8.0 × 173.0 cm. On the face are images (drawn in dark-brown ink, then tinted with red, yellow, and green paint) of the

52. Jan R. Veenstra, *Magic and Divination at the Courts of Burgundy and France: Text and Context of Laurens Pignon's Contre les devineurs (1411),* Brill's Studies in Intellectual History (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), pp. 202–3.

53. For a description of London, Wellcome Historical Medical Library, MS 632, see Moorat, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts,* vol. 1, pp. 491–93, and Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries,* vol. 1, pp. 399–400.

Three Nails of the Passion, with the assurance that "who so ever beholde thys mesure of thys iii naylys" and say certain prayers shall enjoy divine grace to avoid all deadly sins; images of the *Arma Christi,* the Cross, the Crown of Thorns, and the Five Wounds of Christ; Middle English verses on the drops of Christ's blood; and Middle English rubrics offer thousands of years of indulgence for saying particular Latin prayers. Vernacular instructions offer the supplicant the short-cut of saying the Pater Noster ten times (instead of a hundred) each day, provided that one also recites the prayer *Tibi laus vera misericordia.* Written along the length of the dorse, like Wellcome MS 632, is a text supposedly from the Emperor Constantine, offering general protection in the manner of the Heavenly Letter. Among its potential beneficiaries is "a woman that ys quyck wythe chylde." Also on the dorse is a Middle English inscription relating the length of the roll to the height of the Virgin ("Thys moche more ys oure Lady Mary long"). This roll is stained and rubbed from heavy physical use, like Wellcome MS 632.[54]

So too is an English amulet roll of the early sixteenth century (Oxford, Bodleian Library, roll no. 26). Though it contains no specific references either to childbirth or women, multiple sources of general protection may have been deemed sufficient. Measuring about 3.6 cm wide, the roll is made up of fifteen crudely cut parchment strips sewn end to end, for a total length of approximately 9.75 meters. The roll's ribbon-like format would have made it easy to wrap it around a pregnant woman's abdomen or leg, like a birth girdle. Christian numerology contributed to the roll's textual efficacy. Fifteen was of course the sacred number associated with the Measure of Christ. The text is primarily written lengthwise on the unruled face of the roll, like some other English magic rolls and perhaps like the exemplar. It begins with a figure of the Three Nails of the Passion and seriously abraded text that is unreadable but for an invocation of the Trinity (membranes 1–4). The remaining three sections of text are much abraded but identifiable, and contain a standard list of divine names (beginning *messias, sother, emanuel, sabaoth, adonay*), interspersed with crosses (membranes 5–9); the apotropaic opening verses of the Gospel of John (membranes 9–12); and the Lord's Prayer rendered in romanized Greek (membranes 13–15). Along the top and bottom edges of the roll are varying sequences of pentacles, crosses, and magical signs. The text is written in red ink, which Falconer Madan once speculated was blood. The original color was probably too pale even to have simulated blood. Yet there are about a dozen irregular brownish spots, which

54. Takamiya, "Gawain's Green Girdle," pp. 77–79. Christopher De Hamel described the amulet for the Sotheby's London sale of 24 June 1980. See *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts and Miniatures* (London: Sotheby's, 1980), p. 68 (lot 73). The amulet is in the private collection of. Toshiyuki Takamiya, Keio University, Japan.

may well be congealed blood. So it is possible that the roll was used in birthing and that its users washed large parts of the roll in water, with resulting text loss and ink offsetting.[55]

Particular illustrated English rolls with larger dimensions than amulet rolls for women (as much as twice as wide and considerably longer) assigned an exclusive or prominent role to the imagery of the *Arma Christi*. Varying in number and order, the Instruments of the Passion were popularly seen as the weapons of Christ the knight, battling against the Devil. These illustrated rolls include Middle English verses that identify and explain each of the instruments and offer indulgence for gazing at the images. Rossell Hope Robbins argued in a 1939 article based on a study of seven extant *Arma Christi* rolls, "The original function of the 'Arma Christi' was congregational. A friar or a parish priest would display such rolls, either holding them up himself, or hanging them from a convenient ledge or niche in the wall, or suspending them from the pulpit. The worshippers would gain the indulgence by gazing at the roll, and while listening to the priest read the descriptions of the instruments, repeating the *Pater noster.*" Robbins believed that such rolls were not intended for private devotion, but rather were a source of "pictorial aid to meditation and piety." Perhaps, he reasoned, *Arma Christi* rolls were used mainly during Holy Week, which could account for the well-preserved state of many extant rolls.[56] While Robbins might have been correct about the liturgical function of certain rolls based exclusively on the *Arma Christi,* he adduced little supporting evidence. Robbins may have been influenced by studies of the liturgical use of *Exultet* rolls in southern Italy from the tenth to thirteenth centuries. The text and miniatures of most *Exultet* rolls faced opposite directions, unlike *Arma Christi* rolls, so that when displayed from the pulpit for the Easter vigil, the priest could chant from the notated text, while the congregation focused on the brightly colored miniatures

55. Madan, *Summary Catalogue,* vol. 2, pt. 1, p. 590, no. 3115. Though badly abraded and thus very difficult to decipher, the list of divine names is probably close to one recorded by John Northwood of Bordesley more than a century earlier (London, British Library, Additional MS 37787, fol. 174v).

56. Rossell Hope Robbins, "The 'Arma Christi' Rolls," *Modern Language Review* 34, no. 3 (July 1939): 415–21 (especially 419–20). Robbins's arguments were based on Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS 2975 and 29110; London, British Library, Additional MSS 22029 and 32006; and *Arma Christi* rolls then in Stonyhurst College, Blairs College MS 13, and St. Alphonsus Seminary. See also Morris, "The Symbols of the Passion," in *Legends of the Holy Rood,* pp. 170–93; Curt F. Bühler, "A Middle English Prayer Roll," *Modern Language Notes* 52 (1937): 555–62 (concerning New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, M486); Bühler, "Prayers and Charms," pp. 270–78; Barbara A. Shailor, *The Medieval Book Illustrated from the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library,* Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching, no. 28 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 85–87; Arthur, *Medieval Sign Theory,* p. 74; and Friedman, *Northern English Books,* pp. 170–74.

illustrating the text.[57] Moreover, even if *Arma Christi* rolls were initially intended for ecclesiastical use, they might find their way into lay households for devotional and amuletic use.

The practice of gazing at images to win divine protection was not restricted to rolls displayed to church congregations. To win protection, as we have seen, the lay owners of English textual amulets gazed at the Three Nails of the Passion, the Side Wound of Christ, the Measure of Christ, the Tau cross, and other images of popular piety. Late medieval English rolls, with the larger dimensions of the seven rolls that Robbins had studied, similarly combined the *Arma Christi* with brief amuletic texts. One example is MS 410 at Yale University's Beinecke Library, a roll prepared in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. MS 410 is composed of three parchment membranes (151.5 × 16.5 cm), the final one probably added by a subsequent owner at the end of the century. It has been described as an "indulgence scroll" because it includes a pardon for 32,055 years ("the pardon for v pater noster v aves and a credo whyth pytuusly beholdynge the armes of cristis passyon"). Below the indulgence portion is an assortment of brief texts and images found in devotional rolls and amulets: a depiction of the *Arma Christi,* accompanied by a portrait of the patron in clerical garb, with a text scroll concerning the Five Wounds of Christ ("Quinque Wulnera dei sint medicina mea"), with a reminder of the indulgence to a man or woman who devoutly worshipped the wounds daily; a Latin prayer to St. Cyricus and St. Julitta, Christian martyrs associated with protection for pregnant women; a Middle English prayer based on the Measure of Christ; and brief Latin invocations of the cross, beginning with "Crux christi sit semper mecum," found in other amulets. At some point, this roll was privately owned and therefore incorporates the name of a lay supplicant named Thomas and the arms of two Yorkshire families, Driby and Bernake (possibly Thomas Barnak or Bernac).[58]

Another English example is a nine-membrane roll (586.4 × 18.5 cm) that Canon Percival of the Premonstratensian Abbey of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Coverham, Yorkshire, made some time between 1484 and 1500 (New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, Glazier MS 39). The text includes devotions to the Measure of Christ ("this crose xv tymes metyn is the trew lenth of our lorde ihesu criste") and the Three Nails of the Passion ("the ueray trew lenth of the

57. Concerning *Exultet* rolls, see Myrtilla Avery, *The Exultet Rolls of South Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1936), and Guglielmo Cavallo, *Rotoli di Exultet dell'Italia Meridionale* (Bari: Adriatica, 1973).

58. Barbara A. Shailor, *Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library Yale University,* Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, vol. 48 (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1987), vol. 2, pp. 308–11. Shailor, *The Medieval Book,* pp. 85–87, no. 83.

thre Nailis of our lorde ihesu criste") given to Charlemagne; a charm based on the Tau cross (represented by a large cross with the Sacred Heart and the inscription "Signum thau. Maria"), offering general protection to users; an image of the Wounded Heart with divine names based on the Greek *trisagion;* and other textual elements and images often encountered in textual amulets or compilations of charms. Middle English and Latin prayers to St. Roch, St. Sebastian, St. Anthony of Egypt, St. Armagilus of Brittany, St. Margaret of Antioch, St. Catherine, St. Cyricus and St. Julitta, and other helpful saints are related to protection against the plague and demons, and in connection with childbirth. Instructions remind the user, "if a woman trawell of childe, take this crose and lay it one hyr wome and she shalbe hastely be delyuerde with joy with-outen perell." It is not known if the roll was intended for abbey use. The text is not restricted to *Arma Christi* images and verses, however prominently they are displayed. Glazier MS 39 (like Beinecke MS 410) might conceivably have been used in the way that Robbins described. But the text, which is not gender-specific ("michi famulo tuo"), could have been used devotionally and amuletically for the benefit of family and household.[59]

A fifteenth-century multipurpose amulet roll (London, British Library, Harley Roll T.11) offers broad promises of protection through text and figures (a Tau cross, the Three Nails of the Passion, and the Side Wound of Christ). The Middle English text accompanying the lozenge-shaped red wound explains that a heavenly angel brought the image to the Emperor Charlemagne in a golden casket so that no man or woman would ever suffer harm. Successful childbirth is one of the specific forms of protection promised through the Side Wound. There are two sets of four seals, mostly in green. In the first set is one with a Maltese-style cross and a legend reading "Hic est nomen domini. Quicumque secum portauerit saluus erit." The second four seals follow a list of thirty-eight names of Christ and ten Hebrew names. The divine names are as follows: "Here ben the namys off our lorde Jesu Christ ✠ messias ✠ sother ✠ Emanuell ✠ Sabaoth ✠ Adonay; and hec decem nomina sunt apud hebryos quicumque hec nomina super se portauerit nec in aqua nec in igne nec in bello nec in iudicio peribit ✠ hel ✠ heley ✠ johell ✠ hele ✠ adonay ✠ Sabaoth ✠ tetragramaton ✠ Ioth ✠ heli ✠ Iame." Again, the user was to wear a seal relying on the cross for its power ("pone et porta et stabit sanitus"). The roll closes with a self-described *epistola* to be worn on the body at all times for protection against all enemies and evil. The

59. Bühler, "Prayers and Charms," pp. 273–78; Charles Ryskamp, ed., *Twenty-first Report to the Fellows of The Pierpont Morgan Library 1984–1986* (New York: The Pierpont Morgan Library, 1989), pp. 79–80; Friedman, *Northern English Books,* pp. 167–70. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain,* p. 55, describes the manuscript as "Liber precum (in roll form)."

portability of the small roll (two parchment membranes measuring 112.5 × 8.5 cm when unrolled) facilitated its combined devotional and amuletic functions.[60]

Quite extraordinary in provenance and level of presentation is a late fifteenth-century English roll, also combining devotional and amuletic functions (Durham, Ushaw College Library, MS 29). Prince Henry of England owned it before he ascended to the throne as Henry VIII in 1509. The roll opens with a representation of an English cleric and the heraldic arms of an unidentified bishop, who perhaps had commissioned the roll for presentation to the young Tudor prince. As we know, patronage of book production and private devotion were well-established practices in Henry's family, especially with his paternal grandmother, Lady Margaret Beaufort (1443–1509).[61] According to a handwritten note that Prince Henry added to the roll, he gave the roll to his trusted servant William Thomas (d. 1543), who had first served as Groom of the Chamber under Henry's older brother Prince Arthur (d. 1502) and then under Henry himself when he was Prince of Wales. Writing in an English Secretary hand, Prince Henry asked Thomas only for his prayers in return for the roll.[62] At its widest points, the four-membrane illuminated roll measures 441.3 × 11.8 cm. Yet it is surprisingly light and compact when fully rolled, so that it could have been stored and transported in an elegant fabric sack or leather box, like a finely illuminated book of hours.

In the most clearly amuletic section of Prince Henry's roll is a well-painted Crucifixion miniature with a Tau cross (fig. 12). Beneath the cross's arms are two angels, each holding up a small amulet roll-within-a-roll, unfurled beside Christ's crucified body. The Middle English text of the first small roll is written in reddish brown ink, contrasting with the second small roll in dark brown ink. The first text is based on the Measure of Christ ("Thys cros xv tymes moten ys the length of our lord ihesu criste"), and promises general protection, material prosperity, and safe childbirth to those who wear the text on their bodies.

60. For a brief discussion of London, British Library, Harley Roll T.11, see Page, *Magic in Medieval Manuscripts,* pp. 32–33.

61. Michael K. Jones and Malcolm G. Underwood, *The King's Mother: Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 173–87.

62. For Durham, Ushaw College Library, MS 29l, see Edward Charlton, *Archaeologia Aeliana,* series 2, 2 (1858): 41–45; Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries,* vol. 4, pp. 538–40. The roll was rediscovered in the nineteenth century and donated to Ushaw College (also called St. Cuthbert's College), a Roman Catholic seminary located near Durham. For some reason, Ker described William Thomas as an Exchequer clerk. Thomas was from Aberglasney, Carmarthenshire, in Wales. See W.R.B. Robinson, "Henry VIII's Household in the Fifteen-Twenties: The Welsh Connection," *Historical Research* 68, no. 166 (June 1995): 178–79 and n. 23. In 1509 and 1510, King Henry VIII gave various grants to William Thomas. J. S. Brewer, *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862), p. 8, nos. 40–41; p. 148, no. 995.

Image not available

Fig. 12 Ushaw College MS 29 (detail), Durham, England

"And it shal breke your enemys and encres your worldly goodes and if a woman be in trauell off childe ley this on her body and she shal be delyuerd withoute parel the childe cristendin and the moder purificacyon." The second miniature roll contains a Latin prayer ("Deus qui gloriosis martyribus tuis cirico et iulitte tribuisti") to St. Cyricus and St. Julitta, whose names were invoked in late medieval English amulets in connection with childbirth, just as St. Margaret of Antioch was invoked in French amulet rolls.

The inclusion of amuletic texts aimed at a woman of childbearing years made good sense for the young prince, whose early betrothal and marriage were surely anticipated. An advantageous marriage would be valuable to the Tudors and serve the interests of crown and country. Prince Henry's parents had eight children, whose mortality rate threatened to undermine Tudor dynastic security. His betrothal to Catherine of Aragon, widow of his brother Arthur, was confirmed by treaty in 1503, but he did not wed her until he ascended to the throne in 1509.[63] King Henry VIII's legendary efforts to sire a male heir, and thus help ensure the survival of the Tudor line, would have presented him with many opportunities to use the roll (had he not given it away) in connection with childbirth. Perhaps the roll proved more useful for the wife of William Thomas.

The next section of Prince Henry's roll has Side Wound of Christ and *Arma Christi* images, both of which achieved cult status in late medieval England and were therefore included in many textual amulets. The roll has depictions of two angels bearing the Side Wound and of the Three Nails piercing his hands and the Sacred Heart. To the left and right of the Three Nails is a Middle English amuletic text promising protection through Seven Holy Gifts for any man or woman who wore or carried on their persons the images of these particular instruments of the Passion and who recited the Pater Noster, Ave Maria, and Credo five times each day. The broad promises of protection are similar to those in late medieval versions of the Heavenly Letter and invoke Pope Innocent IV (1248–54) to sanction its use.[64]

> Pope Innocent hathe graunted to euery man and woman þat berith vpon them ye length of these nailes seyng daily v pater noster v aue maria and v credo, shall have vii giftes. The first is that he shall not dye no soden death. The second is he shal not be slayn. The iii^de^ is he shal not be

63. S. B. Chrimes, *Henry VII* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 67.

64. For example, a fourteenth-century French book of hours includes a prayer offering forty days of indulgence to a person for saying seven prayers (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 10527). Pope Innocent IV's authority is invoked to justify this indulgence. This book of hours also includes the Heavenly Letter and other amuletic texts. See Leroquais, *Les livres d'heures,* vol. 1, p. 318; vol. 2, p. 208.

> poysoned. The iiii is his enemys shall not ouercom hym. The v is he shall have sufficient goodes to his lyues ende. The vi is he shall not dye without the sacramentes of holy church. The vii is he shall be defendid from all euell spirites.

Prince Henry's roll concludes with a series of prayers to popular saints, not unlike those found among the suffrages in contemporary books of hours. Included are devotions to St. George, St. Michael, St. Christopher (with a Tau Cross), and St. Armagilus of Brittany. The latter mentions King Henry VII (1485–1509), during whose reign the roll was produced. Prince Henry's roll served both devotional and amuletic functions, like other textual amulets and devotional manuscripts of the time.

Texts and images related to the *Arma Christi* were included in many late medieval prayer rolls and small codices. For example, a late fifteenth-century prayer roll in a single membrane (80.0 × 12.1 cm) includes three Latin prayers to the Holy Name followed by a miniature depicting the Trinity as the Seat of Mercy, surrounded by angels bearing the *Arma Christi* (Princeton University Library, Princeton MS 126). While the roll itself was in England in the second half of the sixteenth century, the Flemish or Franco-Flemish style of the miniature suggests that it may have been produced in the Low Countries for the English market. While the text in a Gothic *textualis formata* book hand was not expressly amuletic, the *Arma Christi* imagery had apotropaic associations, so the user might have expected an amuletic function, even if none was intended.[65] As portable as prayer rolls were small devotional *libelli,* which sometimes included apotropaic imagery of the *Arma Christi* or *Vulnera Christi* as a form of sacred medicine.[66] There were also images of popular saints associated with God's triumph over the Devil, protection against the plague, and successful childbirth.

Under the title *Deuout prayers of the pasyon of god,* a small English codex of the late fifteenth century (12.0 × 9.3 cm) could easily be worn around the neck in a sack or purse for both devotional and amuletic use (Princeton University Library, Taylor MS 17). Originally, this *libellus* was sewn through the folds,

65. Concerning this roll and its text, see Jeanne E. Krochalis, "God and Mammon: Prayers and Rents in Princeton MS 126," *Princeton University Library Chronicle* 44, no. 3 (Spring 1983): 209–21, and Carsley, "Devotion to the Holy Name," pp. 156–72. The roll was later in the library of Sir Thomas Phillipps (no. 26985).

66. The thirteenth-century prayer of St. Claire begins "Vulnera quinque Dei sint medicina mei." Gougaud, *Dévotions et pratiques ascétiques,* pp. 82, 85. A late medieval English manuscript in Stockholm includes the following Latin verses: "Sint medicyna mei pia crux et passio Christi / vulnera quinque dei sint medycyna mei / Virginis et lacrime mihi sint medicamina trina / hec mihi portanti succurrant fabricitanti. Amen." Holthausen, "Rezepte, Segen und Zaubersprüche," p. 80, no. 10.

but the sewn text block was not necessarily covered with boards or a parchment wrapper. The manuscript opens with the title and a full-page miniature of the Crucifixion with the *Arma Christi*. Subsequent illustrations include crudely painted images of the Five Wounds of Christ, the Virgin Mary, St. George slaying the dragon, St. Sebastian martyred by a hail of *arowes of dampnable temptacyons of uices and synnes,* and St. Margaret of Antioch, who holds her crucifix as she emerges from the dragon's back. Accompanying the miniatures are Middle English prayers, with a sprinkling of Latin text and prompts to say common prayers (Ave Maria, Pater Noster, and Credo). It is possible that this devotional *libellus* might have doubled as a birthing amulet because the final leaf (fol. 15v), containing devotions to St. Margaret, is extremely worn and soiled, possibly by physical use.[67] In the late Middle Ages, the line between devotional books and textual amulets grew increasingly murky. While the church taught that God freely gave or withheld divine protection, the laity often expected results in a more-or-less automatic way and could use devotional books amuletically.[68]

Books of Hours and Amulets

Portable codices could serve as textual amulets if users believed that wearing powerful words on their bodies offered effective shields against danger and misfortune. The lay owners of elegant books of hours came from the same social class as the aristocratic and bourgeois women who commissioned illuminated prayer rolls and fine textual amulets. Books of hours have survived in such numbers that they now represent the popular ideal of the medieval manuscript and have been accorded misleading sobriquets such as "books for everyone" and "medieval bestseller."[69] Whether elegant or common in appearance, most books

67. Princeton University Library, Taylor MS 17, fols. 13r–15v. The book does not include any amuletic text that called for use in connection with birthing. Reinburg "Popular Prayers," p. 31, notes that Louise Mareschal, the owner of a book of hours printed ca. 1526, wrote several remedies into the book by hand, including "an *etiquette* or prayer addressed to the Wounds of Christ, to be worn around the neck of a pregnant woman."

68. Single sheets with prayers and devotional images for private meditation could be easily folded or rolled for portability and personal protection. Comparable to English and French examples are German prayer rolls ("die Länge Christi und Mariae"). Jacoby, "Heilige Längenmasse." Two German *Gebetblätter* containing vernacular prayers to Christ or the Holy Name, with text written on both sides of single sheets, had a devotional purpose but they were small and portable enough to have been used amuletically if bearers believed in their magical efficacy (Nürnberg, Germanische Nationalmuseum). See Lotte Kurras, *Die deutschen mittelalterlichen Handschriften,* Kataloge des Germanischen Nationalmuseum Nürnberg, vol. 1, pt. 1 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1974), p. 56 (Hs. 7151, parchment, 19.5 × 13.5 cm, ca. 1400), p. 172 (Hs 42601, paper, 20.5 × 14.5 cm, fifteenth century). See also Hohnemann, "Vorformen des Einblattdruckes," pp. 38–39.

69. L.M.J. Delaissé, "The Importance of Books of Hours for the History of the Medieval Book," in *Gatherings in Honor of Dorothy E. Miner,* ed. Ursula E. McCracken, Lilian M.C. Randall, and

of hours were small enough to be portable. When not being used, books of hours were very often kept and transported in purses and sacks of fine fabrics and embroidery, which could be worn from the belt in the manner of girdle books. Books of hours could also be kept in *cuir bouilli* or *cuir ciselé* boxes that could be suspended from the neck or slung over the shoulder by a leather strap laced through loops on each side of the container.[70] Amuletic texts found in books of hours often had rubrics instructing the reader to wear or place the text on one's person. An enclosure made it possible for the reader to enjoy the apotropaic benefits of such an amuletic text *in situ,* without removing the text from the book (for example, Princeton MS 138.44) or copying it on a separate sheet. Moreover, decorated enclosures could enhance magical efficacy. The technique of molding *cuir bouilli* amulets had existed at least since the thirteenth century.[71] By the fifteenth century, leather boxes for carrying books of hours and other devotional books could be decorated with sacred words and religious images

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Richard H. Randall, Jr. (Baltimore: Walters Art Gallery, 1974), pp. 203–25; Janet Backhouse, *Books of Hours* (London: British Library, 1985); Christopher De Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts* (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1986); Wieck, *Time Sanctified*; Barbara A. Shailor, *The Medieval Book: Illustrated from the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library,* Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching, no. 28 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 80; Roger S. Wieck, *Painted Prayers: The Book of Hours in Medieval and Renaissance Art* (New York: George Braziller, 1997). Published in conjunction with the exhibition "Medieval Bestseller: The Book of Hours" (New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, 17 September 1997–4 January 1998). Reinburg, "Popular Prayers," p. 27: "Collectors' interest in highly illuminated and unspoiled books has tended to keep them from acquiring the messy, 'very mediocre' books left by owners who wrote in them, amended them, fingered them." In time they came to appeal to more than just the upper classes. By 1480 they were being printed in Paris, where presses churned out some fifteen hundred editions by the mid-sixteenth century for a broader social spectrum.

70. Reinburg, "Popular Prayers," pp. 62, 95 n. 87. "'Girdle books' allowed clerics to say the Divine Office while travelling or strolling. Lay people also availed themselves of this convenient way of keeping devotional books near at hand." These boxes were used in the same way as leather satchels (*sacculi*) in which early Irish saints transported sacred books or hung them on wooden pegs when not in use. St. Columba was said to have made and blessed such satchels. In later centuries, leather satchels continued to be made and used in Ireland. Ernest A. Savage, *Old English Libraries: The Making, Collection, and Use of Books during the Middle Ages* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1912), pp. 17–19. Western travelers to Ethiopia depicted leather book satchels neatly hung from wooden pegs on interior walls of monasteries. For such a depiction, see the wood engraving *Interior of the Abyssinian Library, in the Monastery of Souriani on the Natron Lakes*, in Robert Curzon, *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant* (London: Murray, 1865). Muslims often carried the Qur'ān in similar leather satchels.

71. Barb, "Three Elusive Amulets," pp. 17–22. The Spanish leather amulet in question is a rectangular piece of *cuir bouilli,* with a perforation hole at the top permitting it to be suspended from the neck. The amulet came to be called the "Amuletum Kircherianum," after being described by Athanasius Kircher (1601–80). It shows Christian and Moorish iconographical and decorative influences. On the obverse are depictions of Christ, the Virgin Mary, St. John the Evangelist, and the archangels Michael and Gabriel; on the reverse side are undecipherable *characteres* arranged in an Islamic *Mihrab* prayer niche. Barb speculated that the amulet might have been made in Cordova no later than 1226.

enjoying apotropaic associations in the popular imagination.[72] Carried around in a sack and case, the ever-portable book of hours was nearly always with its owner and therefore could be used amuletically, provided that the supplicant thought it offered personal protection.

Many books of hours were originally bound in chemise bindings, with velvet or other fine fabrics enveloping the encased book. If the covering material was not cloth but rather leather, ending in a "Turk's head" knot, the book of hours could be carried like a girdle book, suspended from the user's belt. Some books of hours were even bound in elegant metalwork cases with loops in order to be worn in this manner. The need for portability resulted in devotional manuscripts that could be transported on one's person and physically bound to the body. In addition, the customary postures for holding private devotional books, reading the prayers, and contemplating illustrations therein contained put the text in physical propinquity to the body. Books of hours could have an overtly magical aspect, as we can discern from the practice of interlarding amuletic texts such as the Heavenly Letter and lists of divine names interspersed with crosses. Book owners and family members might have used these amuletic texts *in situ* by opening the book to particular texts and placing them on the body, or even by reading them and looking at them. For practical reasons, however, one would be disposed to copy out amuletic texts onto separate, disposable writing supports, rather than risking damage to a precious book by hard physical use.

The Burnet Psalter Hours (University of Aberdeen Library, MS 25), produced by Franco-Flemish book artisans in the early fifteenth century for the English market, possibly a noble landowner in the area of Cambridge or Ely, is a particularly good example of a private devotional book incorporating amuletic texts.[73]

72. For example, a northern Italian *cuir ciselé* box for a breviary from Venice or Verona, ca. 1480 (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Ser. n. 3783) has two loops at each end to hold a leather strap. Decoration includes an Annunciation scene on one of the 24.0 × 18.0 sides, as well as the YHS monogram and the words "Ave Maria" on the other. See Otto Mazal, *Europäische Einbandkunst aus Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1970), p. 30 (fig. 24). A fifteenth-century satchel for the Book of Armagh was transported by leather carrying straps and decorated with interlacing and knotwork decoration, patterns with apotropaic associations, as well as an inscription that would appear to include the word *amen* between *alpha* and *omega*. See *Treasures of Early Irish Art, 1500 B.C. to 1500 A.D.* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1977), pp. 217–18 (plate 67).

73. This discussion uses the folio numbers assigned in the online digital version of Aberdeen University Library, MS 25, with partial transcription and English translation, at http://www.abdn.ac.uk/diss/historic/collects/bps. The description of the manuscript in M. R. James, *A Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts in the University Library Aberdeen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), pp. 25–35, uses slightly different foliation. Aberdeen MS 25 includes the travel charm *Ihesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat* and some other texts encountered in contemporary textual amulets. Gilbert Burnet (1643–1715), bishop of Salisbury, bequeathed this book of hours to Marischal College, Aberdeen.

Scattered throughout more than three hundred illuminated folios of text and miniatures are at least a half dozen folios with such texts, which promise general protection to the supplicant (*famulum N*) or whoever carried or placed the apotropaic text on their bodies, or whoever read them aloud or looked at them each day ("quicumque super se portauerit uel in die legerit vel respexerit," fol. 67v). The relevant texts include: (1) the Latin prayer *Domine deus omnipotens,* which if placed over the supplicant's head was supposed to guarantee victory in battle and a favorable reception by kings and noblemen (fol. 12r–v); (2) a Latin prayer *Deus propicius esto* preceded by a Latin rubric claiming that St. Augustine had both composed the prayer and asked Christ to guarantee its broad amuletic benefits, with the Archangel Michael protecting against visible and invisible enemies (fol. 15r); (3) a French rubric explaining that Pope Leo III had made an amulet (*ceste lettre*) for men and women to wear around the neck day and night in order to cure sickness—this is followed by the amuletic text, a list of thirty-two divine names, beginning "Messyias ✠ Sother ✠ Emmanuel ✠ Sabaoth ✠ Adonay," and then a list of twenty-two divine names, beginning "✠ Adonay ✠ Flos ✠ Sabaoth," which a French rubric identifies as having efficacy for plague, childbirth, fire, and water (fol. 66r–v); (4) a list of thirty divine names, beginning "Dominus ✠ deus ✠ unigenitus ✠ pater ✠ creator," which Pope Leo III was said to have received from the *angelus domini* and written down for the protection of the faithful (fol. 67r–v); (5) a prayer *Domine deus sicut* followed by fifty-two divine names, beginning "Trinitas sancta ✠ Agyos ✠ Otheos ✠ Sother," which one could wear on the body or display on the forehead ("in fronte signauerit") for protection, a position reminiscent of Jewish "frontlets" (fols. 67v–68r); and finally (6) under the rubric *hec sunt nomina beate marie uirginis gloriose,* a list of the ninety-nine names of the Virgin Mary, beginning "Diua. uirgo. flos. nubes. regina. theotecos" (separated by *punctus elevatus* rather than the sign of the cross), which one would carry on the body to prevent sudden death without final confession (fol. 114v–115r). These possible exemplars for the preparation of textual amulets were written in the same fine Gothic *textualis* book hand as the rest of the Burnet Psalter Hours.

There are other fifteenth-century French books of hours into which the professional scribes incorporated amuletic texts, which could be used *in situ* or copied on separate writing supports. We have already mentioned the book of hours made for Princess Katherine of France around 1406 (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Lat. Liturg. F9), and Princeton MS 138.44, which constitutes folios removed from such a French devotional book (probably a book of hours) for use in a birthing kit. In addition, some owners of devotional books wrote down amuletic texts on folios that scribes had intentionally left blank for later additions. Since many books of hours included prayers to saints associated with protection and

healing, it is not surprising that sufficiently literate owners copied various non-liturgical prayers and popular charms onto blank leaves, just as they could paste in devotional prints with apotropaic images.[74] Pilgrims' badges and plaques of the Holy Face, or illuminators' renderings of them, found in some books of hours might also have had apotropaic value in the eyes of the book owners.[75]

It is important to remember that many owners of books of hours were not fully literate and sometimes read these books in unorthodox and unusual ways that do not resemble reading as we know it. Lay book owners often could not read their devotional books with the facility that we might read an academic monograph for the first time or musicians might "sight read" sheet music that they have never before seen, heard, or played. While the laity could properly use books of hours as the clergy used breviaries, owners might do little more than consult the liturgical calendar and particular prayers.[76] Some could only read rubrics, occasionally vernacular for their convenience, relying on memory for the common Latin prayers that were to be recited daily. The marginally lettered owner of a books of hours could use a rubric as an aide-mémoire for familiar prayers and scriptural readings already committed to memory by years of repetition through religious instruction and worship. The faithful could "read" text not by deciphering words as a series of phonetic symbols, but rather by viewing pages of text as images, by gazing intently upon the icon-like sacred imagery and words, by contemplating the prayers that accompanied favorite miniatures, and by fingering litanies of helpful saints or holy helpers in expectation of divine blessing and protection.

The potential confusion of late medieval devotional books and textual amulets is illustrated in two compositionally related Netherlandish panel paintings, which date from the second quarter of the fifteenth century: (1) The Mérode Triptych (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cloisters Collection, 56.70),

74. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* p. 245; Reinburg, "Popular Prayers," pp. 313–19. Apotropaic themes may have transcended the text to the marginal decoration of books of hours, a phenomenon that Ruth Mellinkoff has been studying.

75. J.J.G. Alexander, *The Master of Mary of Burgundy: A Book of Hours for Engelbert of Nassau* (New York: George Braziller, 1970), nos. 26–27.

76. Concerning reading methods and apotropaic uses of books of hours, see Paul Saenger, "Books of Hours and the Reading Habits of the Later Middle Ages," *Scrittura e civiltà* 9 (1985): 240–69: "The book itself, according to its rubrics, became a talisman which if always carried on the person of the owner would protect him from disasters merely by the possession of the written word" (268). Reinburg, "Popular Prayers," has noted that "many people referred to the Calendars in their Hours, read certain prayers, noted family events on end-leaves. But those who actually prayed from their books were probably a minority among owners. For the historian, these people are elusive. I have seen traces of them in their fingers rubbed near favorite prayers and images" (p. 77). "Certainly these readers were literate. Although how many may have used their knowledge of the alphabet to decipher the first words of a prayer, and then let memory supply the remainder?" (p. 81).

in particular its Annunciation center panel, believed to have been commissioned by the Netherlandish merchant Peter Engelbrecht of Mechelen and painted around 1425–30 by the so-called Master of Flémalle, who many art historians have identified as Robert Campin (ca. 1375–1444) of Tournai,[77] and (2) the Brussels Annunciation (Brussels, Musée de l'Art Ancien), a nearly contemporary (ca. 1435) product of Campin's workshop and sometimes attributed to Jacques Daret, a student of Robert Campin. The Mérode Annunication panel depicts the Virgin Mary with three manuscripts, and praying inside a well-appointed contemporary Flemish home, like that of Peter Engelbrecht, at the moment when "the Word was made flesh" (John 1:14).[78] She is reading or meditating on a chemise-bound devotional book in her hands. It is probably opened to Isaiah's prophecy, "A virgin shall conceive."[79] A handsomely produced book in two columns of text lies open on a small round table to her right.

Next to this book is a partially unfurled prayer roll written on a narrow strip of parchment, perhaps 10.0 cm wide. Both the book and roll on the table appear to have been removed from a carrying sack of dark-green fabric with red drawstrings, which is also on the table. Draped over the edge so that the top faces down toward the Virgin Mary, the roll is written in long lines (twenty-four are visible) arranged in discrete sections with rubrics. There is no reason to assume that the artist included the roll to symbolize "Old Covenant." Though relatively uncommon in Annunciation scenes, portable rolls were an observable detail of Netherlandish spiritual life and could be used alongside books of hours and other private devotional books.[80] In fact, several late medieval Flemish books of

77. For a succinct summary of changing opinions of the relationship between the Master of Flémalle and Robert Campin, see Beth Williamson, "Altarpieces, Liturgy, and Devotion," *Speculum* 79, no. 2 (April 2004): 389 n. 171.

78. Lesley Smith, "Scriba, Femina: Medieval Depictions of Women Writing," in *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence,* ed. Lesley Smith and Jane H. M. Taylor (London: British Library, 1996), p. 22: "Lest we think that Christ did not exist before the birth of Jesus, this already-present book reminds us of the doctrine of the eternity of the Word. The Word made flesh (so graphically evident in the parchment pages of a manuscript book) in Mary's book is symbolically present at the very moment of his conception." Comparing the Mérode Triptych and Brussels Annunciation with the Firescreen Madonna (London, National Gallery), attributed to the artist responsible for the Mérode Triptych, some art historians have interpreted the devotional books, with their curling parchment leaves, as "animated" by the presence of the Holy Spirit and suggesting the Incarnation of Christ. Williamson, "Altarpieces," pp. 390–92.

79. In the Annunciation scene in the book of hours for Engelbert of Nassau, according to J.J.G. Alexander, the Virgin "was reading Isaiah's prophecy of the coming Savior." *The Master of Mary of Burgundy: A Book of Hours for Engelbert of Nassau,* introduction and legends by J.J.G. Alexander (New York: George Braziller, 1970), nos. 72–73.

80. Concerning the depiction of prayer rolls in the Hours for Catherine of Cleves (ca. 1440), see John Plummer, ed., *The Hours of Catherine of Cleves: Introduction and Commentaries* (New York: George Braziller, 1966), plate 10. This Annunciation scene takes place in a building from whose

hours have border decoration in which women are depicted using narrow prayer rolls that measure perhaps a meter in length, with brief sections of rubricated text.[81] The Mérode roll is not readable though similar in size and *mise-en-page* to contemporary amulet rolls, professionally produced for wellborn women like the young Netherlandish bride, as well as to portable prayer rolls, which could be used as amulets even if they did not include amuletic texts.[82] It is impossible

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tracery frame are hung two St. George shields, perhaps offering protection from the figure of a red-faced demon at the top. In Christian iconography, of course, St. George is depicted slaying the Devil in the form of a dragon. So this imagery is perhaps related to an apotropaic status of the role. Other Annunciation scenes include prayer rolls, including the *Belles Heures de Jean, duc de Berry* (ca. 1400–1416), New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cloisters Collection (54.1.1); the *Traité sur la salutation angélique* (Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale Albert Ier, MS 9270). See Victor Leroquois, *Le bréviaire de Philippe le Bon: Bréviaire parisien du XVe siècle* (Brussels: Oeuvre Nationale pour la Reproduction de Manuscrits à Miniatures de Belgique, 1929), vol. 2, plate 10. In other Annunciation scenes, an open roll dangles from the slant-top lectern at which the Virgin Mary is depicted praying with an illustrated Dutch prayer book of ca. 1500 (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. 2730), and from a shelf behind the Virgin Mary in a Flemish or South Netherlandish book of hours dating from the third quarter of the fifteenth century (Princeton University Library, Garrett MS 50, fol. 32v). A roll also accompanies an open book of hours in the Annunciation panel of a 1522 altarpeice by Lucas van Leyden (Munich, Alte Pinakothek, no. 1454).

81. There are similar prayer scenes in at least three books of hours. In each, a woman is depicted as a nun with a prayer roll and is sitting on the ground next to either one or two men who kneel with prayer books: Duke Philip of Cleves (1456–1528), Ghent, ca. 1480, in a border, below the beginning of the Seven Penitential Psalms (Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale Albert Ier, MS IV 40, fol. 110r), reproduced in Maurits Smeyers, *L'art de la miniature flamande du VIIIe au XVIe siècle,* translated into French by Monique Verboomen (Tournai: Renaissance du Livre, 1998); the Rothschild Prayer Book, below a miniature of the Coronation of the Virgin (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, ser. nov. 2844, fol. 134v), reproduced in Franz Unterkircher, ed., *Das Rothschild Gebetbuch: Die schönsten Miniaturen eines flämischen Stundenbuches* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1984); and Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg (1490–1545), Hours illuminated by Simon Bening in Bruges, ca. 1522–23, below a miniature of St. Ambrose (fol. 58v), reproduced in *The Hours of Albrecht of Brandenburg . . . Property of Mr. J. R. Ritman Sold for the Benefit of the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam* (London: Sotheby's, 2001), p. 56. Books of hours were rarely in roll format. In the mid-fourteenth century, a member of an Augustinian house in northeastern France or Flanders had a fourteen-membrane book of hours in roll format (London, British Library, Egerton MS 3044). However, the roll would not have been particularly portable because of its large size (91.2 × 40.8 cm). For a description, go to the British Library Manuscripts Catalogue at http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/manuscripts.

82. The roll was neither a banderole serving as a vehicle to convey text, nor a Jewish roll to symbolize the "Old Covenant." Sara Lipton, *Images of Intolerance: The Representation of Jews and Judaism in the Bible moralisée* (Berkeley and California: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 62–66. The use of a roll in an Annunciation scene might refer symbolically to "Old Covenant," if the intention was to relate events in the Old and New Testament, as for example in the Annunciation scene of a ca. 1450 *Biblia pauperum* (Rotulus Seragliensis 52, Istanbul), in which the Virgin Mary is shown seated with a roll in ancient configuration on her lap and a codex open on her lectern; around the Annunciation scene are depicted parallel scenes from the Old Testament. D. Adolf Deissmann and Hans Wegener, *Die Armenbibel des Serai: Rotulus Seragliensis, Nr. 52* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1934), p. 37, plate 1.

to know if the artist intended to depict such a roll such as the previously discussed Burgundian or French roll.

The triptych clearly incorporates some imagery of divine protection in scenes that could have served almost as visual *historiolae,* with words real or implied. Gabriel's angelic salutation in the Annunciation scene had apotropaic associations. The Ave Maria was popularly believed to offer protection against demons.[83] It could be heard verbally as a blessing or as it is here, written in a banderole (the curling text scroll used in late medieval miniatures and prints to convey a person's words).[84] The right panel, also attributed to Robert Campin, depicts St. Joseph in his workshop making mousetraps, one of which lies on a ledge outside the open window of the shop. St. Augustine first envisioned this image in his *Sermones de tempore* (Sermo 263), describing the cross as the Devil's mousetrap, the Lord's death serving as bait.[85] In the left panel, which an assistant (possibly Rogier van der Weyden) painted around 1427–32, the donor's wife is depicted holding a rosary.[86] From its left strand is suspended a small gilded (probably

83. The common prayer Ave Maria was long endowed with apotropaic associations; by the fifteenth century, it was believed sufficient to confer universal protection and win divine favor. The *Legenda aurea* records tales of miraculous protection and cures effected by recitation of the Ave Maria and presents the Annunciation as repairing mankind's fall from grace, which had been brought about by the Devil's temptation of Eve. Graesse, *Jacobi,* p. 216 (chap. 51, "De annuntiatione dominica"): "Primo ratione ordinis connotandi, ut scilicet ordo reparationis responderet ordini praevaricationis. Unde sicut dyabolus tentavit mulierem, ut eam pertraheret ad dubitationem et per dubitationem ad consensum et per consensum ad lapsum, sic angelus nuntiavit virgini, ut nuntiando excitaret ad fidem et per fidem ad consensum et per consensum ad concipiendum Dei filium." Duchet-Suchaux and Pastoreau, *The Bible and the Saints,* pp. 155–66: "The various apocryphal texts are full of information concerning the archangel Gabriel: he is a guardian angel and shares with St. Michael the responsibility of preventing demons from entering churches." In an English Corpus Christi pageant play based on the Annunciation, Mary responds to the angelic salutation by exhorting God, "From all disease thou save me now," and Gabriel in turn assures the Virgin that the Christ child "shall save that was forlorn, and the fiend's power destroy shall he." *The Annunciation,* in *Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays,* ed. A. C. Cawley (London: J. M. Dent, 1965), pp. 72–73, ll. 52, 78–79. The Archangel Gabriel was invoked in prayers, charms, and amulets. He was God's chief messenger, who in popular tradition transmitted the Heavenly Letter from Christ and then delivered it to Christians. Hunt, *Popular Medicine,* pp. 90–91 (nos. 4–41).

84. Martin, *History and Power of Writing,* p. 213: "Engravers soon put texts into their prints: phylacteries bearing words spoken by the personages they depicted or brief legends similar to the ones in stained-glass windows or frescoes." Concerning banderoles, see Flett, "Significance of Text Scrolls," pp. 43–56.

85. St. Augustine, *Sermones de tempore* (Sermo 263. De Ascensione Domini 3.1), in *Patrologia latina,* vol. 38, col. 1210: "Exsulavit diabolus quando mortuus est Christus, et ipsa morte Christi est diabolus victus: tanquam in muscipula escam accepit. Gaudebat ad mortem, quasi praepositus mortis. Ad quod gaudebat, inde ille tensum est. Muscipula diaboli, crux Domini: esca qua caperetur, mors Domini. Et ecce surrexit Dominus noster Jesus Christus."

86. Coincidentally, the Annunciation is the first of fifteen mysteries of the rosary. The configuration of rosaries for amuletic use was not unknown. Murray and Murray, *Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture,* p. 454. Some rosaries were combined with inscribed plaques

copper gilt) ornament of St. Christopher carrying the Christ child. This detail might relate to the young wife's hope of conceiving and bearing her own child, with divine protection against sudden death, complications, and excessive pain in childbirth.[87]

Turning to the Brussels Annunciation, painted five to ten years later in the same workshop, we see that the roll has vanished from the table. Instead, a tattered devotional drawing or block print, which depicts St. Christopher carrying the Christ child to safety across a dangerous river, has been affixed to the chimneypiece in the Virgin Mary's room.[88] From the hearth or *focus* of the house, the image and its accompanying two-line inscription (probably printed from the same woodblock) were centrally positioned to offer general protection to the family and household.[89] This woodcut is similar in appearance to an extant 1423 German woodcut on a sheet of paper measuring 29.3 × 20.5 cm, at the bottom of which is a two-line inscription offering protection from sudden death to those people who on a particular day beheld the image of the saint's face ("Christofori faciem die quacumque tueris, Illa nempe die morte mala non morieris"). This particular block print was found in a book in a Carthusian convent in Buxheim, Swabia. St. Christopher was a "bearer of Christ," like the Virgin Mary, and a "holy helper" who was popularly believed to offer protection against sudden

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quoting the Gospel of John ("In principio erat verbum"). Some clerics condemned the resulting devotional objects as *rosaires superstitieux*. Reproduced in *Superstitions anciennes et modernes: Prejugés vulgaires qui ont induit les peuples à des usages et à des pratiques contraires à la religion* (Amsterdam: Jean Frederic Bernard, 1733), vol. 1, plates after p. 268.

87. Felix Thürlemann, *Robert Campin, das Mérode-Triptychon: Ein Hochzeitsbild für Peter Engelbrecht und Gretchen Schrinmechers aus Köln* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1997); Maryan W. Ainsworth and Keith Christiansen, eds., *From Van Eyck to Bruegel: Early Netherlandish Painting in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), pp. 89–96; Albert Châtelet, *Robert Campin: Le maître de Flémalle, La fascination du quotidien* (Antwerp: Fonds Mercator, 1996), pp. 93–112. For a brief discussion of the *reliures-sacs* in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see Jacques Stiennon, "Considérations générales sur la bibliothéconomie et l'archivistique médiévales," *Scriptorium* 50, no. 2 (1996): 230. In the donor panel, Peter Engelbrecht is depicted with a sturdy black-leather pouch, which could have held devotional articles or almost anything else useful to a medieval merchant. Extant fifteenth-century ornaments of almost identical design were made of copper gilt.

88. In addition, the cloth sack that held the two devotional books lies on the floor just to the left of the Virgin. Jeltje Dijkstra, "The Brussels and Mérode Annunciation Reconsidered," in *Robert Campin: New Directions in Scholarship,* ed. Susan Foister and Susie Nash (Louvain: Brepols, 1996), pp. 95–104; Cyriel Stroo and Pascale Syfer-d'Olne, *The Master of Flémalle, Rogier van der Weyden,* vol. 1 of *The Flemish Primitives* (Brussels: Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, 1996), pp. 37–50.

89. Dijkstra, "The Brussels and Mérode Annunciation Reconsidered"; Stroo and Syfer-d'Olne, *Master of Flémalle,* pp. 44, 46, 49 n. 20. Hand-colored devotional woodcuts are reproduced in various fifteenth-century paintings—a Crucifixion woodcut in Hans Memling's *Benedetto Portinari Tripych* (Florence, Uffizi Gallery) and a saint in Petrus Christus's *Portrait of a Female Donor* (Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art)—though not in an obviously amuletic way.

death (without the last rites of the church) by fire, flood, or serious disease.[90] Carried on the body, such woodcuts could be displayed or carried on one's person amuletically for protection.

Before St. Christopher became bearer of the Christ child, according to Christian legend, he traveled with the Devil until the latter fled before a cross that had been erected in the road. In northern Europe, there was a widespread popular belief that those who looked at an image of St. Christopher would suffer no harm that day. Books of hours and other private devotional books routinely include prayers to St. Christopher and other popular saints, accompanied by images. A prayer in the book of hours made for Engelbert of Nassau (1451–1504) seeks the intercession of St. Christopher against sudden death.[91] In *Encomium moriae* (1511), Erasmus of Rotterdam ridiculed people who foolishly gazed at paintings and wooden or polychrome statues of St. Christopher in the misguided belief that the viewer would not die that day. Erasmus also had disdain for people who believed in magical charms and "superstitious prayers." In 1516 the German artist Hans Holbein the Younger (1497?–1543), then living in Basel, used the margins of a second edition of *Encomium moriae,* owned by the humanist Osvaldus Myconius (1488–1552), to illustrate Erasmus's scathing attack on a popular religious practice. Beneath a printed reference to *Superstitiosus imaginum cultus,* Holbein drew a picture of a man who, foolishly hoping to reap spiritual rewards in a mechanical way, stands with hands clasped in prayer and gazes blankly at a wall painting of St. Christopher bearing the Christ child.[92]

So widespread were such religious beliefs and practices that pious viewers of the Brussels Annunciation, even without prompting or explanation by a family confessor or spiritual adviser, could perceive in the apotropaic imagery the

90. Richard S. Field, ed., *German Single-Leaf Woodcuts before 1500* (Anonymous Artists: .997–.1383), vol. 164 (Supplement) of *The Illustrated Bartsch* (n.p.: Abaris Books, 1992), no. 1349: It has the date "Millesimo cccc xx tercio." For other early woodcuts of St. Christopher carrying the Christ child, see Field, pp. 430–41, and P. A. Lemoisne, *Les xylographies du XIVe et du XVe siècle au Cabinet des Estampes de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris and Brussels: Les Éditions G. van Oest, 1927–30), vol. 1, pp. 69–70, 92; vol. 2, pp. 38, 54, 130.

91. Duchet-Suchaux and Pastoureau, *The Bible and the Saints,* pp. 89–90; Alexander, *The Master of Mary of Burgundy,* no. 34.

92. Heinrich Alfred Schmid, ed., *Erasmi Roterodami Encomium moriae . . . Basler Ausgabe von 1515, mit den Randzeichnungen von Hans Holbein in Facsimile mit einer Einführung herausgegeben von Heinrich Alfred Schmid* (Basel: Henning Oppermann, 1931), vol. 1, k2. Images of St. Christopher adorned many English parish churches, often positioned near the main entrances. The inscription accompanying one of at least 186 wall paintings of St. Christopher in British churches informed viewers, "Ki cest image cerra le jur de male mort ne murra." An old English rhyme reminded the faithful, "If thou the face of Christopher on any morn shall see, throughout the day from sudden death thou shalt preserved be." Mary D. Anderson, *History and Imagery in British Churches* (London: John Murray, 1971), pp. 137–38; Christina Hole, *Saints in Folklore* (New York: M. Barrows, 1965), pp. 54–58.

promise of divine protection in their own daily lives, and especially in the life of a woman in her childbearing years.[93] The issue with the Mérode Triptych and Brussels Annunciation is not that the roll and block print were definitely made and used as textual amulets. Evidence is insufficient to draw a definitive conclusion, though consecrated objects of all sorts were used apotropaically in this great age of lay spirituality. Late medieval devotional books (especially portable rolls for women) might be used amuletically, just as textual amulets could contain prayers for private devotion. Officially, the church taught that devotional texts and images in books of hours and other lay devotional books existed to stimulate the religious imagination and facilitate private prayer and meditation. But this view had to compete with a traditional belief that the act of binding powerful texts, symbols, and images on the body guaranteed personal protection and healing in a more-or-less mechanical way. Guided by a day-to-day ritual context, people could construe the meaning of Christian words and imagery in devotional books in ways that the producers of those books may not have intended.

In conclusion, expanded lay literacy and spirituality fostered wider circulation of textual amulets for women in the thirteenth to early sixteenth centuries. While many women of low social status mindlessly used crude textual amulets as birth girdles without reading or seeing a single word, just as critics charged, there was an upscale market for illuminated amulet rolls and folded sheets combining amuletic and devotional functions. Late medieval English, French, and Netherlandish amulets for women were not only worn on the body but could also be read interactively and visualized in novel ways, like the textual amulets surveyed in Chapter 4. We find evidence of a changing menu of textual elements, inventively assembled and packaged to facilitate multiple functions and users. In a period of growing coalescence between textual amulets and devotional books, what constituted an amulet was ultimately in the eyes of the beholder.

93. Jozef de Coo argues in "A Medieval Look at the Mérode Altarpiece," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 44, no. 2 (1981): 114–32, that the triptych was a married couple's prayer for the blessings of children. In a particularly secular and materialistic interpretation of the Mérode Triptych, Lisa Jardine argues in *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), pp. 127–28, "Mary has the same look of quiet satisfaction in the midst of great comfort . . . the donor and his wife who kneel in rapt adoration at the door of the home of Mary and Joseph appear to be as awed by the décor as by the scene they witness."

Conclusion

The study of textual amulets offers a window into a distant world of everyday magic based on the power of the word. Through a study of medieval sources and extant physical evidence, we have been able to trace threads of continuity in the history of textual amulets from the magical papyri of late antique Egypt to the batch-produced broadside amulets of the Renaissance. Textual amulets emerge from this study as a significant aspect of medieval magic and an important area of lay access to the written word. Theologians, canon lawyers, and inquisitors were able to articulate clear lines of demarcation between religion and magic, faith and superstition. But beyond the intellectual elite, such distinctions were far too subtle. Though Christian purists were often wont to condemn textual amulets as worthless deceptions and fascinations of unlettered folk, clerics willingly prepared amulets and disseminated them to medieval people at all social levels. In our study, textual amulets emerge as a widespread cultural phenomenon, transcending geopolitical boundaries and barriers of class, gender, education, and age. At different times, the ranks of amulet producers and users included canonized saints and would-be prophets, church prelates and parish priests, noble knights and traveling merchants, trained physicians and village healers, urban artisans and hermits, landowners and nameless peasants. A broad cross section of late medieval society believed in the apotropaic, therapeutic, and exorcistic benefits of binding powerful words, just as they believed in the efficacy of holy relics, consecrated objects, and ritual practices that were more generally accepted by mainstream theological opinion.

People who believed in the magical power of sacred words, especially when dispensed by clerics in the manner of sacralized objects, might actually feel better and experience reduced anxiety, pain, or other symptoms, if only through the placebo effect. Textual amulets could evoke beneficial emotional responses in users and allow them to feel that they were playing an active role in securing

personal protection and restoring health. Before modern medicine provided physiological explanations for illness, textual amulets must have seemed to work often enough to sustain continued belief in their efficacy.[1] Survivable infectious diseases and self-correcting problems with intermittent symptoms allowed people to misinterpret perceived improvements in health as direct consequences of amulet use. Among such diseases and physical problems were fevers (from the common cold to the plague), wounds and bleeding, dysentery ("bloody flux"), food poisoning, ergotism, epileptic seizures, labor pains, chronic depression, sexual dysfunction, and common aches, pains, and discomfort. Chance phenomena and natural disasters such as bad luck, poor harvests, famine, fire, flood, and marauding armies also invited amulet use, as did imaginary terrors such as the Devil, demonic possession, and the Evil Eye.

Textual amulets placed limited demands on reading ability, if actually read. They could be within the reach of everyone, even people who were unlettered or had attained only a modest level of practical literacy. From the thirteenth century, while textual amulets could still be worn passively as textual shields but never read, they could also be carried on the body and read or otherwise used in interactive ways. The inclusion of interpretive rubrics and embedded vernacular instructions for lay readers provides insight into the complex interplay of oral and written traditions, and into the importance of reading, writing, speech, visualization, memory, physical gesture, and other practices related to the use of textual amulets.[2] Physical evidence suggests a more richly nuanced picture of textual amulets than negative impressions gleaned from theology, moralistic tales, and vernacular literature. Wider lay literacy led to more textual and codicological complexity. Producers were able to appropriate a traditional vocabulary of sacred words and symbols, reinterpret them and construct meanings to meet specific needs, borrow from Solomonic magic, and repackage this mass to create material texts for new audiences. As D. F. McKenzie observed, "New readers make new texts and their new meanings are a function of their new forms."[3]

Beyond increasing our knowledge of the material culture of magic, the study of textual amulets contributes to our understanding of written culture and the

1. B. F. Skinner concluded in "Superstition in the Pigeon," *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 38 (1948): 168–72, that occasional rewards or reinforcement were sufficient to condition pigeons to expect certain positive results, however variable they actually were.

2. Matthew Innes has recently pointed out that "the written word needs to be related to the mass of non-written practices which surround, envelop and rival it." See Innes, "Memory, Orality and Literacy in an Early Medieval Society," *Past and Present* 158 (1998): 4.

3. D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts,* The Panizzi Lectures, 1985 (London: British Library, 1986), p. 20. Guglielmo Cavallo, "Between *Volumen* and *Codex,*" in Cavallo and Chartier, *History of Reading in the West,* p. 79: "Different groups might read the same texts; what differed were the ways they read, comprehended and appropriated a written text."

history of the book. Our knowledge of the medieval book as physical artifact has been based primarily on the study of extant codices. This approach is understandable but not without risks because uneven survival patterns make it difficult to see the medieval book in its full diversity. Reasons for these survival patterns are not difficult to identify. Monastic and cathedral libraries were generally better protected from the vagaries of time than were private libraries. Exquisite illuminated manuscripts for ceremonial use or ornamental display, sacralized and rarely opened for reading, were specially commissioned. As such, they were more likely to survive than service books for everyday use. Then as now, luxury manuscripts were perceived to be treasures and were carefully protected by generations of owners and collectors, so that they survive in disproportionately large numbers relative to their original market share and to the plethora of utilitarian but less durable expressions of medieval literacy.[4]

Through a quasi-Darwinian process that we might describe as "the survival of the fairest," people have tended to preserve elegantly produced manuscripts and ignore the commonplace. Illuminated manuscripts have thus found their way by the tens of thousands into private collections and research libraries, while heavily used university texts that were sold by stationers, lent from open-air stalls, or self-copied by scholars on paper (less durable than parchment) have tended to survive in reduced numbers.[5] Beyond the codex, the medieval book

4. Christian Coppens has summarized losses of books in fifteenth-century private libraries: "We all know the list of the types of 15th c. manuscripts more likely to have disappeared than others: cheap books in general; small books in general; household books, like cookbooks, instructions on how to prepare vinegar or brandy—very volatile indeed—; books classified as pseudo-science, like prescriptions, almanacs, prognostications, dream books, books of secrets, the so-called *Kunst- oder Probirbüchlein* with instructions how to harden iron, write in invisible ink (very appropriate here); medical books, like remedies against the plague and herbals; all kinds of school books; vernacular popular literature books for private devotion and popular legends; books judged heretical or subject to one or other form of censorship; aids in conducting business, as books on commercial arithmetic, etc." Christian Coppens, "Provenances and Private Libraries," *Scriptorium* 50, no. 2 (1996): 327. Lowden, "Illuminated Books and the Liturgy," p. 18: "What images and lavish decoration always serve to do is to distinguish levels of religious desire, some might say conspicuous consumption, in book production. The uneven distribution of illuminated books for the liturgy across Europe and across the centuries—to judge by what survives—implies that there was no universal recognition of the pressing requirement for such books (i.e. illuminated copies). Each was commissioned to satisfy a particular and often a personal need."

5. Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages,* ed. F. M. Powicke and A. B. Emden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), vol. 1, p. 423: "The enormous prices often quoted in illustration of the dearness of books relate (as far as the university period is concerned) to the gorgeous illuminated works of art prepared for great personages or rich monasteries." Uneven survival patterns for medieval manuscripts have a parallel in early printed books. After the advent of printing, for example, large-size incunables tended to survive over small ones, Latin texts over vernacular texts, and major works over printed ephemera. Lotte Hellinga, "Importation of Books Printed on the Continent," in *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books, circa 1450–1520,* ed. Sandra Hindman (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 214.

world is sketchy, in large part because of limited physical evidence. There are relatively few extant examples of experimental formats such as the folding books and portfolios of separate sheets. Wax writing tablets, widely used in the Middle Ages for drafting literary texts and accounts, survive in meager numbers, and some were preserved only because of the luxurious workmanship of the tablets.[6] Among textual rolls, preserved in libraries and museums, as opposed to documentary rolls in archives, there is a tendency for the more elegant examples to have survived.[7]

The consequence of focusing on artfully produced cultural artifacts, especially deluxe illuminated manuscripts, visually pleasing to elite connoisseurs and thus perceived as treasures, has been a degree of inattention to noncanonical texts, especially those produced in odd physical formats or used in unusual ways. One is reminded of Brian Stock's observation about "the implicit equation of literacy, higher culture, and rationality." There can be a deafening silence about forgotten authors and anonymous popular texts that do not fit accepted academic models, literary canons, and theory, and thus have become marginalized and consigned to oblivion.[8] In recent decades, fortunately, scholars such as Carlo Cipolla, M. T. Clanchy, Rosamund McKitterick, Armando Petrucci, and Leonard E. Boyle have

6. See also Ursula Bruckner, "Beutelbuch-Originale," *Studien zum Buch und Bibliothekswesen* 9 (1995): 5–23; Harry Bober, "The Zodiacal Miniature of the *Très Riches Heures* of the Duke of Berry: Its Sources and Meaning," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 11 (1948): 23–26, plate 11; Michelle P. Brown, "The Role of the Wax Tablet in Medieval Literacy: A Reconsideration in Light of a Recent Find from York," *British Library Journal* 20, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 1–16; M. H. Smith, "De la cire au papyrus, de la cire au papier: deux mutations de l'écriture?" *Gazette du livre médiéval,* no. 43 (Autumn 2003): 1–13: "De la production parisienne même, le XIVe siècle fournit la majorité des exemplaires: mais ce sont des ivoires sculptés, ostentatoires au moins autant que pratiques, et conservés jusqu'à nous pour leur valeur artistique (sans cire)."

7. On the use and nonsurvival of textual rolls, see Richard H. Rouse, "Roll and Codex: The Transmission of the Works of Reinmar von Zweter," in *Paläographie 1981: Colloquium des Comité International de Paléographie, München, 15–18 September 1981,* ed. Gabriel Silagi, Münchener Beiträge zur Mediavistik und Renaissance-Forschung, no. 32 (Munich: Arbeo-Gesellschaft, 1982), pp. 107–23, and Skemer, "From Archives to the Book Trade," pp. 193–206. Particularly elegant rolls were perhaps not intended for daily use, any more than were the finest books of hours. Francesco Novati has observed concerning a three-membrane parchment prayer roll of the fourteenth century, containing Petrarch's Penitential Psalms and *Oratio quotidiana* (Lucerne, Central Library, S. 20, 4°), copied and illuminated for Duke Giangaleazzo Visconti of Milan, that its elegant level of production went beyond the everyday needs of someone traveling and hunting, though it was small enough to be portable (202.6 × 12.3 cm). Novati, "Un esemplare Visconteo dei psalmi poenitentiales del Petrarca," p. 214. For a description of the roll, see Ottavio Besomi, *Codici Petrarcheschi nelle biblioteche svizzere,* Censimento dei codici Petrarcheschi, no. 3 (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1967), pp. 49–51, no. 31.

8. Stock, *Implications of Literacy,* pp. 30–32. See also Eric H. Reiter, "The Reader as Author of the User-Produced Manuscript: Reading and Rewriting Popular Latin Theology in the Late Middle Ages," *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 27 (1996): 166: "The crucial point is that in concentrating on works of artistic value or on those produced by famous authors, theories of reading run the risk of losing sight of what people actually read."

sought to widen and invigorate the study of medieval book culture by emphasizing the importance of document preparation, practical literacy, and inadequately studied forms of medieval writing, much as book historians like Roger Chartier have devoted attention to popular reading in the age of print.[9]

Textual amulets followed the overall contours of book history from clerical production in the predominantly oral culture of the sixth to twelfth centuries; to a mixed economy of production by clerics (outside organized scriptoria), supplemented by commercial producers and self-producing literate laymen from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries; to a transition at the end of the Middle Ages from scribal copying to mechanical reproduction. While batch production of identical block prints and broadside amulets was now possible, handwritten amulets continued to circulate, just as books were sometimes copied and disseminated in manuscript form. Printing did not put an end to writing any more than the latter had put an end to charms that were memorized, circulated orally, recited, and performed. Local clerics, healers, and the laity continued to prepare textual amulets in traditional ways. Ethnologists and folklorists have traced nineteenth- and twentieth-century survivals of textual amulets and other forms of material magic in rural areas. Romantics, magical visionaries, and cultists still offer a pastiche of spiritual alternatives to established religion.

Even in our age of advanced information technologies and globalization, references to textual amulets can be found in self-help books promoting the practical benefits of Hermetic wisdom, Cabala, or other varieties of magic. Textual amulets have even made a successful transition to the Internet. Using a search engine, one can easily find Catholic websites that disseminate modern-day *historiolae* about the miraculous powers of St. Anthony's Brief, a textual amulet that ostensibly prevented a demon-possessed Portuguese woman from drowning herself in the Tagus River. She is said to have prayed to St. Anthony of Padua in a

9. Carlo Cipolla, *Literacy and Development in the West* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969); Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record;* Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Rosamond McKitterick, ed., *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Roger Chartier, "Reading Matter and 'Popular' Reading from the Renaissance to the Seventeenth Century," in Cavallo and Chartier, *History of Reading in the West,* pp. 269–83. As Leonard E. Boyle observed in *Medieval Latin Palaeography: A Bibliographical Introduction,* Toronto Medieval Bibliographies, no. 8 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), p. xi: "Writing is a medium of communication, no matter where one finds it: in a lavish codex, a crumpled roll, a scrap of paper, a scribble on a wall, a jagged inscription, the base of an old chalice or drinking cup, the rim of a coin." Similarly, Armando Petrucci has noted in "Commentare Bischoff," *Scrittura e civiltà* 20 (1996): 402: "nessuna testimonianza scritta può essere interpretata senza il confronto, esplicito o anche implicito, con le altre contemporanee della medesima area culturale e senza la precisa e vigile coscienza che in ogni epoca la cultura scritta, fatta di libri e di documenti, di iscrizioni e di graffiti, di lettere, di monete, di *tituli* dipinti e così via, ha sempre costituito un tessuto unico."

Franciscan shrine, and he responded by giving her a parchment amulet to be worn around the neck. Written on the St. Anthony's Brief was a standard apotropaic formula, found in some extant medieval amulets and talismans ("Ecce crucem domini, fugite partes adversae, vincit Leo de tribu juda, radix David, alleluia"). Christians wearing or carrying devotional objects with these powerful words, we are assured, will enjoy protection of body and soul. The accompanying offers of devotional objects for sale are not alone. In recent years, Internet merchants of New Age religion, spiritualism, and the occult have found a ready market for printed amulets in suspension capsules and inscribed astrological talismans satisfying continuing human needs for supernatural protection. This phenomenon is more than a curiosity on the Western cultural landscape, serving instead as a reminder of a widespread and resilient ritual practice that survived from the ancient world through the Middle Ages, flourished from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries in a robust Western economy for protective objects, made the transition from manuscript production to printing, and is still alive despite centuries of rationalism, scientific explanation, and modern medicine.

APPENDIX 1:

Canterbury Amulet, mid-thirteenth century (Canterbury Cathedral Library, Additional MS 23)

This appendix and the two that follow contain transcriptions made from the original manuscripts, all of which have some missing or abraded text. Ultraviolet light and digitally enhanced photographs were useful in the preparation of the transcriptions. The author has retained the original capitalization and spelling but expanded the abbreviations, contractions, suspensions, and superscript letters; inserted hyphens at the ends of lines in order to indicate word division; indicated original rubrics with underlining; and inserted line or column numbers. In the case of missing or unreadable words in quotations from scripture or liturgy, the author has used brackets to indicate reconstructed readings. Ellipses indicate missing text at the end of lines. Missing words and letters or unreadable portions of words within the line are indicated by empty brackets. Question marks indicate possible readings.

Canterbury Amulet: Text on recto, cols. 1–8

col. 1 Cotidie uide hec signa greca
et erit tibi gratia ad omnes et mag-
nam letitiam habebis r. c. z. o.
~~ttt~~. z. n. 9. m. c. y. ffos. y. c. ii. eo.
diceos. imoon. iopos. morolos. sy-
mophos. s. ap̲. z. ofc. z. o. x. qq.
domini. e. e. yitus. yitus. Si uis quod omnes
te diligant et dent tibi honorem. hos
nos caracteres habe tecum. et securus.
eris ab omni perturbacione. oymos.
yprorimum. Gyrophum. pitimum. s.
p. ipomomum. orophum. gs. R. x.
z. y. p̲c. s. q. u. p. d. ꝫ. ꝫ. ꝫ. ofc.

l. x. x. y. p. e. impero. co. omoos. s.
p. d. longinus miles perforauit latus
domini et exiuit sanguis et aqua et dix-
it dominus. cessa sanguis. sicut cessa-
uit de domino sic cesset iste sanguis
de isto homine. amen. ator. Bator.
Saterat. sator. fetor. fecunde sancte
marie. Arex. h. Regum rex et dominus.
amen. hos scribe ad fluxum sangui-
nis et sub pectore eius liga. si non
credis: scribe in cultello et occide
porcum et sanguis non fluet ✞
te ✞ ze. ✞ iii ✞ N. ✞ v. o. z. ✞
p ✞ x. b. c. peorat. q. m. y. y.
ic. b. Iste littere uictoriam habent
qui eas honeste deferre poterit.
Nullus ei nocere poterit. uince deus
pater. uince dei filius. uince deus
spiritus sanctus. α et ω. deus. adonay.
deus uince. deus sabaoth. adiuua
filium. a. salus. homo. deus. medici-
na. bat. w. b. q^{9}. u. s. ~~ꝗ~~. cic. N. h.
w. uirtus deus fortis. ihesus. sapientia
semper manens. omnipotens. ella. sob-
ba. adonay. ari. saday. athonay.
ota. tota. ai. ara. princeps. v. e-
manuel. adonay. heta. amen. han.
hay. ari. saday. adonay. sebus.
dedo. riam. sedda. adhonay. ylas.
z. q. pl. v. pv. a. b. l. oo. e. co. se. s.
e. a. N. o. b. v. cisi. osmas. eloy.
a. z. e. oo. Messias. sother. ⁊
⊞f 9. ✞ . ✝ ~~ЄKЄ~~. ~~AS~~. sw. b. vel'
o. u^{9}. a. qo. p^{9}. cp. N. h. dei. ψ. ~~SS~~.
Φ. 9. e. h. hos fer tecum caracteres
in lineo mundo. Patrion. ceci-
noos. aglael. eloy. sabaoth. e-
liam. pine. adonay. he. breheel.
sc'rio. q. is. sodtes. saluator.
emanuel. deus. dominus. caro ueris

genitus. principium. uis. uirtus.
ueritas. vitulus. figura. petra.
dextera. splendor. aperi oculos
tuos et uide tribulacionem meam.
vide domine afflictionem meam quoniam
erecti sunt inimici mei. Extende
domine brachium tuum et libera me
per illud quia omnia cognoscis oc-
culta a peccatis meis munda me
domine per infinita secula seculorum amen.
Sanctum nomen thodeheon fortissime
deus resiste inimicis meis amen.
Ecce nomina christi. adonay. ata-
nathos. theos. panthon. tetragra-
maton. hebreel. Idum electe. cra-
ton. victe. hiemmay. erates. era-
ton. kyries kyrion. eloe. eloy.
himsion. saluator. ex te primoge-
nitus. seyros. flos. Urinos. Ere-
ne. osanna. abata. principium.
finis. uia. uita. ueritas.
atot. imago. dignamini. figura.
splendor. locei. Teon. Tear. so-
ey. hel. Clam. sapientia. lumen.
lux. paraclitus. ego sum qui
sum. Gramata. qui sit. Quem.
mediator. ela. natura. feneta.
Agnus. ouis. uitulus. serpens.
lanne. atot. flabe. panton. hec-
tion. panis. fons. flos. ianua.
lapis. petra. pastor. Tegere.

col. 2 legion. Messias. sacerdos. propheta.
sanctus immortalis. Rex. Ihesus. as. sabaoth.
deus. dominus. pater. filius hominis. spiritus
sanctus. omnipotens. misericors. redemptor.
α et ω. flo[s]. leo. karitas. fides. spes.
eternus. Creator. primus et nouissi-
mus. unitas. summum bonum. sother.
hec sunt lxxii nomina dei. et quicumque

ea super se portauerit nullus malus
homo ei nocere potest. In primo eius
diuinitatis. in isto humanitatis.
si in die obitus tui super te habebis sal-
uus eris. Sabaoth. messias. floris.
aeternus. deus. eris. abiora. ala. ocinios.
panteth. on. lux. esclofias. In nomine
sancte et indiuidue trinitatis. sancta et on.
messias. arturi. mensis. orion.
adonay. α et ω. ihesus christus. mane. ma-
nere. el. fare. h. a. 9. t. f. p̲. x.. i. c. e.
2. c. b. ze. b. s. c. x. 9. c. xx. q. mani.
proum. fe. ꝺꝼ. d. xx. dex. G. ob. et
n.s. et obus. Miserere mei domine
seu david miserere mei. da ut ui-
deam gloriam tuam. Aufer a me domine.
spiritum fornicacionis et immundicie.
tribue mihi castitatis et continencie. et
a spiritu blasphemie libera me domine.
Ecce crucem ✠ domini fugite partes
aduerse. v. l. d. t. I. r. d. Domine per
hoc admirabile nomen tuum. Iathe. li-
bera me famulum tuum. N[omen] ab omnibus
periculis et ab omnibus perfestionibus
inimicorum meorum uisibilium et inuisi-
bilium. fiat fiat fiat amen. Ange-
lus domini dedit sancto columchille episcopo
Gamata. fracotin. respaleon.
aloba. acote. pater. filius. spiritus sanctus
Rex. maior. Adiuua me domine patre
nostri ihesu christi per precorsum sancte crucis tui
lignum et misericordiam tuam amen ✠ on pater.
✠ on filius ✠ on spiritus sanctus ✠ on uer-
mis ✠ on ouis ✠ on aries ✠ on uitulus
on agnus. Domine deus per hec tria
sancta nomina. on tetragramaton. sophia.
osanna. Ihesus. saluator. messias. so-
ther. Emanuel. sabaoth. adonay
unigenitus. vita. via. manus. homo-
usion. principium. primogenitus. sapientia.

uirtus. Alpha. Caput. finis et ω
fons et origo. paraclitus. mediator.
Agnus. Craton. ysus. Gramaton. pat-
er per sanctos angelos tuos. Michaelem.
Gabrielem. Raphaelem. orielem . . .
uachielem. thobielem. Raguelem . . .
tassaronem. Cherubin et se[raphin] . . .
me semper nocte dieque des[ ] . . .
adiuua. Et hii sancti angel[i et archangeli et]
alii. et beatissima uirgo [maria]
et sanctus Iohannes baptista. et omne[s sancti patri-].
arche et prophete. et beatus . . .
i. p. p. s. m. i. m. s. i. . . .
omnes sancti discipuli d[omini. omnes sancti]
innocentes. et sancti martyres. [sancte uirgi-]
nes. et omnes sancti dei . . .
mea ambiant hoste . . .
dant michique amicorum . . .
tituant et eos custo[diat] . . .
Corpus et anima[m] . . .
quos deo acceptabiles . . .
et externis me et o[ ] . . .
muniant. manent[ ] . . .
consummacionem un[ ] . . .
concedente et adiu[uante] . . .
quicumque istas li[tteras por-]
tauerit inimicum . . .
Angelus dedit Ca[rolo regi prope-]
ranti ad bellum . . .
as inimicum aliqu[ ] . . . [nec]
potionem. nec serp[entem. nec ig-]
nem. nec pestem. n[ec] . . .
uenenum. nec mor[tem subithaneam]
peribis. et si in placiti[ ] . . .
recto non euelleris d[ ] . . .
cum semper custodia . . .

col. 3 Incipit epistola saluatoris domini nostri
ihesu christi ad abgarum regem quam
dominus noster scripsit manu sua dicens

Beatus es abgare rex qui me non
uidisti et in me credidisti. multi enim
me uiderunt et in me non crediderunt
set quia misisti ad me ut ad te ueni-
rem. scio quiadum compleuero tempus
ascendendi ad patrem meum oportet
me omnia adimplere propter quem mis-
us sum. Set dum assumptus fuero
mittam tibi illium ex discipulis
meis qui omnem languorem et omnem
infirmitatem a te auferet. Iterum
uero mitto tibi epistolam istam ma-
nu mea scriptam ut ubicumque fu-
eris uel perrexeris semper illam
tecum portabis. et saluus eris
a grandine. a pluuia. a tonitruo.
a fulgure. ab omni periculo. Nemo
inimicorum tuorum et accusaciones des-
truentur. Inmundi spiritus expellentur
saluus eris in ciuitate in domo in
agro in mari in uentis ualidis in
tempestate in carceribus in obscu-
ris locis in omnibus periculis fia[t] fiat.
Amen. Hec sunt nomina domini.
on. enofaton. el. eloe. sabaoth. eleon.
eloe. adonay. saday. Bethen. ham-
eth foras. eleyson. Imas. ely. eloe.
emanuel. diramon ipse laus. ves-
ti. adonay. Ia. anofenaton. pantather.
domine deus eterne et ineffabilis sine
fine per hec tua sancta supradicta no-
mina te deprecor ut me saluare digne-
ris ab omni malo. ab omni periculo
libera me domine sicut liberasti petrum
de carcere. Iohannem de ueneno chalarium de
ingeniis malorum hominum. et de omnibus
tribus lacionibus salua me et in ore
meo Et eloquia tua sancta semper et lo-
quatur. in me melita lingua so-
lomonis et uerba mea sint coram

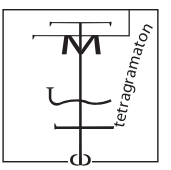
te paradisi sine fine in secula seculorum
amen. christus deus. o7. deus. og. deus. og. deus
miserere mei. amen. On. primum. no-
men domini. antequam fecisset celum
et terram postquam mundus factus
est fuit deus appellatus. og et postea
hebreyel. libyos. Ihesus. sother. sal-
uator. ara. Chelte. El. egypte. Gu-
tei. sabaoth. digmamon. adonay.
[ ]aros. ensaday. feton. tetragrama-
[ton] hecciother. wame. christus. alothath.
. . . elose. hei. heie. sanson. panthon.
. . . Region. heli. vi. tori. osanna.
. . . [ ]eoy. albata. hethona. chisoy.
. . . [ ]nus. chermia. abaton. zana-
. . . [ ]os. leo. eounctus. heretes.
. . . [ ]n. cleratos. chir. chefero-
. . . [ ]n. anatus. eogabetos. to-
. . . [ ]m. Gorleon. remani.
. . . [ ]thetion. Tuncie. tybion.
. . . [ ]. sabia. setha Adonay.
[hec sunt n]omina christi. i. nomen.
[on. hoc est] deus. ii. hely. iii. heloe.
. . . [ ] que dicitur deus. iiii. sa-
[baoth] . . . est exercituum. v. helyon.
. . . [ ]s. vi. egey. id est idem
. . . [vii] adonay. hoc est deus. viii
. . . [ ]o tamen ponitur. quod. et
. . . [ ] sillera sonat alleluya.
. . . [tetragra]maton. id est. uii. sic
. . . [id e]st lode. Iode. id est dua
. . . [s]upplicate. ineffabi-
le nomen. eg]o sum nomen domini
[ineffa]bile. x. saday. quod
. . . [ ] deus. et sancta maria
. . . [ ] meam. Agios. ara-
[ton?] [ ]on. ymas. sanctus deus.
. . . [ ] et immortalis amen.
. . . [ ] deus amen. christus uincit.
[christus regnat]. christus imperat. primum
[nomen domi]ni ante omnia nomina. on. quod-

col. 4 quod bonum est. super omne nomen Qui
istud nomen domini portauerit super se scriptum
in nomine domini saluus eret. Dyabolus ei nocere
non poterit. nec iniquus homo. nec malignus
spiritus. lan. lanay. aray. aday. la. adora.
Quisquis has litteras super se portauerit inuic-
tus permanebit. salua. har. lanaoath. la-
ba. valala. homoy. lauia. a. e. x. a. s. e.
x. G. e. p̲. qз. xx. Ioth. he. ✠ de. d. T̲. ω.
e. ✠ adonay. a. Bicton. qs. qv. Hanc fi-
guram porta tecum demon tibi nocere non poterit et
omne uinculum
ea superposita sol-
uitur cum ieiuniis et oracionibus primo
peractis. E.N.E.R. 9–c. 9–c. a et ω. 6. non
morietur morte subithanea. qua die
uideris illam. Hoc nomen amandum et glorifi-
candum et adorandum est ERAGFRARI. ualde
est optimum. et a nullo doctore unquam po-
tuit exponi. Set uere affirmo quod utile
est ad inuocandum. Eterne deus rex immorta-
lis deus inmensus atque ineffabilis qui solus
immortalitatem nostram gubernas. per hoc
ineffabilem nomen tuum quod aaron tuus sacerdos
tuo iussu per manus moysi in lamina
sacre uenerationis scriptum tetragrama-
ton in fronte sua detulit per ihesum christum fi-
lium enim dominum nostrum qui mortem nostram
moriendo destruxit. et uitam resurgen-
do reparauit per te qui uiuis. Domine
deus omnipotens per ista tua sancta nomina precor
te. ut exaudias me peccatorem clamantem
ad te. ut defendas me ab omnibus inimicis
meis et de aduersitate dyaboli ut secura
perueniat anima mea ad tuam uisio-
nem et secura perueniat et permaneat.
sine ulla dampnacione sicut permansit anima.
famuli tui moysi. cui hanc figuram
imposuisti. α et ω. primus et nouissimus
ab initio mundi in secula. uita et pace. amen.

Iothe. astad. Gaze. sother. emanuel.
Contra tempestatem hec dices nomina
et cessabit illico. Carado te benedicat.
In nomine. uia. rex. lux. emanuel. te
benedicat. In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sanctui. amen. filius
dei qui uenisti in hunc mundum redimere
nos salua me. guberna me et omnes
actus meos. uerba mea cogitationes me-
as clementissime pater. misericordis-
sime deus tibi gratias ago qui me seruas-
ti per diem et noctem. dignare me conser-
uare. et fac ob tuam gratiam timere te.
Domine deus tibi com[m]endo animam meam
et corpus meum. tetragramathon. α et ω. bene-
dicat de celo. Domine deus sabaoth. tibi com-
mendo animam meam et corpus meum. tetra-
gramaton. hel. hiros. his. kyrios. ihesus.
fortis. heloe. theos. sabaoth. sother. dig-
namyon. vesti. adonay. hely. heferrere.
saday. messias. anofaneto. pantur. a-
led. hya. flos. herenel. alabessoso. heloy.
pantor. Sephate. alai. ciriet. appo. ade-
region. abac. abacta. agnus. ouis. uitu-
lus. serpens. aries. leo. uermis. uirtus.
salus. pax. lux. Rex. lex. ala ala. forti-
tudo. potencia. patiencia. bonitas. lar-
gitas. sapientia. Imas. sanctus deus. sanctus fortis.
sanctus et immortalis. Emanuel. Garati. Ra-
di. Milas. filo. anabonas. Biroim. io-
noc. fiuce. fauti. Saruca. dorayca. la.
hωrichidal. mefron. sepharu. Batha.
azas. eloym. sess. ebeon. Erethriepte.
matheon. baruc. lamu. zabutur. Grecorum.
cielo. memaron. achedas. abrachio.
athaminis. Iram. botio. mamicata. R-
iud. achiel. sechel. temam. Gloria. lux. y-
mago. uerbum. Ichtus. inceptor. laus.
factor. benedictio. Unctus. spiritus. dominus. deus.
Id est emanuel. ihesus. christus. on. usion. ara-
ton. iothe. uau. he. heseria. suddia. cus-

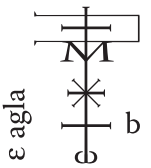
todi me. adiuua me. libera me. trinitas
sancta omnipotens deus ab omnibus periculis
terre. domine deus emanuel. tibi est nomen.
omnipotens pater. propicius sis michi

col. 5 peccatori. Benedictus deus israel. digna-
re saluare. ely. ely. lamazabatani. hoc
est deus meus ne dereliquas me. nec [di-]
[mittas] me in ullum peccatum cadere. nec o-
pus illud facere unde te offendam. set
salua me. ex omnibus angustiis et tri-
bulationibus meis. Adonay magne et
mirabilis. terribilis. et iustus. pius. et lau[d]-
abilis. fortis et clemens. Si aliquando
miserere mei. Dominus ihesus christus nazarenus
crucifixus. propicius sis michi peccatori.
Domine. on. pater omnipotens. Imploro te exoro
te regna in me. regna pro me. Deus
magne in dignitate me saluare et ad-
iuuare et custodiare. deus uere mise-
ricors miserere mei. Rex sanctorum erat [ ]
me amantem te confidentem in te. In te
credo deus uiue et uere pater meus sine
fine. Sancte trine. deus. uere. omnipotens. pater
miserere mihi peccatori. amen. a. x. e. e. d.
i. x. p. v. o. pq9'. x. x. Contra tempesta-
tem hec dices nomina et cessabit ilico
Carado. s[ ]. enoc. sancta [ ]. te benedicat. In
nomine patris et filii et spiritus sanctui amen. Flamma. Rex.
emanuel te benedicat. In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti.



Hoc signum dedit an-
gelus domini sancto colum-
bano episcopo siquis fide-
lis hanc figuram in
qua scripta sunt no-
mina dei ineffabilia super se habuerit
nulla uis dyaboli aduersus eum pre-
ualebit. nec ullum uenenum nec po-
cio nec pocio mortifera super eum potes-
tatem habebit. et omnes inimici

eius uerebunt eum. et si te eum
quasi mortui stabunt. Hec nomina
dei sunt apud hebreos quibus deus
nominatur. Quicumque ea super se
portauerit. signe. nec in aqua. nec in iu-
dicio. nec in armis. peribit. hel. heloy.
iohel. hele. adonay. sabaoth. tetragra-
maton. Ioth. hely. samo. hec sunt
nomina. nostri saluatoris nemo nomina-
re debet nisi pro timo-
re mortis. abya. ocin-
hos. panomem. Qui-
cumque super se portauerit
saluus erit. in domo.



in agro. in bello. in nemore. in uia.
in aquis. et in omnibus locis. Set ca-
ueat ne inmundo loco mittatur
pater. et pax amen. Et si mulier preg-
nans super se habuerit non morietur
de partu. amen. hoc est nomen composi-
tum. ⓨⓨ. ex quatuor. litteris. set. x. r.
pluribus modis sic. a. d. e. o. a. Qui-
cumque littera[s] istas. uult probare pri-
uatus oportet septem missas desu-
per cantare. cotidie ieiunare. ele-
mosinas. ccc.lxvi. facere uiduis
et orphanis dare. totum psalterium
legere.

Hoc est ✡ magnum nomen domini ⓘ ineff-
fabile x. Iothe. Ivathe.

Dominus leo papa misit istas litteras
karolo magno properanti ad bellum
quas angelus domini sancto Gregorio
detulit et quas omnes christiani in super
se portare debent. b. d. u. g. u. m. f.
y. x. s. n. u. e. p. xx. y. p. s. k. a. p. g.
z. f. x. p'. p'. c'. v. o. d. d. N. g. xx. y. 9s9.
q. r. q. q. qq. Hoc est magnum nomen domini

ineffabile. Iothhe. vathhe. serla. s3
h'. s'. amen. a. n. a. o. le. pa. Galas. erump-
no. Iunas. pandite. Lutum fecit dominus
ex sputo et liniuit oculos ceci nati
sic abiit et lauit et uidit et redidit
deo. agyos. agyos. agyos. alpha
et ω. sanctus. sanctus. sanctus. fortis. sanctus. et immor-
talis. Agnus dei qui tollit peccata mundi

col. 6 miserere mei famuli tui. N[omen]. libera me
a dolore oculi mei amen. christus uincit. christus
regnat. christus imperat. amen. In epheso ci-
uitate cheleon. Ibi requiescunt vii
dormientes. malcus. martinianus.
maximianus. constantinus. Iohannes. Se-
rephion. Dionisius. per eorum piam inter-
cessionem dignetur dominus mittere so-
porem in famulum tuum N[omen]. et liberare
eum dignetur ab omni malo. Sicut
uere credimus quod sancta maria uerum
infantem genuit christum. sic retine in
uera uena tuum sanguinem. In no-
mine patris et filii et spiritu sancti amen. Pater noster iii. Sancta
✠ libera eam. a perfluo sanguinis amen.
9–c. x. r. r. a. x. p. x. x. p. x. x. s. x. x. 9–c.
rr. x. f. x. x. p. x. x. x. 9–c. In nomine domine. deo. x. anne.
ubi. expertum est et perflua mulieris
casu mirabili. Scribe hos caracteres in uno
breui et super pectus liga et statim res-
tringet. et si hiis litteris non credis. scribe
in quodam cultello et iugula porcum. et
non exiet sanguis. hercum. her. et her. q3.
herbutum. her. et her. iniheuim. Gonturebi-
ror. hergenere. stelle. babilone. et de-
lum. et dolam. et duciem esal'. aue.
auer. arecha. her. sanctus. reix. sanctus uaal-
as purpuereatur. sanctus cassias. huma.
iabr. humam. mutat non habet. Deus
in nomine tuo saluum me fac. christus natus.
christus unctus. christus lancea perforatus fuit.

recede sanguinis effusio. a famulo
dei. In nomine domini nostri ihesu christi. probo.
hominem munificauit nullam malam.
In nomine filii dei recede. In nomine
spiritus sancti conclude. Deus ultionum dominus
deus u[ltionum] li[bere] e[git]. Beronica mulier teti-
git uestimentum domini statim cessauit
sanguis. ayos. ayos. ayos. sanctus deus.
sanctus fortis. sanctus et immortalis. miserere.
F[iat] t[ibi]. Inter uestibulum et altare occisus
est zakarius et coagulatus est sanguis
eius. dominus ihesus in flumine iordanis bap-
tizatus est. sicut unde stetet sic stet
sanguis eius. amen amen. Crucifixus est.
In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti. Pater noster.
iii. quando dominus in cruce missus est
longinus lancea perforauit latus eius
et exiuit sanguis et aqua. de sanctis uir-
tutibus quas deus fecit coniuro te
sanguis. ut non exeas amplius ad hoc
christiano. iii. Adonay domine. deus mag-
ne et mirabilis qui es iustus et mi-
sericors et inmensus. ego omnium
miserimus miserorum tam requiro mi-
seratione pro miseriis meis et uni-
uersorum. ut secundum tuam misericordiam
tuis omnibus miserearis mortuis ui-
uentibus et natituris et quamuis
me faciat magnitudo peccati indignum
a te respici. uel audiri. tunc curare tibi
de omnibus eo quod dominus es omnium
non tamen de mea malignitate despero.
quantum de tua bonitate confido. Unde
ergo creatura tua te deum creatorem
meum suppliciter imploro et audiet[ur?]
et postulo ut opus manuum tuarum mi-
chi inet et ipsi porrigas. misericorditer
ad destruendum quod mens mea iuste
odit. et formidat. et ad faciendum
quod iuste animus diligit et perop-

tat. Quia uero non possum corpora-
liter celum ascendere. et te deum
sabaoth in maiestate aspicere. Hic
ubi te requiri precepisti et promisisti
a fidelibus inuenturi in uirtute mis-
terii tui te adoro. et misericordie tue te
laudo. In uerbo ueritatis tue te
glorifico. tu quo totius nostre redemp-
tionis consummatur perfectio. hic
omnipotens clementia. et clemens omni-
potentia. suspiria. et singultus.
et lacrimas effundere concedas. Si
de sepulcro cordis. ostiura ores aperias

col. 7 ut de isto nominatim negocio. hic pete
quod uis. ex quo intrui secus tanta in-
tencione sum per motus dolorem attendas.
clamorem audias. laborem despicias.
infirmum cures. lapsum releues. mes-
sum letifices. uincula soluas. argumen-
tum totius expedimenti expedias. uia
indeclinabili. meipsum inducas. et ad
tuam laudem meam salutem desiderum
meum ad impleas magna quidem
potes. inpossibilia cupio promereri. sed
tu maiora gratis dare. et iam in gratiam
[nostram]. verum et sic huiusmodi. cuncta
sic et tua pietate surgant. ut tantum
ista facilius de celerrime super indig-
num ascendant. quoniam ad hec obtinendi
siue minor minimo illud in adiutorium
inuoco. quod in nomen tue maiestatis et
glorie. tetragramaton sanctissimum quod
indignus scire. necnon etiam nomina-
re nec coiunctione sillabarum profero
set etiam tamen earum diuisiones sil-
labarum persono. Ioth. ω. beth. ut huius
sancti in uirtus nominis tui efficaciter com-
pleat. quod pura mens deuocio tam
fideliter clamat. Cum uero. tu qui es

ueritas inuiolabilis. permittas or[at]iones
insubstantiam et tanti nominis in-
uocatione nullatenus att[ ].
tibi equidem subiecta sunt singula et mi-
rabiliter seruiunt uniuersa de quibuscumque
predicatur discernere. uiuere. sen-
tire. esse. Sicut enim que ea discerunt
narratione eaque sine sensu uiuunt
eaque que sine uita subsistunt in cog-
nicione non erraui a subiectione non
claudicant. dum instituta seruator
et disposita non mutant. Licet [non] qui-
buscumque naturarum alie ab aliis
in semen[ ] dissenciant tunc omnes
creature in te solo creatore se concor-
dant. nulle quippe earum plenitudine
carent. set omnes omnia in te uno
possident. hoc catholice credens con-
credendo confitens. et confitendo ante
sacra altare siue ante presentiam tuam
unum deum eternem inuisibilem
per hoc tuum sanctum et uniuersis tam
notum et admirabile nomen tuum. obse-
cro. ut sicut nichil est possibile tibi.
qui ex nichilo cuncta creasti. sic osten-
dam ex meo magno desiderio satis-
facere michi. Exaudi domine. placare domine.
Attende et fac. ne moreris per teipsum
deus meus quia uocatum est nomen
tuum sanctum super me mihi tam terribile et
amabile omnibus diebus tunc et ante
secula. Amen. Initium mundi. consum-
macio. secula. uita. pax. Ego sum alpha
et ω. primus et nouissimus. In no-
mine patris quesiui te. In nomine
filii inueni te. in nomine spiritu sancti.
deleto te super aspidem et basilis-
cum et cetera. Longinus miles perfora-
uit latus domini. et recessit dolor. agyos.
agyos. agyos. crux christi. crux christi. crux
christi. signaculum christi. bicoronis.

col. 8 de coronis. de dedi[ ] . . .
bis coronis [cunctis?] spiritus christus sanctus
spiritus abraham fid[ ] diui-
na. inclina. digna sancta
saturnina. agyos. agyos. agyos.
sanctus. sanctus. sanctus. dominus deus [sabaoth]
qui eras. et qui es et qui uen-
turus es. adiuro te [per diem.]
In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti
[ ] ab isto N. euanescat am-
plius non credens amen. Pater noster.

✠ Ihesus nazarenus rex iu-
deorum. ecce [crucem domini nostri. ecce]
signum uiuifice [crucis dominicum. fugite]
partes aduerse uincit leo de tribu
iuda radix david alleluia. pater noster
et ne nos. ego nob[ ] . . .
for. a facie inimici. domine . . .
[ ]. Omnipotente sempiterne domine
miserere supplicauit pa[ ] . . .
tuentibus. ut post . . .
uel ignes . . .
in materiam tue laudis . . .
comminatio potestatis ✠ agla ✠
yabe. homos. e[ ]. occinoos.
patrion. usion. Hec nomina habes
quando audies . . .
in igne in armis et . . .
rium ad placitum . . .
tonitruo que . . .
omnis enim de . . .
per quem hec omnia [domine semper bona]
creas sanctificas [uiuificas benedictis]
et prestas nobis [per ipsum et in ip-]
so ✠ [et cum] ipso [est tibi deo patri]
omnipotenti [in unitate spiritus sancti]
honor et gloria per omnia [secula seculorum]
preceptis salutar[ibus moniti et di-]
uina institutione [formati audemus]

dicere. pater noster amen . . .
lis salutaris. [ihesus] naza-
renus rex iudeorum. [michael]
cum mane leuaueris [in men-]
te et letum diem [habebis.]
cum tonat et non [nocebit tibi. orie-]
lem in mente habe contra adue[uersa-]
rium. et eum uincis. Raphaelem
cum panem aut potum [intaminas et omnia]
tibi habundabunt. Raguel cum in
iter acceperis et nichil [nocebit.]
Barachielem et thobielem cum iu-
dicium ueneris et omnia explica-
bis. Panteserouem cum con-
uiuium ueneris. et omnes congaudebunt.

aay
ehp9
cunøn ✞
øωϥ
yyϥ øωoω
ya

cols. 7–8 El flum iurdan. ceut suns seignee . . .
Chescun home ceste ueine. a. estancher . . .
ne uostre sanc. par la fei que deus. a. madame seinte ma-
rie se seont sur ces senors uerrai enfant ce niout. neuve. me-
re. uerai enfant estancher ueine nostre sanc. par le dampnedeu co-
mand. Pater noster treis foit.

Canterbury Amulet: Seals and Figures with Legends

recto

col. 1–2 ωv ferli ste taan prp p.ϩ pac est pan gxv iω prp ϩpsxp chmim im ni
ter ra gyvbb svat ω.

col. 3 Hoc est ineffabile nomen dei. Nomos. aneba. yno. abla. tu. vothe9
N[ ] altes rex. ✞ r. patris ✞ regi quam prestit ✞ beni ✞ rex tera
Iothe. adonay. on.

col. 4 In quacumque die uiderit hoc signum non peribis morte subithanea

Hoc signum porta tecum demon
tibi nocere non poterit. set in omni
loco saluus eris

col. 5 In quacumque die uideris
hoc signum non ingulaber-
beris auraiando uermina.

Qui cotidie istam figuram
secum tulerit ignis ei non noce-
bit neque aqua si tantum
in deum crediderit

col. 6 ✞ agla ✞ panoneth ✞ ocino~~t t~~os. spiritus sanctus. baya elcha alla agla.

Angelus domini dedit hic figuram si[c]-
ut hanc figuram sancto columchille episcopo
te po. pax. rex. ux. atex. on. era-
ton, tetragramaton Soter cui pri-
mum nomen est on. ubique totus
tibi sanguis uel humoris substan-
tia celestem fecit carnem accessit
spiritus sanctus et quicumque erant inglu-
gillo [ ] amando for-
mauit. formata distruere. et
anima hominem animauit.

Hoc est signum regis salomo-
nis quo demones in puteo signa-
lauit. qui super se portauerit a nocen-
tibus saluus erit. et si demon ei ap-
paruerit iubeat ei quicumque uolue-
rit et obediet ei dominus enim ad hoc opus de-
dit salomoni: ut demones compelleret.

pater. iectanu. christus. abiel. heloy. mi-
serere mei ~~ttt~~ in qua e-
rat inclus deus lamentis fuit
tenebatur.

col. 7 Hanc scripturam dedit angelus . . .
morte subithanea . . .

col. 8 Hic angelus . . .
. . .
. . .
. . .
. . .
Homo . . .
[ ] ω
aliud habiet . . .
lapide adducere . . .
quicum approp[ ] . . .
tis statim por . . .
terre. per huius
nominis et pist[ ] . . .
lir[ ] . . .
litatis [ ] prosperit aliquis . . .
ac tamen ne . . .
quod si fecerat . . .
uiat non morieris . . .
uel morte subithanea morieris . . .

ab
abr
abra
abrac
abraca
abracal
abracala
abracalab
abracala
abracal
abraca
abrac
abra
abr
ab

a
ab
abr
abra
abrac
abraca
abracal
abracala
abracalab
abracalabr
abracalabra
abracalabr
abracalab
abracala
abracal
abraca
abrac
abra
abr
ab
a

VERSO

col. 1 Qui istam figuram secum habuerit ignis eum non ardebit
In quacumque uideris hoc signum non peribis
Contra tempestatem

col. 2 ✠ [ ] Bmborbener
Qua die hoc signum uideris non ingulaberis nec igne nec aqua peribis

col. 3 ✠ Angelus domini dedit hoc signum carolo regi
In quacumque die hoc signum uideris non ingulaberis
Hanc figuram porta tecum omne uinculum soluet
Quando audieris tonitruum respice hoc figuram

col. 4 ✠ Angelus domini ostendit sancto columbano hanc figuram
Iaoth. fi. herb. la. ubn cnnyabcde ω cum ꝯ ay

APPENDIX 2:

French or Burgundian Amulet Roll, early fifteenth century (private collection)

1 Incipiunt Nomina sancta Ihesu christi
2 Messias ✞ sother ✞ emanuel ✞ sabaoth ✞ adonay
3 ✞ est unigenitus ✞ via vita ✞ manus ✞ homousion
4 ✞ principium ✞ sapientia ✞ virtus ✞ alpha ✞ caput ✞ finisque ✞
5 simul ✞ uocitatur est ✞ fons ✞ et origo ✞ boni ✞ paraclitus ✞
6 et mediator ✞ agnus ✞ ouis ✞ vitulus ✞ serpens ✞ nomen ✞ veritas ✞
7 leo ✞ vermis ✞ ω ✞ verbum ✞ splendor ✞ sol ✞ gloria ✞ lux ✞ ym-
8 ago ✞ panis ✞ vitis ✞ janua ✞ petra ✞ lapisque
9 In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti amen Primum
10 nomen predictum ✞ Deus ✞ Sancta maria in presepio
11 iacebat sancta maria magnifico dolore plangebat Con-
12 iuro tetragramaton per triginta milia angelorum et per tri-
13 ginta milia archangelorum et per duodecim apostolos et per triginta
14 milia martirorum et per totidem confessorum ut non habeas licenciam
15 illud dilatorem huius brevis ab hodie usque in annos xxxgin[ta]
16 sit sanitas in illo pax super illis fiat fiat Amen
17 Ait Abgarus rex mitto tibi epistolam
18 meam et in manu mea scriptam Ut ubicumque ambula-
19 ueris siue in domo siue in ciuitate siue in flumine siue in omni
20 loco non agitaberis uel ab igne uel ab aqua non oporteat
21 te timere inimicus tuus vel aduersarius non dominabitur
22 tibi neque incidias diaboli tenebris et de omnibus in mundum
23 periculis liberaberis AGLA Qualis pater talis
24 filius talis et spiritus sanctus ✞ Alpha ✞ ω rex vite remedium

Don C. Skemer, "Amulet Rolls and Female Devotion in the Late Middle Ages," *Scriptorium* 40, no. 2 (2001): 224–27, plate 51. See the opening paragraph of Appendix 1 for an explanation of the conventions of the transcription.

25 Domine ne derelinque me huius latorem ✞ heloy ✞ adonay ✞ te-
26 tragramaton ✞ sadar ✞ indominibilis ✞ incorruptibilis ✞ eternus ✞ pos-
27 ibilis ✞ veritas ✞ vita ✞ ymago ✞ figura ✞ virtus ✞ sapiencia ✞
28 splendor ✞ lumen ✞ seu lux ✞ mediator ✞ paraclitus
29 In nomine meo demonia eicient linguis loquentur nouis
30 serpentes tollent Et si mortiferum quid biberint non eis
31 nocebit super egros manus imponent et bene habebunt Do-
32 mine liberasti tres pueros de camino ignis ardentis sydrac
33 misac et abdenago danielem de lacu leonum Jonam de ventre ceti
34 teclam de bestis susannam de falso crimine petrum de mari et vinculis
35 et cathenis paulum de carcere libera me de isto langore et omni
36 crimine et a presenti tribulatione in quo sum miserere mei Exaudi me
37 sicut exaudisti mariam et martham deprecor sancte petre cla-
38 uiger celi ut absoluare me a peccatis meis et da me domine ihesu christe
39 in manus tuas de celo ut vincat omnes aduersarios meos contrarios meos
40 in nomine dei patris et per virtutem sancte ✞ crucis libera me de inimicis
41 meis Si mulier laboret in partu ponet hoc breue sub dextra
42 mamilla et illuc deo auxiliante in fide subsequente de partu suo
43 liberabit se ✞ tetragramatio ✞ messias ✞ sother ✞ emanuel ✞ sab-
44 baoth ✞ adonay ✞ agyos ✞ otheos ✞ istiros ✞ athanathas ✞ eleyson ✞
45 ysmas ✞ sanctus deus ✞ sanctus fortis ✞ sanctus et immortalis Lectio secun-
46 In illo tempore factum est autem -dum lucam
47 cum loqueretur Ihesus ad turbas extollens vocem quedam mulier
48 de turba dixit illi beatus venter qui portauit et ubera que suscisti
49 At ille dixit Quynimo beati qui audiunt verbum dei et custodiunt
50 illud ✞ Nomina septem dormientium in monte celyon requiesit-
51 ium ✞ Malcus ✞ maximianus ✞ martinianus ✞ constantinus ✞
52 ✞ dyonisus ✞ johannes ✞ seraphyon Contra fluxum sanguinis
53 Longinus miles lancea latus christi perforauit et continuo exi-
54 uit sanguis et aqua sanguis Redemptione nostre aqua baptisma-
55 lis In nomine huius sanguinis et aque Restet hec unda sanguinis
56 Omnipotens sempiterne Oratio sancti sigismundi regis amen
57 deus qui per sanctos apostolos et martires et martiris contra febres
58 tuos diversa sanitatum dona largiri dignatus es da quos uel presentem
59 famulum tuum quia febrium vexatione fatigatum per In-
60 tercessorem sigismundi regis et martiris tui medicina
61 erigat ad salutem et ad sanitatem pristinam clementer revo-
62 care dignetur Per christum dominum nostrum Amen Secundum Johannem
63 In principio erat verbum et verbum erat apud deum et deus
64 erat verbum Hoc erat in principio apud deum omnia per

65 Ipsum facta sunt ✠ et sine ipso factum est nichil Quod factum
66 est in ipso vita erat et vita erat lux hominum et lux in tenebris
67 lucet et tenebre eam non comprehenderunt Fuit homo missus
68 a deo cui nomen erat Johannes Hic venit in testimonium ut
69 testimonium periberet de lumine ut omnes crederent per Illum Non
70 erat ille lux sed ut testimonium periberet de lumine Erat
71 lux vera que illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum
72 In mundo erat et mundus per Ipsum factus est et mundus eum
73 non cognouerit In propria venit et sui eum non Receperunt
74 Quot quot autem receperunt eum dedit eis potestatem
75 filios dei fieri hiis qui credunt in nomine eius Qui non ex san-
76 guinibus neque ex voluntate carnis neque ex voluntate viri
77 sed ex deo nati sunt Et verbum caro factum est et habitabit
78 in nobis Et vidimus gloriam eius gloriam quasi unigeniti a patre
79 plenum gratie et veritatis deo gratias Lectio secundum mattheum
80 In Illo tempore cum venisset Ihesus in domum petri vi-
81 dit socrum petri jacentem et febricitantem et teti-
82 git manum eius et dimisit eum febris et surrexit et minis-
83 trabat illis Vespere autem facto obtulerunt ei multos
84 demonia habentes et eiciebat spiritus verbo Et omnes male
85 habentes curauit Ut adimpleretur quod dictum est per ysayam
86 prophetam dicentem ipse infirmitates nostras portauit
87 et egrotationes accepit Deo gratias Amen

APPENDIX 3:

Italian Amulet, late fifteenth century (Princeton University Library, John Hinsdale Scheide Collection, no. 7923)

1 Yhesus
2 In nomine patris et filii et spiritus santi amen ✞ christus est uera salus ✞ christus superat ~~gla~~
3 gladium ✞ christus sit semper mecum ✞ christus volui vincula ✞christus nobis signum ✞ christus sit semper sit
4 semper ante me et postea me comuniter maledittus diabolus me vidit ✞ ely ✞ eloy ✞ tetragra-
5 maton ✞ Adonay ✞ fons vivus ✞ christus fortis contra Diabolum ✞ et pater et filius et spiritus sanctus
6 amen. yhesus christus redime famulum tuum ab omnibus aduersariis suis per Dominum nostrum yhesum christum
7 amen. In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti amen. Nota che ai a dire ogne di cinque ave marie
8 et cinque pater nostri
9 ✞ ✞ ✞ M ✞ N ✞ O ✞ pax christi sit semper cum Illioneo ✞ ✞ ✞ V ✞ D ✞ M ✞ O ✞ S ✞ FA
10 ✞ ely ✞ eloy Alfa et o ✞ tu fons origho ✞ amen ✞ Adonai ✞ ad uiam id[ ] sis
11 propitium famulo tuo Illioneo et custodi me ab omni malo amen christus amen. transiens
12 per medium illorum ibat in pace. si ergo me queritis sinite hos abire consumatum
13 est. sanctus andreas sanctus Jacobus sanctus petrus sanctus paulus sanctus
14 thomas sanctus Joannes sanctus barnabas sanctus simon sanctus bartholomeus

Don C. Skemer, "Written Amulets and the Medieval Book," *Scrittura e civiltà* 23 (1999): 303–5, plate. See the opening paragraph of Appendix 1 for an explanation of the conventions of the transcription.

15 judas cum phylippus Jacobus Matteus Mathias sanctus gregorius sanctus nicolaus
16 sanctus Michael sancta maria mater dei ecce filius tuus. Deinde dixit discipulo
17 ecce mater tua ely ely lamaza batani. hoc est deus meus ut quidem dereliquisti me.
18 sit [ ] pater in manus tuas Domine commendo spiritum meum. consumatum est hodie
19 eris mecum in paradiso ✞ ✞ ✞ ✞ In principio erat verbum et verbum erat apud deum et
20 deus erat verbum. hoc erat in principo [sic] apud deum omnia per ipsum fatta sunt et sine epso
21 fattum est nihil quod fattum est in ipso vita erat et vita erat lux hominum et
22 lux in tenebre lucet et tenebre eam nos comprenderunt fuit homo missus a deo
23 cui nomen erat Joannes hic venit in testimonium ut testimonium periberet de
24 lumine. ut omnen crederent per illum non erat ille lux sed ut testimonium periberet de lumine erat lux vera
25 que Illuminat omnen hominem venientem in hunc mundum in mundus erat et mun-
26 dus per ipsum fattum est et mundus eum non cogniovit. in propria venit et sui eum non
27 receperunt quotquot autem receperunt eum dedit eis potestatem filios dei fieri his qui
28 credunt in nomine eius qui non ex sanguinibus neque ex voluntate carnis ne-
29 que es voluntat [sic] viri sed ex deo nati sunt et verbum caro fattum est et vidi-
30 mus gloriam eius et gloriam quasi unigeniti a patri plenum gratie et verita-
31 tis. Deo gratias. Benedittum sit dulce nomen Domini nostri yesu christi et nomen
32 beatissime virginis marie matris eius in eternum.

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