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PERSONAL AND PLACE NAMES IN ENGLISH VERBAL CHARMS

Abstract. One of characteristic features of verbal charms (French: *charmes*; German: *Segen*; Italian: *scongiuri*, Russian: *zagovory*, Finnish: *loitsut*) is the presence in them of personal and place names. In this paper I comment on the English charms corpus, and most especially those charms which possess a narrative element (or, *historiola*), which feature characters and locations. I discuss those personal and place names (which are surprisingly few in number). As well as touching upon etymological issues, the paper also comments on the role that names played within the inner logic of verbal charms.

The following paper discusses names as found in charms. By the term 'charm' (or more properly, 'verbal charm'), I refer to those relatively fixed sets of words, which, when they were spoken, were meant to bring about a change in the real world. Such effects were typically believed to be the curing of a disease, the locating of stolen property, or the revelation of information regarding whether one would marry (and if so to whom). In other words, what we are talking about is a traditional verbal genre halfway between spell and prayer, found traditionally in every European country. Records of charms in English survive from the late Anglo-Saxon period. And traditional charming continued in England for a remarkably long time, at least until the post Second World War period (although this was not as long as certain other European countries, where it still continues in a traditional form today). There were often rules governing the transmission of charms from one speaker to another, and there were all sorts of caveats about who could be a legitimate speaker of a charm, and also various conditions, including preconditions and postconditions, that needed to be met to ensure the charm's success (and were no doubt also useful in explaining cases of failure). While most charms were for speaking aloud (often in a mumbling tone), others were to be written down and used as talismans. I intend to speak no more today however, about charming as an activity, but to concentrate upon the charms as texts.

Charms are, amongst other things, an interesting source of linguistic data, and, as such, have been drawn upon to supply citations for headwords in the *Middle English Dictionary* and in the *English Dialect Dictionary*. However, while we might hope that a vernacular genre with a sub-

stantial set of textual witnesses for a period of over a millennium might be able to supply us with a great number of names, it has rather to be admitted straight off that the corpus of English verbal charms, unlike that of other traditional genres, such as ballads,[1] presents somewhat slim pickings for the names scholar. Some of the reasons for this relate to the characteristics of the genre. Charms at their simplest are bald commands. This, by the way, is what distinguishes them from prayers, which petition rather than command – although the borderline between the two genres is not completely hard and fast. An example of a simple command is the following charm intended to avert the bad luck arising from seeing a magpie:

> I cross the Magpie,
> The magpie crosses me,
> Bad luck to the magpie,
> And good luck to me.[2]

Practically the only form of names to feature in such short commands is the name of the addressee. A Swedish scholar, Bengt af Klintberg has claimed that the original form of such invocations was to name the addressee three times,[3-4] which later developed in Sweden at least into an alliterating pattern of noun-noun-adjective. Examples of this later pattern "Mara mara minna",[5] "Bölde, bölde blå",[6] "Näck, näck, nålatjuv",[7] and

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[1] For a discussion of names in ballads see Richmond, W. Edson, 'Ballad Place Names', "Journal of American Folklore", vol.lix (1946), 263-7; Nicolaisen, W.F., 'Place-Names in Traditional Ballads', "Folklore", vol.lxxxiv (1973), 299-312, 'Personal Names in Traditional Ballads: A Proposal for a Ballad Onomasticon', "Journal of American Folklore", vol.xciv (1981), 229-31, and '"There was a Lord in Ambertown": Fictitious Names in the Ballad Landscape', in eds Edwards, Carol, and Manley, Kathleen, *Narrative Folksong – New Directions: Essays in Appreciation of W. Edson Richmond*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1985), pp.71-81.

[2] Henderson, William, *Notes on the Folk-Lore of the Northern Counties of England and the Borders: a New Edition with many Additional Notes* (London: W. Satchell, Peyton for the Folk-Lore Society, 1879), p.128.

[3] "I sin ursprungligaste form är den ett direkt anrop, ofte återtaget så att det magiska tretalet uppstår" ["In its most original form it is a direct call to someone, in many cases repeated so that the magical number of three will be reached"], af Klintberg, B., *Svenska trollformler* 2nd edn (Stockholm: Wahlström och Widstrand, 1980).

[4] "Den utforming som varit vanligast i Sverige nöjer sig dock med att nämna namnet två gånger och istället tillfoga ett tredje, ofta allittererat ord som ger någon ytterligare beskrivning av det onda" ["the pattern that has been the most common in Sweden is content with mentioning the name twice and, instead, adds a third, often alliterating word that will supply a further description of the evil"], af Klintberg (1980), p. 40.

[5] From a nightmare charm, op cit., p. 76. It translates as "Nightmare, nightmare, remember".

[6] From a charm to treat boils, op cit., p. 77. It translates as "Boil, boil blue".

[7] From a charm to bind nuckers (water-elves) while bathing, i.e to prevent drowning, op cit., p. 98. It translates as "Nucker, nucker, needle-thief".

"Rosen, rosen röd".[8] Both of Klintberg's patterns are also found in West Germanic, for example, the Old English *Wen charm* begins, "Wenne, wenne, wennichene", and in the German material we find the following opening: "Wuth, Wuth, du wüthende Wuth".[9] However the more common practice in English command charms is to simply name the addressee twice. Examples of this include "Ladybird, ladybird", "Snail, snail", "Ashentree, ashentree", "Crow, crow", "Ague, ague", etc. We are told by grammarians that the equivalent of the vocative in English is formed by O standing before a noun as in Latin, but given that the earliest cited example of O "standing before a noun in the vocative relation" the *Oxford English Dictionary* lists is c1205, it might thus be thought unlikely to be the original mode of invocation in English. I suggest that it is more likely that reduplicative naming was the traditional vocative (or equivalent of the vocative) in English, for example, 'Ladybird, ladybird' rather than 'O Ladybird'. We might note in this connection the occurrence of reduplicated invocations in other traditional verbal genres: nursery rhymes ("Mary, Mary, quite contrary"); imitations of bird song ("Peewit, peewit, I coup'd and I rue it"); and Märchen ('Mirror, mirror on the wall').

To return to the matter in hand however, we should note that beyond rather bald commands, there are various other ways in which charms can be more elaborate, the most important of which is to preface these commands with very short narratives, thus giving us what is called a 'narrative charm'. As an example of a narrative charm, we can take a text recorded in mid nineteenth century Devon, and which was intended for healing sprained limbs. Firstly, the protagonist is named and located: "As our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was riding into Jerusalem,", then the crisis whereby the injury came about is described "His horse tripped and sprained his leg.". Next, the healing process is described: "Our blessed Lord and Saviour blessed it, and said-", and then the words that Jesus is supposed to have used to cure a sprain follow in direct speech "Bone to bone, and vein to vein, O vein turn to thy rest again!". The narrative is then applied to the current situation: "N.N. so shall thine", and a conventionally Christian ratification closes the charm: "In the name

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[8] From a charm to treat erysipelas ("the rose"), op cit., p. 71. It translates as "Rose, rose red". In this Scandinavian context, one might also note the opening of a charm recorded in Shetland: "Ringworm! ringworm red!" Dunrossness, 'Shetland Folk Lore', "Notes and Queries", first series, vol.iv (1851), 500.

[9] Hampp, I., *Beschwörung, Segen, Gebet. Untersuchungen zum Zauberspruch aus dem Bereich der Volksheilkunde* (Stuttgart: Veröffentlichungen des Staatlichen Amtes für Denkmalpflege Stuttgart, 1961), p. 119. It translates as "Fury, fury, you furious fury". The *Wen charm* is from MS London British Library Royal 4A xiv, f.106v.

etc."[10] This bipartite structure of very short narrative (the technical term for which is 'historiola') and application is also to be found in a written charm recorded at a similar date in Herefordshire. Firstly, the suffering character is named and located: "As peter was standing before the gates of Jerusalem." The healing character addresses the sufferer in direct speech: "Our Saviour Jesus Christ called peter and said come away Peter." The sufferer reveals his ailment, also in direct speech: "Peter answered and said Lord my teeth does ache and therefore I cannot come." The ailment is then cured: "Jesus answered and said come away, away from the Evil toothache and immediately the toothache left him." The precedent of this cure is then applied to the present, firstly in general: "Then Peter prayed and said Good Lord might it please the that whosoever shall carry this word [,] their teeth shall have no power to hurt or harm them".[11]

So while we might not expect bald commands to have much of onomastic interest in them, we might expect that narrative charms would, by warrant of the fact that they usually contain both protagonists and locations. And yet, while the protagonists are nearly always named, the number of personal names is very small. In other words, though we have many tokens, we have few types. And again, while the location of the action is usually mentioned, often what we have are references to areas such as "the bridge", "the road", "the hill", rather than specific place-names.

Despite this, there is still enough data to state that the three most popular figures in the historiolas of English narrative charms are Jesus, Peter and Mary,[12] in that order, that the most popular settlement names are Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the most popular hill name is 'Mount Olivet' (the Mount of Olives)[13] and the most popular hydronym is the River Jordan. These results clearly show the Biblical, and specifically New Testament, character of the landscape and personnel of English narrative charms.

The greatest twentieth-century charms scholar, Ferdinand Ohrt, sug-

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[10]   T., H.G., 'Charms from Devonshire', "Notes and Queries", first series, vol.iii (1851), 258.

[11]   The charm continues, but for our purposes this fragment is sufficient to illustrate the structure of historiola and application: Leather, Ella Mary, *The Folk-Lore of Herefordshire, Collected from Oral and Printed Sources* (Hereford/London: Jakeman & Carver/Sidgwick & Jackson, 1912), pp.74-75.

[12]   Often the spellings of the personal names are sometimes quite non-standard. For historical linguists, the many occurrences of the names of three main personages, could be useful additional evidence of historical and dialectal sound forms.

[13]   But in Russian material, Mount Zion and Sinai are more popular than the Mount of Olives.

gests that for German material the results as regards personal names are similar, the most popular figures there being Jesus, Mary and Peter, respectively – a sign no doubt of the greater strength of Catholicism, especially in southern Germany, but still essentially the same personnel. Likewise, Jekaterina Velmezova's study of Czech incantations mentions the most popular named personage in charms is Jesus Christ, followed by other holy personages are most of all those connected with the main events in Jesus' life.[14] And elsewhere in Europe, charms-scholars from Sweden and Estonia have suggested to me that these three figures are similarly popular in their own corpora.[15]

It is not until we turn to the Russian material that we find significantly different results. The surviving corpus of Russian charms is much larger than the English one,[16] and this has enabled the researcher Aleksei Judin to produce an *onomasticon* of Russian charms.[17] From his material, it is possible to draw up not just a top three, but a top thirty of personal names in Russian charms. It begins as follows: Jesus, Archangel Michael, Mary, St. George, St. Nicholas, Ss Cosmas and Damian, Angel Gabriel, John the Baptist, Herod, Elijah. The largest differences with Western Christendom are the practical absence of Peter,[18] and the presence of angels, of Orthodox saints such as Modest, Tixon, and Nikita Muchenin, and of the Old Testament figures, such as the patriarch Elijah (though some have suggested that this is a euhemerisation of the Slavic god, Perun), and the kings, David and Solomon.

It can also be noted that the Russian corpus is also very rich in names given to personified fevers (known collectively as *lixoradki* or *trjasavitsy*) in healing charms, and also to snakes in snake charms.

We should note that the most popular name (or name-type) of all in the corpus is the name of the charmee – usually indicated in the texts as we

[14]   Vel'mezova, E.V., *Cheshskije Zagovory - Issledovanija i teksty* (Moscow: Indrik, 2004), pp. 71-2.

[15]   The leading Estonian authority on verbal charms, Mare Kõiva, has suggested that the three most popular protagonists in Estonian charms were Jesus, Peter and Mary (personal communication, September 2004), and Ritwa Herjulfsdotter Andersson, a Swedish charms-researcher, has suggested that the two most popular protagonists in Swedish charms were Jesus and Mary (with a composite Mary and Joseph being the third most popular), (personal communication, March 2005).

[16]   Though not much larger (and perhaps in fact smaller) than the German one, if we consider the 20 000 charms held in Dresden. Thus a German *onomasticon* may well be a fruitful enterprise.

[17]   Judin, Aleksei, *Onomastikon russkix zagovorov. Imena sobstvennyje v russkom magicheskom fol'klore* (Moscow: Moskovskij obshchestvennyj nauchnij fond, 1997).

[18]   Peter and Paul however, as a single unit, are the eleventh most popular protagonists.

have them by *N.* or *N.N.*, a practice also found in, and not doubt drawn from ecclesiastical texts, such as *The Book of Common Prayer*. The nature of the surviving texts means that we usually lack the actual names inserted in these slots.[19] A typical example is the this fifteenth-century blood-staunching charm:

> Whan Oure Lorde Jesu Criste was done on tho croys, than com Longius thider and stong him wit tho spere in tho syde. Blode and watur com out at tho wound. He wyped his yne and sawe anone throrow tho holi vertu that God did there. I conjure the, blod, that thu come not out of tho cristen man .N.[20]

The instructions accompanying the charm make plain the importance of naming the charmee:

> Firste ye most wite tho mannes name or tho wommannes and then go to chirche and sey this charme

The instructions conclude "thar the never rekke where tho man or tho womman be[,] bot thar thu knowe her name."[21]

One of the named figures in this charm, Longius (or more usually, Longinus), deserves a mention. He is a figure found largely in charms to heal wounds and staunch bleeding. These charms relate the story of the Roman centurion, who while Jesus was on the cross, pierced him in his side with a spear, as found in the Passion narrative as it is told in Matthew, Mark and Luke. The name of the centurion is not found in the canonical Bible however. Our earliest reference to the name Longinus comes in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, and later references are found in such works as the *Legenda Aurea*. In such apocryphal accounts, after Longinus has pierced the Lord in his side with a spear, some of the blood and water falls into his eyes, which healed of him of near-blindness. There is a further association of Longinus and blood in such narratives, in that upon Longinus' own martyrdom by beheading, the sight of a blind Roman governor was restored when some of his blood came into contact with the

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[19] But on occasion we do have such names. For example, the records of a mid sixteenth century trial, surviving in the records of the Consistory Court of Exeter, in which one Margaret Kelland was charged with "mynistering charmyns" to John Kelland. The record runs that she "dyd charm hym with words as followeth, ones everye daye": "John Byflye followed him nonne; joynt to joynt, sinewe to sinewe, and bone to bone, and as gryne as grasse, an grasse ys it nowe." "Vic." [i.e. Herbert Edward Reynolds], *Odd Ways in Olden Days down West; or Tales of the Reformation in Devon and Cornwall* (Birmingham: printed for the author, 1892), p.xii.

[20] Hunt, Tony, *Popular Medicine in Thirteenth Century England: Introduction and Texts* (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1990) p. 93, cited from MS London British Library Sloane 962, f. 38v.

[21] Loc. cit.

Governor's eyes. Whether "Longinus" was the name of the centurion in question is perhaps made doubtful by its suspiciously close resemblance to a Latinized version of the Greek word for spear, *longxe*: Nevertheless such charms were extremely popular in the late middle ages, being found in German, French, Danish, Italian, Swedish, Byzantine Greek, and Russian, in addition to English and Latin.[22]

Another interesting figure found in charm historiolas in the Middle English period is 'Architriclinus', For example he appears in a fifteenth century charm for fever:

> Archidecline syttes on hye and holdes a vergyne yerde of hesil in his hande and seys also soth os tho prest makes Godes bodi in his handes and also soth os God blessed is moder Mari and also soth, I conjure the, vergin yerde of hesil, that thu close and be bote of this evel fever to this man .N.
> In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, amen.[23]

Now while other historiolas of this charm-type also to a protagonist called "Seynt Architeclyn"[24] and even to a French-sounding "Sente arche de clyne",[25] there was no historical 'Saint Architriclinus'. The word 'architriclinus' is found in John 2:8, meaning 'the ruler of the feast'. The passage "ut autem gustavit architriclinus aquam vinum factam" means "when the *ruler of the feast* had tasted the water that was made wine", but the term was taken from the passage as the "proper name of a rich lord".[26]

A form of unnamed characters found in the historiolas of European charms, are those groups of characters referred to by kinship terms. Thus we find in Latin charms *Tres boni fratres*, in Old High German charms *Dri guot pruoder*,[27] and in Middle English charms "thre goode brethren".[28]

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[22] Hoffmann-Krayer, Eduard, and Bächtold-Stäubli, Hanns, eds, *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1927-1942), *s.v.* 'Longinussegen'. Besides this entry on Longinus, Ohrt also writes about the most prominent personages in German-language charms in the following important entries in this encyclopedia, *sv.v.* 'Christus (in Segen)', 'Heilige in den Segen', 'Hiob in den Segen', 'Judas', 'Maria in den Segen', 'Petrus in den Segen', 'Teufel in den Segen'.

[23] MS London British Library Sloane 962, f.38r; published in Hunt (1990), p. 93. Due to circumstances beyond the control of the author, in this and other medieval English texts quoted in this piece it has been necessary to Latinize yogh as "y" or "gh", and both thorn and eth as "th".

[24] MS London British Library Sloane 962, f.135v; published in Hunt (1990), p.97.

[25] MS London British Library Sloane 3160, f.130v; published in Sheldon, Suzanne Eastman, *Middle English and Latin Charms, Amulets, and Talismans from Vernacular Manuscripts* (unpublished Tulane University PhD. thesis, 1978), p.170.

[26] *Oxford English Dictionary*, *s.v.* 'architricline'. However I have been able to find no trace of a medieval legend featuring Architriclinus, with a hazel (or briar) rod, which was seemingly his attribute.

[27] Hoffmann-Krayer et al. (1927-1942), *s.v.* 'Dreibrüdersegen'.

[28] See Roper, Jonathan, *English Verbal Charms* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica,

The historiola describes the encounter between these three good brethren (on their way to the Mount of Olives to find healing plants) and Jesus, who instructs them as how to heal the wounds, by applying oil to them and reciting a charm. Similarly, we can find an international charm with three unnamed female figures, in Latin *Tres virgines*, and in German *Dreifrauen* or *Drei Jungfrauen*. The charm-type is one of the oldest, an analogue first being recorded in the writing of Marcellus of Bordeaux, circa 400.[29] The English analogues are somewhat of exceptions in that they generally feature three Maries, as in this example from 1610:

> There were three Maryes went over the floude;
> The one bid stande, the other stente bloude:
> Then bespake Mary that Jesus Christ bore,
> Defende gods forbod thou shouldeste bleede anye more.[30]

To turn now to place names, as I mentioned before while the micronarratives we find in charms are usually located in a landscape, these places, unless they are Biblical locations such as the River Jordan, the Mount of Olives, Bethlehem or Jerusalem, tend to be referred in general terms, such "the bridge" or "a road", or "the wood", although there are some exceptions to this.

Most toothache charms begin with a historiola locating Peter "super petram" – a Latin pun, lost in English recensions where we find, for example, "Peter sat weeping on a marvel stone".[31] This is one of the charm-types that most often features place names. For example, other variants, give more diverse locations, e.g., "Peter stood by the gate of Jerusalem weeping," (the influence of the Passion narrative here), sitting by the "gate of the Temple", or, less plausibly, "lying at the gate of Sodom".

Another charm with a specific place name is a nineteenth century sprain charm recorded in Devon,[32] which begins "As Christ was riding over Crolly Bridge". Now a Crolly bridge does in fact exist, in Ireland,

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2005), *s.v.* 'Tres boni fratres'. One Danish charm identifies the three brothers as Ylinus, Cosmas and Damianus. Cosmas and Damian, who were themselves brothers, "are the patron saints of doctors; their Acts recount their skill in healing both men and animals", Farmer, D.H., *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 'Cosmas and Damian'.

[29]   Hoffmann-Krayer et al. (1927-1942), *s.v.* 'Dreifrauensegen', §1.

[30]   Opie, Iona, and Tatem, Moira, eds, *A Dictionary of Superstitions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), *s.v.* 'BLEEDING, charm to staunch', cited from "The Gentleman's Magazine" vol.cv (1835), pt 2, 31.

[31]   Latham, Charlotte, 'Some West Sussex Superstitions Lingering in 1868', "Folk-Lore Record", vol.i (1878), 1-67: 40.

[32]   Baring-Gould seems to imply it was "a woman on Lew Down … an old spinster [who] had one eye and eyebrow higher than the other", Baring-Gould, Sabine, *Further reminiscences, 1864-1894* (London: John Lane, 1925), p.143.

near to Letterkenny, County Donegal. The fact that this seems to be in origin an Irish charm (though whether originally anglophone or Gaelic is unclear) may possibly explain why a place-name – unusually for the English material – is mentioned.

The one certain place-name that we find in the Old English charms, Alorford,[33] (i.e. 'alder ford' in modern English) could be a specific place. We might wish to associate it with Alford in Lincolnshire, Alderford in Norfolk, or Allerford near Minehead in Somerset, but I feel that 'Alorford' may serve just as well as a general place-name in the charm *alliterativa causa*, in the same way that the place-name 'Cripplegate' in a tongue-twister to be said against hiccups that begins "Three crooked cripples went through Cripplegate" is surely there more for phonetic reasons than for locative reference. And such seemingly specific names were atypical even in the Old English period. When we look, for example, at the place of expulsion in the Old English *Wen charm*, we find it is "than nihgan berhge", the nearby hill, which is not named. Certainly there has been a general predominance of topology over toponyms in our charm corpus.

To move now to names other than personal or place names, we can note that animal names are not uncommon in charms. Ladybird charms, whose purpose is to encourage (or often threaten) a Ladybird to fly off, and thus a) avert the ill luck that would result if the Ladybird was accidentally or deliberately killed, or b) provide a love divination by the direction of their flight, provide a good variety of the local names for this creature:

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[33]   Lines 23-4 of the *Nine Herbs charm* run "Gemyne thu, mægthe, hwæt thu ameldodest,/ hwæt thu geændadest æt Alorforda;" which can be rendered as 'Remember, Mayweed [or 'Camomile'], what you declared/ What you brought to an end at Alorford;' (MS London British Library Harley 585, ff.160a-163a). Lines 1-2 of the same charms run "Gemyne thu, mucgwyrt, hwæt thu ameldodest,/ hwæt thu renadest æt Regenmelde." A translation of this could run 'Remember, Mugwort, what you declared / What you brought about at the Great Proclamation.". But it has also been suggested that "Regenmald" could rather be a place-name, see Magoun, Francis, 'Zu den altenglischen Zaubersprüchen', *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*, vol. 176 (1937), 17-35: 28-9. There are two interesting personal names in the Old English charms, "Noththe" in line 1 of the charm "With cyrnel" (MS London British Library Harley 585, f.182a) and "Garmund" in line 5 of the charm "For Theft of Cattle" (MS Cambridge Corpus Christi College 41, p.206). Conceivably "Erce" in line 51 of the charm "For Unfruitful Land" (MS London British Library Cotton Caligula A vii, ff.176a-178a) may also be a personal name. In contrast to the many obviously Christian names identifiable in the Old English charms (and 'Woden' as well for that matter in the *Nine Herbs charm*), the identity of the bearers of these names has not been established beyond doubt. All these charms may be found in Dobbie, Elliott van Kirk, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, vol.VI. The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), pp.116-128, with the exception of the "With cyrnel" charm, which can be found in Storms, Gerhard, *Anglo-Saxon Magic. Academisch proefschrift, etc.*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1948), p.150.

'Marygold',[34] 'Lady-cow'[35] and 'Bishop Barnabee'.[36]

An Isle of Wight charm addressed to a dragonfly, provides the otherwise unrecorded name 'snakestanger'.[37] This name is not in the *Oxford English Dictionary* or the *English Dialect Dictionary*, although it is analogous to the dialect terms for dragon-fly such as 'horse-stinger', and to the archaic term that Caxton uses, 'adderbolt'.[38] Other dialect animal names found in charms include "pynot", a term for a magpie, found in a charm recorded in the vicinity of mid nineteenth century Sheffield, and "Snarley-'orn" found in nineteenth century Somerset for a snail.

Another class of names found in both charms and in the instructions that accompany them is plant names. Indeed the most studied aspect of names in the entire English charms corpus has been the plant names found in the so-called *Nine Herbs charm*, and the attempts made to identify these nine plants (or, perhaps these eleven plants as some commentators have suggested). And we should also mention Tony Hunt's work in clarifying the references of plant-names in some of the Middle English and Anglo-Norman charms (and recipes).[39]

But, all in all, while charms are a fascinating and somewhat neglected aspect of cultural history, they cannot be said to form a good source for the names scholar, beyond those wishing to study the variant spellings of a small number of terms such 'Bethlehem', 'Jesus' or 'Jordan' over time and space.

I should like to close however with one example of a close linkage between charms and names, and that comes in the field of love divinations.[40]

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[34]   Leather, Ella Mary, *The Folk-Lore of Herefordshire, Collected from Oral and Printed Sources* (Hereford/London: Jakeman & Carver/Sidgwick & Jackson, 1912), p.64.

[35]   Burne, Charlotte, *Shropshire Folk-Lore - a sheaf of gleanings, edited by C. S. Burne from the collections of Georgina F. Jackson* (London: Trübner, 1883), p.237.

[36]   Parish, William Douglas, *A Dictionary of the Sussex Dialect and Collection of Provincialisms in use in the County of Sussex: Expanded, Augmented and Illustrated by Helena Hall, together with some Sussex Sayings and Crafts* (Bexhill: Gardners, 1957), *s.v.* 'Bishop-Barnaby'.

[37]   Halliwell, James Orchard, *Popular Rhymes and Nursery Tales of England* (London: James Russell Smith, 1849), p.174.

[38]   Compare further the regional American names for the dragonfly, 'snake feeder' and 'snake doctor'.

[39]   Hunt, Tony, *Plant names of medieval England* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1989) and also Hunt (1990).

[40]   We can sometimes find place-names in such divinations, for example: in the Lancashire charm "Pippin, pippin, paradise, Tell me where my true love lies: East, west, north, or south, Pilling brig or Cocker-mouth", and in the Shropshire charm "Lady-cow, lady-cow, fly away, flee! Tell me which way my weddin's to be, Up hill, or down hill, or toward the Brown Clee!". These charms are to be found in Opie and Tatem (1989), *s.v.* 'APPLE PIPS, squeezing: divination' and Burne (1883), p.237, respectively.

Let us take, for example, the charm-type **Even, even ash**, is a divination involving an "even ash", i.e. an ash leaf with an even number of leaflets. A twentieth-century version runs:

> An even ash is in my hand
> The first I meet shall be my man,
> If he don't speak and I don't speak,
> This even ash I will not keep.[41]

While each word of the rhyme was said, the speaker of the charm was to count one leaflet at a time around the ash-leaf, and after the rhyme was completed, the letters, A, B, C, D, E, etc., were to be recited, until the bottom right-hand leaflet was reached. This letter was supposed to provide a clue to the identity of the beloved by being the first letter of his personal name.

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[41] Vickery, A. Roy, 'West Dorset Folklore Notes', "Folklore" vol.lxxxix (1978) no. 2, 156.