

## **À la guerre comme à guerre but with caution: Protection charms and blessings in the Germanic tradition**

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### **Abstract:**

Even though bravery in combat represents a key value in both the Germanic heroic tradition and in the medieval courtly literature, the possibility of a struggle certainly constituted a cause of concern for medieval and early modern people. This preoccupation is seen in a series of charms, blessings and amulets aimed at averting a physical confrontation or, if this were not possible, at obtaining magical help and protection against enemies and their weapons. This wide corpus of medieval and early modern Germanic formulas will be dealt with, classified and analyzed in this study.

**Keywords: Protection charms and blessings – enemies – weapons – amulets.**

### **Zusammenfassung:**

Obwohl sowohl die germanische Heldenepik als auch die mittelalterliche höfische Literatur Mut und Tapferkeit als Schlüsselwerte hervorheben, scheint die Möglichkeit, sich Kampfstationen stellen zu müssen, dem mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Menschen Anlass zur Besorgnis gegeben zu haben. Diese Angst vor Kampfsituationen ist durch ein Korpus von Zaubersprüchen, Segen und Amuletten bezeugt, die dem Zweck dienen, eine physische Auseinandersetzung zu vermeiden oder gegebenenfalls magische bzw. göttliche Hilfe und Beistand gegen Feinde und Waffen zu gewährleisten. In diesem Beitrag wird dieses umfangreiche Korpus von mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen germanischen Formeln untersucht und kategorisiert.

**Stichwörter: Schutzsegen – Feinde – Waffen – Amulette**

Bravery in combat constitutes one of the central elements of both the Germanic heroic tradition and the medieval courtly literature. This does not mean, however, that in everyday life people looked forward to or were not scared of fighting. A degree of preoccupation with struggle can be found in a series of rituals and amulets aimed at obtaining magical and/or divine help against the enemy, which are preserved in a corpus of medieval and early modern Germanic charms, blessings and prayers that will be dealt with in this article. Supernatural help against the enemy and his weapons is invoked in both specific weapon charms and blessings or in more generic texts aimed at granting protection from a wide range of dangers in everyday life (e.g. wolves, worms, difficult labor, robbers and thieves etc.).

## 1. Specific in-fight protection

Charms and blessings specifically aimed at protecting the petitioner from the risks connected with a combat situation can be divided into two categories according to their addressee and *modus operandi*: 1) those addressing enemies and 2) those addressing weapons (both one's own and hostile ones), even though this distinction cannot be considered absolute, since some Germanic formulas combine the two. Formulas to prevent capture and/or to escape from imprisonment constitute a further category of charms aimed at protecting from the dangers of war.

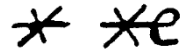
### 1.1. Charms and blessings addressing enemies

Protection charms and blessings against enemies were widespread in the Middle Ages and, since enemies could be met in many different situations (e.g. in war, in court, at home or on the road), are often difficult to distinguish from other kinds of charms and blessings, such as journey and departure (German *Reise-* and *Ausfahrtssegen*) or court (German *Gerichtssegen*) formulas (OHRT, 1929: col. 1318). In contrast to ancient rituals of this kind, which were often violent and aimed at hurting the enemy, in the Middle Ages blessings against enemies were strongly influenced by Christian values and became exclusively defensive, focusing on making foes inoffensive, rather than on damaging them (OHRT, 1929: col. 1318).<sup>1</sup> This could be achieved in various ways, depending on the context in which enemies had to be encountered: in court, for example, adversaries were inoffensive if they did not get the chance to talk, as the Jews did in front of Christ (Matthew 22: 46: “No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question”), a motif which can be found in High German charms, such as the 14<sup>th</sup>-century one transmitted in München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 4350, fol. 82a:

Unser herre gie ze ding,  
da swigen die juden alle still.  
Also muossen si mir hiut alsant geswaigen,  
die mich hassen oder naident. Amen.  
daz sol man sprechen, wenn ain man ze schaffen hab vor ainem gericht.<sup>2</sup>  
(HOLZMANN, 2001: 253).

On the other hand, when hostile physical aggression can be expected an effective protection strategy can include scaring the enemy off, in order to prevent the fight. This is the aim of a short charm prescribing the carving of two staves on an oak branch, which is described in the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Icelandic *Galdrarbók* (“Book of Magic”):

Ef þu villt að ovinur þinn hafi hrædslu af þíer er hann sýr þig, þá rist þessa stafi á hrijseyk og síá so til þu ljítir hann firr enn hann þig.<sup>3</sup>

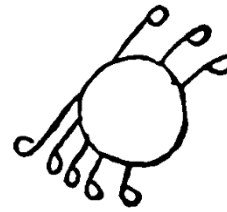


(LINDQVIST, 1921: 30).

In addition to having to wear these magical staves the effectiveness of the ritual in this case is subordinate to the fact that the person wearing the magical staves must see his enemy before his enemy sees him.

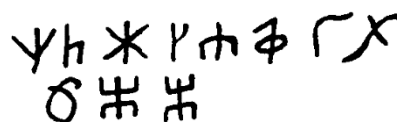
The same Icelandic source gives two further examples of amulets aimed at frightening enemies out of attacking the person carrying them. In one of these, the amulet – a stave – has to be carried under the left hand or arm, while the other one simply prescribes bringing along a series of staves in order to be feared by enemies:

Ef þu uillt ouiner þíner ottist þig haf þennan staf vnder uinstri hendi þíer med Jafnadi.<sup>4</sup>



(LINDQVIST, 1921: 34).

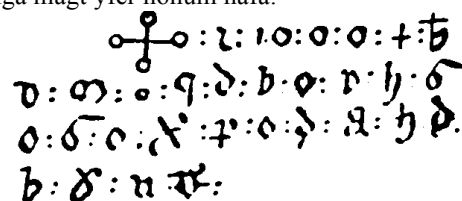
Haf þessa eppter fýllgiandi stafi aa þíer og munu Ouiner þíner hrædast þig.<sup>5</sup>



(LINDQVIST, 1921: 34).

A slightly different approach can be found in another passage of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century *Galdrarbók*, since the focus here seems to be on making the adversary lose any power he could possibly have on the person wearing the amulet:

Huer sem þessa stafi ber aa síer þann dag ma honum einginn skada giora og hanz ouiner munu aunga magt yfer honum hafa.<sup>6</sup>



(LINDQVIST, 1921: 32).

Making enemies inoffensive is also the aim of a Swedish charm recorded in Lönnemåla, Blekinge in 1679, in which the petitioner wishes the enemies in front of him to be like lambs in front of a wolf and all the people to love him as God loves his soul:

Hwar iagh seer mine owenner stå för migh,  
då skall dhe stå för migh som et lam,  
och iagh skall wara dheras vlff.  
Alla menniskior skall hålla migh så kier,  
som Gudh giör min sjähl.<sup>7</sup> (LINDERHOLM, 1917-1943: 173).

No mention of possible physical aggression by the enemy is made in a High German orthodox blessing recorded by Zingerle (1891: 318) and transmitted in a late 15<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript once preserved in Castle Wolfsturn in South Tirol and now lost (fol. 72d):

Ain guter seggen, das sich ain mensh vorsorgenn mag vor sein veindenn.  
Mach ein † vber die stiren vnd ein † an denn munde, ain † vber dein hercz  
vnd spriche: “Gesegen mich heutt die wort, da vnsser lieber her Jhesus  
Cristus mensh ynnenn wart, gesegenn mich heut der fried vnd sune, do vnsser  
liebe fraw ynnen wasse, do sie ires lieben Kindes genass, gesegenn mich heutt  
der segenn, den vnser liber herr Jhesus Christus am demm jungsten tag sein  
aussderweltenn liebsten freundenn will geben amen.” Den segenn den sprich  
iii stund mit iii pater noster vnd mit iii aue maria vnd ain gelauben.<sup>8</sup>

The text, which is introduced by a title indicating its aim – *Ain guter seggen, das sich ain mensh vorsorgenn mag vor sein veindenn* “a good blessing for those wishing to be protected against their enemies” – begins with the instructions on how to perform a ritual consisting of tracing a triple cross over the forehead, the lips and the heart, as done before the reading of the Gospel during Mass, while pronouncing the formula. In doing this, the petitioner invokes on himself the blessing of Christ and of the Virgin, who is portrayed as full of grace and peace at the moment of Jesus’ nativity (*der fried vnd sune, do vnsser liebe fraw ynnen wasse, do sie ires lieben Kindes genass*). The formula has to be pronounced three times accompanied by three Lord’s Prayers, three Ave Marias and a creed.

The same manuscript transmitted, on fol. 118a, another blessing aimed at obtaining help against enemies:

Fur deine veinde sprich dise wort: “Si me queritis, sinite hos abire; Cristus nobiscum in nomine patris et fyly et spiritus sancti.”<sup>9</sup> (ZINGERLE, 1891: 318).

In this case, the formula – in Latin – consists of a simple imperative calling on an ambiguous second person plural to let them [i.e. the enemies] go away, which is followed by the liturgical phrase *Cristus nobiscum* and by the Trinitarian formula.

In another – unpublished – 15<sup>th</sup>-century High German blessing in München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm. 850, fol. 61v the petitioner addresses his enemy directly, begging him to hurt him no more than a dead man could do from the grave:

Ain ander güter seggen  
Ich sich dich an in gutem müt  
vnd man dich mit dem milten *iesus christus* blut

hastu kain bösen mut  
vber mich den laß sencken neben mich  
Als vnnsere lieber herre *iesus cristus* der sein swaiß vnd sein blüt an dem  
hailigen fron creucz do er stund das du mir als vil schadest als ain tod in  
ainem grab das sie war in gotes namen Amen  
Sprich .v. *pater noster* vnd .v. aue maria Amen<sup>10</sup>

## 1.2. Charms and blessings addressing weapons

As mentioned above, some medieval and early modern Germanic protection charms and blessings are addressed to both enemies and weapons. This is, for example, the case with a 14<sup>th</sup>-century High German blessing preserved in München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm. 54, fol. 106b:

O Maria sunden frey. dir wonten siben fræud pei da du enphie dein liebez  
chint. dar nach du trawrichleichen giengd. mit im in den pittern tod. O Maria  
ich man dich an die selben not daz du alle mein feind vor wendest und si an  
iren gelidern pfendest. daz mich chain waffen nicht versneid heut und ymmer  
mich vermeid. amen. ave maria.<sup>11</sup> (SCHÖNBACH, 1880: 71).

This rhymed text begins by invoking the Virgin Mary, who is called *sunden frey* “free from sin” and whose greatest joy – Jesus’ birth – and pain – his passion and death – are synthetically hinted at. Turning to Mary in an equally dramatic situation the petitioner begs for her help against both enemies and weapons. The former have to be distracted and physically impaired in their pursuit, while the latter have to be enchanted so that they will not harm the petitioner now and forever.

Another example of a blessing addressing both enemies and weapons can be found in Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2817, fol. 15b and 26a (14<sup>th</sup> century):

Herr got, behüete hiut mich N.  
durch des vil heiligen speres stich,  
den dir Longinus surch dîn sîten stach  
dô dir dîn heilec herze brach;  
unde beschirme mich daz pluot  
daz dir durch die selben wunden wuot,  
daz mir alle mîne vînde entwîchen  
und elliu wâfen gên mir enblîchen,  
und aller stahel und allez îsen  
behalten vor mir ir snîden,  
als mîn frowe ir magetuom behielt,  
dô sich got selber in ir vielt.<sup>12</sup> (HOLZMANN, 2001: 275).

The text, in the form of an orthodox prayer, adopts the motif of Longinus, the Roman soldier who pierced Jesus in his side with his lance,<sup>13</sup> and asks for protection against both enemies (*daz mir alle mîne vînde entwîchen*) and weapons (*elliu wâfen gên mir enblîchen, und aller stahel und allez îsen behalten vor mir ir snîden*). The passage referring to weapons is reinforced by a simile built on two differently-nuanced meanings of the MHG verb *behalten* – “protect” and “retain” –,<sup>14</sup> which suggests that the petitioner’s pieces of armor will protect him from hostile blades in the same way that Mary retained her virginity when God himself penetrated her. Even though this reference to Christ’s conception in terms of a sexual act<sup>15</sup> is quite unusual in the corpus,

Marian motifs are extremely frequent in medieval and early modern Germanic protection blessings addressing weapons.

A recurring Marian motif in protection formulas is that of her tenderness toward baby Jesus, which often constitutes a point of comparison for the behavior of blessed weapons toward the petitioner. This is, for example, the case with a blessing transmitted in the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Low German medical recipe collection known as *Stockholmer mittelniederdeutsches Arzneibuch* (Stockholm, Kungliga bibliotek, X 113, fol. 48r) and aimed at making sure that knives and swords do not cut:

Wultu eyn mest ofte eyn swert besprecken, dat it nicht sniden en mach, so spreck jii: Yk beswere di swert efte mest bi dem namen des vaders vnde des sones vnde des hilghen gheistes, sachtmodich vnde otmodech wes van snede, asse Maria was, do se des hylghen Karstes ghenas. In dem namen ghodes, amen.<sup>16</sup> (LINDGREN, 1967: 136).

A variation of this motif can be found in a 15<sup>th</sup>-century High German manuscript (Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Pal. germ. 211, fol. 33r), where the to-be-enchanted sword has to be as sweet as Mary's milk and as tender as Mary herself when she gave birth to Jesus:

Ich gebüt dir swert gut bie dess vil heligen Christüs blüt dass dü noch hutte werdest also weich werdest Vff mynen libe Also myner frawen sant maria milch Und sweis was do si ihres trüt liben kinde genass dass du mich dole verschnidest dass stahel Vnd dass ysen noch keynen hant woffen dass ye geschmidet wardt Sider dass cristüs geboren wardt one dass myne dass müsse stechen Und schniden wo es hin gemeyne wenne es küm uss miner hant do sindt die selben wunt doruber genant Die wunt sindt steta vnd veste also dass helig pater noster dass der prister in der heligen stilmessen sprach.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly in a blessing found in a 14<sup>th</sup>-century parchment leaf from Einsiedeln Abbey, where the to-be-enchanted weapons are expected to become as tender and delicate toward the speaking first person as the sweat Mary gave out while giving birth to Christ:

ich beswer alliv wafen guot  
bigot vnd bi sim vil heiligen bluot  
bi sinen heiligen 5 wnden  
di vnserm herren durch sin site drungen  
das alliu wafen as lind gegen mir sient vnder mir vnd ob mir hinder mir vnd  
for mir vnd nebent mir as der sweis was den vnser frou sancte Maria swist do  
si irs lieben trut Kindes maget wis an dis welt gnas das mich kein wafen snid  
das ie gesmidet wart sit das krist geboren wart in gottes namen amen.<sup>18</sup>  
(WACKERNAGEL, 1843: 42).

The reference to the motif of Mary's tenderness is preceded by that of the holy Five Wounds of Christ and followed by another recurring element found in both specific and generic protection formulas addressing weapons: the mention of all the weapons forged since Jesus' birth (*das mich kein wafen snid das ie gesmidet wart si das krist geboren wart*).<sup>19</sup>

In another Low German blessing found in Stockholm, Kungliga bibliotek, X 113, fol. 34v the theme of Mary's tenderness toward her son is combined with the Jordan motif:

Vnse leue vrowe de schot eyne rode in de Jordanen.  
De rode de vntstunt.  
So mote alle wapen gud  
weder myn vlesch vnde myn blod  
in godes namen, amen.  
Also wek si alle wapen gud  
vor myn vlesch vnde myn blot,  
alse Marien swet was,  
do se des hilghen Karstes nas;  
in godes namen, amen.  
Oft dat wapen kome vt myner hant  
so binde ek dat an den suluen bant;  
in godes namen, amen. etc.<sup>20</sup> (LINDGREN, 1967: 125).

This motif is often employed in formulas to staunch blood,<sup>21</sup> but also to prevent theft and, in some cases, to protect cattle from wolves.<sup>22</sup> While the analogy underlying the use of this motif in charms against bleeding was that of the waters of the river Jordan standing still in order to let the Israelites pass, as in Joshua 3: 14-17, or to allow Christ's baptism by John, "the odd train of thought that links Christ's birth and baptism with the claim that at the baptism 'neither wolf nor thief was named [*or* spoken of]', and with a plea for material protection, can only be understood through some knowledge of earlier charms" (SMALLWOOD, 1989: 207). In my opinion, the Low German formula in the Stockholm manuscript could represent the missing link between the Jordan imagery and its use against thieves. This Middle Low German text, in which the Virgin throws a rod into the Jordan and the rod stands still, could, in fact, constitute an intermediate stage of the tradition of the Jordan motif, in which the analogy with something standing still (in this case a rod) is still present, even though it is not referred to a flowing liquid, but to a weapon. The next phase of the evolution of this motif could be identified in the generalization of its protective value from a specific (weapons) to a generic threat also including wolves and thieves.

The final part of the blessing takes into consideration the potentially lethal combat situation, in which one of the fighters is disarmed by his opponent: in case the petitioner's weapon falls from their hand, may it be enchanted in the same way as their enemy's and become as harmless (*Oft dat wapen komen vt myner hant so binde ek dat an den suluen bant*).

Jordan and Marian motifs are also combined in another Low German blessing included in the same manuscript (fol. 47v):

Sancte Johannes de schot eyne roden an de Jordanen; dar entstunt de rode. So mote hute daghe aller leyghe wapen vntstan to snidende an myn vlesch vnde an myn blot, als vnser leuen vrowen Marien an dem stillen vridaghe, do se or leue kynt vant stan vangen vnde bunden mangh den joden. In dem namen des vaders vnde des sones vnde des hillyghen gheystes, amen.<sup>23</sup> (LINDGREN, 1967: 136).

As in the above-discussed text, it is not the Jordan to stand still, but a rod which has been thrown into it. In this case, however, the rod is thrown by Saint John and not by the Virgin Mary, who is mentioned as a point of comparison for the behavior of the enchanted weapons: may they refrain from hitting the petitioner's flesh and blood as Our Lady (stood still?) on the Good Friday, when she saw her own son bound and incarcerated among the Jews (*als vnser leuen vrowen Marien an dem stillen vridaghe, do se or leue kynt vant stan vangen vnde bunden mangh den joden*).

Another double protection blessing addressing weapons possessed by both the petitioner and their enemies could be found in the manuscript once preserved in Castle Wolfsthurn in South Tirol and now lost (fol. 72d):

Ain ander gutt segen, do sich auch ain mensch mit mage vorsorgenn vor sein veund, vnd sprich also:  
In dem namenn des vaters vnd des suns vnd des hailgen gaist amen.  
Ich will mich heutt gurten  
mit dene hailgen funff worten,  
mit der svnne vnd mit dem monad  
vnd mit dem hailgen fron leichnam;  
wer mir heutt nicht sey gutt,  
dem empfall sein crafft vnd mut,  
er möge sich auch alls wenig gegen mir geregenn,  
als ein tode man sich moge gewegenn.  
Mein waffen das sey mir stehlein,  
das sein sey seyden;  
als wenig moge er mich an leybe  
vnd an gutt vnd an eren ergynnenn,  
als die liebe junckfraw Maria  
ain andern sune gewynne;  
des helff mir der mann,  
der denn tode an dem hailgen fron creucze nam, amen.  
vnd sprich iii pater noster vnd aue maria.<sup>24</sup> (HOLZMANN, 2001: 272).<sup>25</sup>

In this text, which begins with the Trinitarian formula, the petitioner's own weapon is enchanted to become *stehlein* "steely", while his enemy's one has to be *seyden* "silken" and will not be able to harm the petitioner's body, just as the Virgin will not be able to give birth to another son.

The theme of Mary's impossible second maternity is also attested in a series of 17<sup>th</sup>-century Danish charms, such as the one preserved in København, Kongelige Bibliotek, NKS 67, 8<sup>vo</sup>, fol. 19:

Vorherre Jesus Christus red i herreferd,  
han(d) døde alle dragne suerd  
och dragen kniffue, 10 finger och 2 hender, och bad, att d(et) skulle aldrig bide eller bløde røde, vden jomfru Marria føder en anden søn; det haffuer Marria engang gjort, och skier aldrig mer.<sup>26</sup> (OVRT, 1917: 355).

This short narrative describes how Christ himself blunted all swords and knives, so that they would never cut, harm or cause bleeding, unless the Virgin Mary gives birth to another son, which will not happen.<sup>27</sup>

The same *historiola* is attested in the Danish language area from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onward, as witnessed by the charm transmitted in København, Kongelige Bibliotek, Thott 710, 4<sup>to</sup>, fol. 57 (1450 ca.), where Christ is said to have blunted swords with his Holy Five Wounds:<sup>28</sup>

[V]or herræ reth j herferdh,  
døffden alæ gothæ swerth,  
alle swerdh gothe  
meth syth signathe blothæ,  
alle swerth ondæ  
meth synæ helgæ fyem wundhæ,  
j naffn fathers etc.



ther nest læs V pater noster oc V aue Maria.  
Swa døffwæ han oc eg oc odh for mech j dag oc alt thet mech skathæ kan!<sup>29</sup>  
(OHRT, 1917: 352).

These formulas find parallels in the Swedish tradition as well. See, for example, the late 17<sup>th</sup>-century text given in the manuscript, Uppsala, Universitetsbibliotek, D. 609:

Wår Herre red i Herre fård,  
døffde han alla wårior:  
“Udd och egg  
skall icke bita på mig  
mer än som en wägg;  
järn och stål,  
hugg och stick,  
hug allrig så fast  
skall icke mer bita  
än som en flatt bast.”  
In [nomine] P., F., Spiriti. Amen.<sup>30</sup> (LINDERHOLM, 1917-1943: 354).

Protection against weapons can be guaranteed not only by pronouncing a verbal formula like the ones analyzed above, but also by bringing along an amulet such as the one preserved in København, Kongelige Bibliotek, NKS 67, 8<sup>vo</sup>, fol. 24, whose text invokes the protection of the Holy Cross:

Jesu Christi kaars vere med mig, Iesu Christi kaars vere offuer alle  
armbörster och suerd och spyd och piil, Iesu Christi kaars veree offuer mig,  
vnder mig och alle 4 vegne omkring mig!<sup>31</sup> (OHRT, 1917: 356).

In another 17<sup>th</sup>-century Danish amulet, on the other hand, divine protection is said to replace conventional battle equipment, with heaven becoming the petitioner's shield and the Virgin Mary his own sword:

Der nest itt kors att schulle bliffue beuarett i krigen:  
Ieg vill opstaa, sagde Christo, til himelen vill ieg gaa. Himelen schall vere  
mitt schiold, och jomfru Maria skall vere mitt suerd, I Jesu naffn, amenn.<sup>32</sup>  
(OHRT, 1917: 356).

### **1.3. Charms and blessings to escape capture and imprisonment**

In the case of a negative outcome, physical confrontation could result in immediate death or in imprisonment and captivity, which certainly was no less of a frightening idea, as demonstrated by some significant examples of charms and blessings aimed at avoiding the possibility of a capture or aiding escape from enemy hands. The latter goal is most famously pursued in the 10<sup>th</sup>-century Old High German incantation known as the first Merseburg charm (Merseburg, Domstiftsbibliothek, Cod. 136, fol. 84r), whose first part describes how three groups of supernatural women called *Idisi* free a prisoner from his shackles and constitute a “narrative analogy” (GOLOPENTIA, 2004: 152) to the situation in which the charm is expected to be effective. The three groups of women perform, in fact, three actions which are necessary to achieve the goal of the formula: the first group fastens fetters, the second impedes the enemies, while the third loosens the prisoner from his bonds:

Eiris sazun idisi, sazun hera duoder.  
suma hapt heptidun, suma heri lezidun,  
suma clubodun umbi cuoniouuidi:  
insprinc haptbandum, inuar uigandun! H.33 (CIANCI, 2004: 172).<sup>34</sup>

The liberation of a prisoner is the aim of a later and certainly less famous Middle Low German formula transmitted in Stockholm, Kungliga bibliotek, Cod. X 113, fol. 34v, whose *historiola* adopts the Marian motif of the Virgin seeing her own son in a pagan country escape from his enemy's hands. In the same way, the petitioner will be able to escape from his enemy's hands:

Myn wrowe sunte Maria de sach sik ouer mer,  
se sach sik in dat hedensche her.  
Dar sach se ore leue kint stan vangen,  
vnde bunden he entsprangh  
vt alle sinen vigenen benden.  
So mote yk vt al mynen vigenen henden. Amen.<sup>35</sup> (LINDGREN, 1967: 125).

Avoiding the possibility of capture is, on the other hand, one of the aims of two, almost identical, 15<sup>th</sup>-century High German prayers preserved, respectively, in München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm. 1020, fol. 45v and on the last leaf of Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cpg. 163, which recall the imitation of Christ:

Ich dreden hûde ûf den phat,  
den unser herre Jesus drat:  
der sî mir sûze unde gût.  
Nû helfe mir sin heilig blût  
und sîne funf wonden  
daz ich nimmer werde gefangen.  
Vor allen finden mich behûde,  
daz helfe mir die hêre hûde;  
behûde mich vor fliezen,  
vor swerten und vor schiezen,  
vor aller slahte ungehûre,  
[vor snöder gesellschaft und âbentûre]  
daz alle mîne bant  
enbunden werde sâ zuhant,  
also unser herre inbunden wart,  
dô er nam die himelhart. amen.<sup>36</sup> (HOLZMANN, 2001: 273).

Ich dreden hude uf den phat,  
den unser herre Jesus Cristus drat,  
der sy mir also suß und also gut;  
nu helfe mir sin heilges rosefarbes blut,  
und sin heilige funf wonden,  
daz ich nimmer werde gefangen oder gebunden,  
von allen minen fienden mich behude,  
daz helfe mir die here hude;  
[behude mich] vor fleyssen,  
vor swerten und vor schiessen,  
vor aller slachtunge ungehuere,  
vor schnoder gesellschaft und abentuere,  
daz all mynne bant  
von mir enbunden werde zu hant,

also unser herre Jesus inbunden wart,  
do er nam die himelfart.<sup>37</sup> (HOLZMANN, 2001: 273).

The petitioner invokes the help of Christ's wounds and blood in order not to be captured and to be protected from weapons, as well as from bad company. If this were not possible and he were to be captured, he asks to be able to escape immediately as our Lord ascended to Heaven despite being bound.

## 2. Generic protection

These last two texts can be considered a specific fight-oriented subcategory of charms and blessings aimed at guaranteeing protection in a wide spectrum of potentially dangerous situations. These texts can – according to their use of the efficacious word(s) – be divided into spoken prayers and written amulets.

Prayers of this kind are often to be recited in the morning (German *Morgensegen*) after waking up or at night before lying down in order to ensure divine protection for the coming day and can be more or less specific in listing the circumstances, in which this protection is required.

A 14<sup>th</sup>-century High German formula found on a piece of parchment in an old prison in Basel refers explicitly to the morning and to the action of getting up:

+ Ich wil hivt vf stan  
Ich wil in gotes namen hinnan gan  
Ich wil Ich wil mich begvrten  
mit den gocz worten  
mit den sige rinen  
mit allen gewaeren dingen  
daz mir alles daz holt si  
das sant dem tag vf si  
div svnne vnd ovech der mane  
krist selbe amen.  
Div helle si mir verspert  
ölle waffen sin mir ver wert  
want alein eis daz sticht vnd sunit  
swa mans hin wist. amen.<sup>38</sup> (HOLZMANN, 2001: 272).<sup>39</sup>

The petitioner expresses his intention to get up and leave in God's name, in this way he will be protected, everything will be favorable toward him, the doors of hell will remain closed for him and weapons will be ineffective when used against him.

The Low German prayer preserved in Stockholm, Kungliga bibliotek, Cod. X 113, fol. 34v, on the other hand, is aimed at obtaining good sleep as well as granting protection from places, weapons and people (both men and women):

Item yk slep my alle dusse nacht so rechte sote  
tho des benediden hilghen karstes voten.  
De benedide hilghe Karst het my vp stan  
vnde het my an sine benediden hilghen vrede gan.  
Sin benedyde hilghe vrede ys so gud,  
dat he my so wol behut  
vor ort, vor eghe, vor wif, vor man,  
des helpe my god vnde de gude here sunte Johan.<sup>40</sup> (LINDGREN, 1967: 125).

Similarly, the 15<sup>th</sup>-century High German formula transmitted on the last leaf of a manuscript of the Gymnasialbibliothek in Halberstadt (Nr. 22) invokes divine protection (*das er mich behude unde bewarde*) against dogs (*das mich neyn hunt bite*), wolves (*das mich neyn wolf eynrite*), worms (*das mich neyn wrm eynstichedt*) as well as against all the weapons which have been forged since Christ's birth (*das mich neyn wappen scahde, das hy gesmedet wart sin der cyt, das der helige krist geboren wart*) and against witches and magic (*das mich neyn herren torn hobergen und das mich neyn zobering gescade*):

Wis willekome, liber suntages hêre,  
ich sende dich us czu eym boden  
czu dem aldermechte[ch]sten gode,  
das er mich behude unde bewarde,  
das mich neyn hunt bite  
unde das mich neyn wolf eynrite  
unde das mich neyn wrm eynstichedt  
unde das mich neyn wappen scahde,  
das hy gesmedet wart sin der cyt,  
das der helige krist geboren wart,  
unde das mich neyn herren torn hobergen  
und das mich neyn zoberin gescade.  
in dem namen des vaders, des sones, des heligen gest. amen.<sup>41</sup>  
(HOLZMANN, 2001: 267).<sup>42</sup>

The reference to all the weapons ever forged since Christ's birth can also be found in a 14<sup>th</sup>-century High German formula found in a manuscript once belonging to the private collection of Don Luigi Pascoli in Emenonzo in Friuli (Italy):

Heute ich us ge,  
min engil mit myr geyn,  
dry myn waldyn,  
dry mych behalden,  
dry mich beschyrmyn,  
czobende czu gutyr herberge brengyn:  
das myr in den wogyn gesze keyn ungenade,  
daz mich keyn wofen vorsnide,  
daz y gesmett worde  
sint der heylige crist geborn worde.  
ab is mir us den minen werde genumen,  
daz is wedir in den selben seyn kueme;  
ab is mir wedir werde in di min,  
daz beide steche unde snide durch steyn durch beyn.  
dem heyligen cruce zy ich bevoln,  
der heylige hymelhelder zy mir obyn.<sup>43</sup> (HOLZMANN, 2001: 275-276).<sup>44</sup>

This prayer, which has to be recited before setting off on a journey, invokes angelic company to preserve, support and shield the speaking first person on his route and to lead him to a good shelter. Furthermore, protection from accidents (*ungenade*) and from all the weapons ever produced (*daz mich keyn wofen vorsnide, daz y gesmett worde sint der heylige crist geborn worde*) is invoked. As far as weapons are concerned, the petitioner wishes to retrieve them quickly if they are lost. Moreover, once these are retrieved, they should be able to stick and cut through both stone and bone (*daz beide steche unde snide durch steyn durch beyn*). The final invocation of the Holy Cross is a recurring motif which can be found, for example, in a series of Middle Low German

blessings transmitted in København, Kongelige bibliotek, GKS 3487 8<sup>vo</sup>, fol. 104a-105b.<sup>45</sup>

One of these Low German blessings (fol. 104b), on the other hand, adopts the motif of the Five Wounds of Christ:

Here dorch dyn hyllige vyff wunden  
macke my salyck van alle mynen swnden.  
Godeß hylligen vyff wunden  
sy my eyne arstedie nu und to allen stunden.  
Jhesuß van nazaret eyne konyneck der Joden. Jhesuß gynck dorcth dal myddel  
Joden in deme vrede. Jhesuß iß de leuendyghe godeß sone, de gecreuziget yß.  
de segene my vnd rechte my up to deme ewyghe leuende vnd beware my vor  
alle qwaet. god de behode my. Cristuß de beskerme my de nene my alle  
boesheyth. In deme name deß vaders, vnd deß soneß, vnd hylligen geysteß.  
Amen.<sup>46</sup> (BENATI, 2017: 129).

The text begins with four rhymed lines, in which a sinner asks for mercy and forgiveness of sins for the sake of God's holy Five Wounds – his medicine now and forever – briefly summarizes Christ's incarnation and death and finally invokes Jesus' blessing and protection against any evil (*de leuendyghe godeß sone de gecreuziget yß de segene my vnd rechte my up to deme ewyghe leuende vnd beware my vor alle qwaet god de behode my Cristuß de beskerme my de nene my alle boesheyth*).

Both the Cross and the holy Five Wounds of Christ are mentioned in a 15<sup>th</sup>-century High German morning prayer aimed at obtaining protection against both spiritual and physical evil, enemies and traitors that is preserved in a paper manuscript from Wolfsthurn:

Gesegen mich heutt das edlest pain,  
das die sunne ye vberschain,  
gesegen mich heutt das edlest creucz,  
das ye gewchs,  
gesegen mich heutt die hailgen funff wunden,  
die gott nye wurden vorpundenn,  
die müssen mich heut behuten vor allen mein veindenn,  
das mir kein shad mogen gesein an sele vnd an leyb,  
an eren, an gutt, vor verretersshafft vnd vor allen posen dingenn,  
das mir nymmer misselinge,  
des helfenn mir die vier spangenn,  
die himel vnd ertreich habenn vmbfangen,  
vnd die hailgen himelische kint,  
die in dem hohen himel sind.  
Mein Fraw sand Maria muss mier behutenn  
stigel vnd wege, stege, wo ich mich hin kere,  
in gotes namen amen. pater noster.<sup>47</sup> (HOLZMANN, 2001: 279).<sup>48</sup>

A generic protection prayer going under the name of *Brinniu bæn* “breastplate prayer”<sup>49</sup> can be found in the Icelandic *Galdrarbók*:

BRINNIU BÆN.  
HEÝR ÞU MIG HEYLAUG ÞRENING Fader Sonur og heylagur andi eyrn  
drottinn Skapari allra hluta Rijkandj i dyrdinni Med aullum þijnum  
heýlaugum Verttu brinia eg skioldur minar Salar lijfz og lijkama fyrer innan  
og utan fyrer sin og heyrn Smackan þefan og atekning fyrer holdd og blodi  
ædum og sinum brioski og beinum inyflum og aullum hræringum og  
samteingum minz lykama Sanliga fyrir þig drottinn vpplijfgist blasist og

styrkist og hrærist og heyler verdi aller miner lyder og limar geym þu mig Drottinn minn till hægri og uinstry handar i fyrer og a bak fyrer ofan og nedan fyrer inan og utan i nidur lotningu og uppriettingu minni i vedri mycklu i uotnum myklum og litlum i sio i bylgum i uillu mýrkrum i gaungu i stodu i sæti i suefni i uoku i þogn i tali og i allri hræringu minz lykama Geim þu mig drottinn minn daga og nætur uid hialpa þu mier gud allzmektugur i heylagri þrening ADONAIJ AGIJOS OTHEOS AGIJOS YSKYROS AGIJOS ATHANATHOS ELEYSON YMAS ZEBAOth EMANUEL frelsa þu Mig Drottinn Minn af haska daudans iardarinnar uatz og sioar allra dyra og sioskrimsla fugla og ferfættinga og allra skryd kuikinda.

Vernda þu mig drottinn minn af aullu illu af elldi og reidar þrumum af hagli snioar af doggu og uindi og af allre skielfingu og hræringu iardarinnar og af aullum illum monum af eitre fiolkinga af allri ofund augna tillitninga af illum ordum og uerkum og haskasamligum stodum af modkum mirkranna og aullum myddeigiz dioflum og fliugandi skeitum þeirra sem fyrer dagliga syslu eru fyrer gangandi i myrkrum þessrar ueralldar. Geim þu mig drottinn minn af allri sekt ouinarinz huer mig af helldur aullum godum hlutum hijer fyrer daudann og i daudanum og annarz heimz effter daudan þu drottinn gud huer ed lifer og rijker i heylagri algjordre þreningu eýrn gud um allar allder allda Amen.<sup>50</sup> (LINDQVIST, 1921: 36-40).

In this long text, which begins with an address to the Trinity, the petitioner begs for protection asking God to be breastplate and shield for both his soul and his body, inside and outside, for the five senses (*sin, heyra, Smackan, þefan, atekning*), for flesh and blood, veins and sinews, cartilage and bone and for all his body's movements at any time. Despite the armor metaphor around which the whole prayer is centered, however, no specific reference to war or weapons can be found in the catalogue of the dangerous situations in which divine help is required, which range from the monsters of the ocean to earthquakes, from creeping animals to magical poisons. Moreover, the final mention of "all the ostility of the enemy" (*allri sekt ouinarinz*) alludes to the Enemy par excellence – the Devil<sup>51</sup> – rather than to a human opponent.

Sometimes protection against various kinds of dangers is offered by written amulets, which have to be worn or carried. Many of these are introduced as letters – usually sent by Pope Leo to Charlemagne – and can be placed in the tradition of the so-called "Heaven's letters" (German *Himmelsbriefe*) and, in particular, to what Stübe (1932: col. 22) identifies as the "Holstein-Typus" of this genre.<sup>52</sup>

In the High German language area the oldest representative of this kind of amulet is constituted by the text found on a now lost fragment once belonging to the Universitätsbibliothek in München (Fragm. 135). This slip of parchment, which could have really been used as amulet (LEHMANN – GLAUNING, 1940: 138), transmitted a Bavarian version of the letter to Charlemagne dating back to the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century:

Das ist der brieff von babilon den der Engl kunig karrl sand vnd ist also bebärt wer de<n> | den mag den tag kain Eyssen nit verschneyden noch mag in kainem wasser ertrincken noch in | pey jm hat der müeß den leitten wol gefallen vnd wer den segen pey ym hat der müß de | ym hat der kan in kainem wetter nimer mer verderben vnd müeß von tag zw tag züe u | Fraw den brief pey jr hat so sy swanger ist so mag jr nimer misselingen vnd wer den segen | nimer verderben + Crux kristi sit mecum + Crux kristi est semper quem adoro + Crux kri<sti> | gloriam dominy | Crux christi soluit vincula mortis + Crux christi est venerabilis arma + | Crux christi sit michi protectio + Crux christi custodiat me Vlricum ab omni malo per virtutem | tuus vlricus Amen + Crux christi aufert a me omnem penam eternam + Crux christi saluat | me + Et post me + jn nomine patris + Et fily + et spiritus sancti sprich fumf

patter n<oster> | Müeß ich als wol geseget sein als der kelch vnd der wein vnd als das prott das | tag pott + Wenit epistola domini nostri jesu christi quoniam nomina schripsit et Misit karolo Reg<i> | quia me non vidisti et credidisti jn me Multi viderunt et in me credere noluerunt sed quia | expleure tempus recipiendi a patre meo mittam vnum ex discipulis meis thomas nomine qui curr | periculo Vlricy + qui me protegat et ad vitam eternam ascendat vt kristo epistola mea manu s | tempus + semper et salus eis in tempestate et sy in periculys fueris non formidabilis et mullo | esse poterit vbicumque fuerit + bely +<sup>53</sup> (LEHMANN – GLAUNING, 1940: 138).

Despite its fragmentary character (the parchment was cut on both the lower and the right margin and part of the text was lost) and the consequent problematic reading of some passages, this blessing already shows some of the recurring features of the genre, such as the repeated invocation to the Holy Cross, the use and contamination of biblical quotations (*quia me non vidisti et credidisti jn me*, John 20: 29 “Jesus said to him, ‘Because you have seen me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.’”) and other Latin formulas (*Crux kristi sit mecum + Crux kristi est semper quem adoro*),<sup>54</sup> as well as the reference to the amulet’s effectiveness against dangers such as water, fire, weapons and difficult labor. Differently from other formulas of the same kind, the letter is referred to as *der brieff von babilon* “the letter of Babylon” and is ascribed to an angel and not to Pope Leo (*den der Engl kunig karrl sand*).

The motif of Pope Leo’s letter to Charlemagne is widely attested not only in amulets, but also in spoken protection formulas. An example of the latter case is found in a 14<sup>th</sup>-century High German prayer transmitted in Wien, Hofbibliothek 2817, fol. 26a:

[...]  
überwinden mit kainem waffen.  
+ Gotes creucz sei min schirm.  
Mit gotes creucz sol ich alweg gan und sicher varn.  
+ Gotes creucz geb mir alles guot.  
+ Gotes creucz nem us mir die weis des ewigen todes.  
+ Gotes creucz hail mich N. und sei ewichlich by mir,  
ob mir, under mir, vor mir, hinder mir und neben mir.  
+ Ich empfilch hiut min sel und min lib in des hailigen gaistes segen,  
+ und in den segen den all priester über gotes lichnam machent,  
tuont und gebent: Der geruoch mines libes und miner sel all zit pflegen in gotes namen. Amen.

Daz ist der brief den der babst Leo künig Karl sant: der ist dick und oft bewert. Wer den alle tag an sicht oder liset, dem mag des tages kain leid wider varn, noch mag mit kainem ysen verschniten werden. Er mag auch in feur nit verbrinnen, noch in kainem wasser ertrinken, und wer in all tag by im tret, der verdirbet nimmer und muoz von tag ze tag uf gan an lib und an guot und an ern, und wer in by im hat an sinem ende, des sel kann nimmer verlorn werden. Amen.<sup>55</sup> (HOLZMANN, 2001: 264).

This text, whose beginning is missing, consists of two parts: the formula, a prayer to the Holy Cross, in which the petitioner invokes not only protection against weapons (*überwinden mit kainem waffen*), but also safety of travel (*Mit gotes creucz sol ich alweg gan und sicher varn*), good luck (*Gotes creucz geb mir alles guot*) as well as eternal life (*Gotes creucz nem us mir die weis des ewigen todes*) and constant support (*Gotes creucz hail mich N. und sei ewichlich by mir, ob mir, under mir, vor mir, hinder mir und neben mir*), and the instructions for how to perform the ritual. These

instructions, which begin by identifying the prayer above as the text of the letter sent by Pope Leo to Charlemagne, prescribe the reading of the formula every day, in order to be, among other things, protected from any form of pain or risk and from any weapon.

A similar ritual is described in a 15<sup>th</sup>-century High German fragmentary text transmitted on a parchment leaf preserved in the Universitätsbibliothek in Innsbruck (Fragm. 36). In this case, however, the positive effect of the blessing can be achieved both by reading the letter and by listening to someone reading it on a daily basis (*Wer den brief alltag list oder hoert lesen d ...*):

... . v<sup>s</sup>bend. Vater Ich enpfilch min gaist in din hend + Jhesus von Nazareth + rex iudeorum + Caspar baltusser melchor vnd ... / ... er vnd ain aue maria + Ich enpfilch mich In die verborgen togenhait da sich die hoch gothait in verbarg in die bewollen mens ... / ... die hoch gothait verberget In des priesters hend vnd wärlich da bist mit diner hailigen menschait mit diner sel vnd mit di ... / ... iligen flaisch vnd mit dinem hailigen pluet Die hailig dryfältigkait sy mir ain mantel für all min fiend vnd sy mich behiett ... / ... + Das hailig crütz sy min schilt für alles vnglick vnd sprich ain pater noster vnd aue maria + Johannes Veria Ich en ... / ... got sin ewigen sun enpfalch vnd du im sin sel enpfalchst in sin hend do du von disem ellend wolltest faren zue den e ... / ... der brief den baubst leo kúng Karlo sant Vnd ist dick vnd offt bewert worden Wer den brief alltag list oder hoert lesen d ... / ... ntlas Vnd mag Im kain hertzlaid nymer wider faren vnd mag in kainem für verbrinnen noch in kainem wasser ertrincken noch ... / ... verschnitten werden Vnd welchu in by ir haut der mag nit misselingen an ir geburt Noch kain mensch mag nit vnrecht ... / ... + Christus crütz ist ain waur hail + Cristus crutz vber wind die schwert + Crist crütz behiet mich allweg wa ... / ... s herren crütz sy ob mir + vnsers herren crütz sy vnder mir + vnsers herren crütz sy for mir + vnsers herren crütz sy mir ain schilt für all min feind sy syen sichtig oder vnsichtig. Min got ... / ... in künftiger richter + Min erlöser ich ermane dich durch dines vß valenden bloutz dz vß diner sytten floß + Vch + enoch ... / ... kait + crist sy min feind vber winden + crist sy min fründ + crist crütz sy mich behietten vor allem dem dz mir schädlich sy ... / ... b an guot vnd an er vnd allen dingen die nit nutzlich syen zue dem ewigen leben caspar + baltusser + melchor + lucas + marcus ... / ... Johannes + alles himelisch hör behiet mich hüt vnd alltag + In dem namen des vaters des svns vnd des hailigen ... + a ...<sup>56</sup> (HOLZMANN, 2001: 264-265).<sup>57</sup>

Despite the fragmentary character of the text it is possible to notice that protection against enemies and weapons is assigned to the Holy Cross, which is asked to get the better of swords (*Cristus crutz vber wind die schwert*) and to constitute a shield against both visible and invisible enemies (*vnsers herren crutz sy mir ain schilt für all min feind sy syen sichtig oder vnsichtig*).

The same indication on the possibility of either reading or listening to someone reading the formula can also be found in the above-mentioned manuscript München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 850, fol. 62r:

Dis ist der brief den bapst leo kuenigk karolo sant und ist bewert wer in bey im treid list ader hort lesen der hat XL tag ablaß und hat oen bestetiget und magk im kein herczlait geschehen und mag nit ertrincken noch verbrinnen noch kain waffen versneiden. Auch in welchem houß er ist do mag im kein fewer geschaden Auch wenn in ain fraw bei ir treit so sie mit ainem kind gat so gewinnet si ain frolichen anplick und wirt selig und got lieb und wer diße wort bey im treit so er vor gericht gat der kann nit vorlißen.<sup>58</sup> (HOLZMANN, 2001: 267).<sup>59</sup>



In this case, however, the oral use of the text as a prayer to be recited regularly is put side by side with its employment as a written amulet.<sup>60</sup> The list of the positive effects of the letter is, in fact, preceded by the indication that they are guaranteed to those who read the formula, listen to it or carry it as an amulet (*wer in bey im treid list ader hort lesen*). Moreover, in some specific situations – e.g. in case of pregnancy or in court – the physical presence of this textual amulet seems to be necessary (*Auch wenn in ain fraw bei ir treit so sie mit ainem kind gat; wer diße wort bey im treit so er vor gericht gat*), possibly because no woman in labor or accused in court could be expected to recite a prayer. In the manuscript, this formula is followed by an – only apparently independent – up-to-now inedited invocation to the Holy Cross (fol. 62v) comparable to those included in other texts of the tradition:<sup>61</sup>

Cristus kreutz ist ain wares liecht + *Cristus* creutz uber windet das swert + Cristus creutz sei mit mir Johans neben mir vnd ob mir Cristus sei mit mir an wegen vnd an stegen ader wo ich bin + Cristus creutz sei mit mir Johans mein schirm schilt vor allen meinen vienden sie sint sichtig ader vnsichtig + Cristus creutz sei neben mir vnd ob mir + Cristus creutz sei mit mir wann du dein creutz herre gehailigot hast mit deinem rosen farwen blut + Cristus creutz sein mein schirm vor allen meinen vienden sie sint sichtig ader vnsichtig vnde behüt mich heut + vnd all tag vor wertlichen schaden vnd vor totlichen sunden vor vnrechter demut vnd vor dem snellen tod Mein got mein herre mein erloser vnd mein zükünftiger richter ich man dich her deiner marter vnd deines todes vnd deines rosen farwes blütes das du vorgoszen hast, an dem galgen des hailigen creutz Durch mich vnd durch all tod sunder vnd bit dich lieben herre das du dein rosen farbes blut, an mir armen sunder nymmer wollest lassen werden vorlorn an der hailigen weinelickaid Saban Sathan Jhesus jseam sable salua principem viem + Finis no vinat + *Cristus* vinat + *Cristus* regnat + *Cristus* imperat et defendat me Johannem a malo + Caspar + Melchior + Baltisar + *Cristus* autem transiens per medium eorum ibat in pace Sanctus lucas Sanctus marcus Sanctus Johannes Sanctus matheus et omnes sancti benedicat Johannem imperialis maiestas + dirigat me in estimabilis bonitas + foueat me gloriosa veritas + protegat me regalis diuinitas + Defendat me immensa deitas et trinitas regat potencias potencia et benefaciat me sapiencia filij Illumiet me *virtus spiritus* sancti Alpha et o deus et + homo in mensa in vocato salus et protectio in nomine patris et filij et spiritus sancti Amen

Das heupt cristi das hailig hertz vnsers hern *ihesu* cristi der waissage ysayas die barmhertzikait dauides die weisung salomonis die güte abels die gesellschaft moyses der trouff danielis die gedult iop die gnad johannis die miltikait vnser lieben frawen sancte marie der frid des hailigen creutz sei zwisschen mir Johan vnd meinen vienden sie sint sichtigk oder vnsichtig vnd behüth mich Johan an eren an sinnen an allen meinen leib an sel an güt vnd an mut Amen<sup>62</sup>

A double function of the text as both prayer and amulet is also hinted at in a – partly inedited<sup>63</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>-century version of the letter inserted in a Latin manuscript once belonging to the Benedictine Monastery of Weihenstephan and now preserved in München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek under the signature Clm. 11601 (fol. 183va and 185va):

In nomine patris et filij et spiritus sancti Daz ist der brif den past leo sand dem edell kunig karlen + vnd ist auch oft geweit Swer den brif dret pey ym vnd in alltag list oder hört lesen oder in an sicht dem selben mag nicht geschahden er weder fewr noch wazz<er> noch eysen vnd mag auch nimer ermer werden vnd muzz von tag Ze auf nemen an leyb vnd an guet vnd hat in

ain fraw pey ir alz sy zu dem Kind get *der* kan auch nimer misslingen vnd swer in auch pey ym hat an sein lectzen zeyten *der* sel kann auch nimmer *vorloren* werden vnd auch vor gottz amplick nimer *vorstozzen* werden + das Crewcz ihesu *cristi* sey mit mir *johannes* daz crewcz + *cristi* pet ich an das crewcz + *cristi* ein woers hayl + das crewcz *cristi* vber vintet alle woffen + das crewcz *cristi* erloset mich *johannem* auz aller not + daz froleych zaychen *cristi* sey mit mir *johanni* auf wegen vnd auf stegen mit dem zaychen *cristi* vber wint ich *johannes* alle vner daz zaychen *cristi* vertreib von mir *johanni* all woyzz *der* ewigen tod + daz gotleych crewcz *ihesu cristi* selig mich vnd vor mein vnd ob mein neben mein vnd vnder mein van er dem pozzen vinfte vachen swer er erlicht an + almatyg got Ely. helig got + Elaysen got + Adonay starker got Tetragramaton kingleych got + fons + virtus + spes + karitas + Trinitas in separabilis maygestas rege an *johanni* ab omni malo + Caspar + Baleysar + Melchior dye kungleyche nomen alle drey behuthen mich *iohannem* vor allem vbel amen +  
fient sichtig vnd vnsichtig amen H X X X X<sup>64</sup>

No mention of an oral reciting of the formula is, on the other hand, made in the Middle Low German version of Pope Leo's letter preserved in København, Kongelige bibliotek, GKS 3487 8<sup>vo</sup>, fol. 105a, which is said to be effective in protecting those who bring it along with them against anything bad, weapons, thunder and lightning and fire, as well as helping women in labor and people in court:

Pawst leo sande desse segenyng konynek karlen, do he to kryghe scholde stoen. we dessen breff by syck heft, nene bose twngen mach en belegen, neen wapent mach en snyden, donre blixem mach en nichth scaden. In wylckem huß desse breff iß, mach neen vuer scaden. ock hylcke vroue by syck hefft wen se geyst to der bort, de entfanget vorlycke gaue van gode vnd heft gode leff.

Dus we by syck heft, wen he to reche geyst, mach dat recht nichth vorlesen, ock gut, effthe ere, wert he beholden by den luden. dyt iß de sulue segenyng, men dat de worde vorwandert syn.<sup>65</sup> (BENATI, 2017: 131).

A much longer version of the letter is transmitted in Nürnberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Hs. 5832 (15<sup>th</sup> century). This text combines, in fact, various Christian motifs, such as the Five Wounds of Christ, the Holy Three Nails or Mary's Virginity with the devotion of Jesus' last seven words on the cross,<sup>66</sup> which are reported in Latin and then systematically translated into German:

Ich gesegent mich heut mit guten stunden. Mit den hailigen funff wunden. Ich gesegn mich mit den hailigen drey negel die dir lieber hergot durch hend vnd fuß wurden geslagen. Ich gesegen mich heut mit dem sper gut daz dir lieber got durch dein rechte seiten wut. Ich gesegen mich heut mit der rainen durnen krone die dir lieber got in dein haubt gedruckt wart.

Nun gesegen mich das creucz prait do got sein hailige marter an lait. Were mich willen hat heut zu hassen zu slachen oder zu fachen oder sust kain ubel zu tun das mir mag geschaden an minem leib oder an miner sel oder an gut oder an ere den zornigen mut den las er faren vnd reisen fur sein fuss als vnser lieber herr ihs xps tet sein plut zu verreren do er an der hailigen marter stund. In xpo namen amen. Gotes namen darzu sprich V pater noster vnd V aue maria vnserm lieben herrn ihu xpo zu lob vnd zu eren.

Cristus creucz xps anlutz xps plut sein mir heut fur allzmenig gelub gut vnd muß heut als wol behutet sein vor allen minen veinden sichtig oder vnsichtig gelert oder vngelert vnd beschirmt sein als die lieb Junkfraw maria waz do sie irs lieben Kindes genaß amen.

Mein virsts haws wend stend in des hailigen xpus hend. Diese vier stuben sind mit engeln vberzogen das pater noster daz sint alle tur Das aue maria der rigel dar fur nu muß ich heut alz wol behutet sein vor dieben vor feur vnd uor allem vngeluck vnd vngeheur als do du mich fraw maria wast do du deins lieben kindes genast.

amen.

Der maidtum vnser frawen vnd der frid aller gotes hailigen der sej heut zwischen mir vnd allen meinen feinden sie seind sichtig oder vnsichtig gelert oder vngelert so mus ich als wol behutet sein vnd beschirmet alz du Junck fraw maria wast du deins lieber kinder genast. amen.

Herr ihu xpe ich befilch dir mein lieb vnd mein ere vnd min gut in den rosen varbes plut das ich lieber herr da deinen ruck an das heilig fron creucz test. Herr ihu xpe dein sel hailig mich dein leichnam behalt mich dem rosenvarwes blut das trenk mich. Das wasser das aus deiner seiten flos daz wasch mich von allen meinen sunden amen.

Gotes namen der helf vns herre Jhu xpe Ich pit dich daz du ewiglich seist bey mir der laidig feint der flich mich wo er mich sehe oder hore amen.

O maria durch deins kindes tot das uor dir hieng von plut so rot so hilf mir das mir wert der engel prot ee ich ersterb in todes not Dü gotes namen schol sprechen die ganz cristenhait amen.

Ditz ist die leng der dreijn nagel die vnserm herren durch sein hend vnd fuss wurden geschlagen. Wer die bej im treit der hat vierlay nucz davon. Der erst nucz ist an welchem tag sie ein mensch ansicht. So werdent im siben todsund vergeben Der ander nucz ist daz im kain falsch red geschaden mag Der dirt nucz ist daz im kain gaist nicht geschaden mag Der vierd nucz ist daz eren vnd gutz nicht zerinnen mag in gotes namen amen.

Das sind die siben wort die vnser liber herr an dem heiligen fron creüz sprach daran er hieng mit genaigtem haubt wer die beij im trait der ist lieb gehabt uon got vnd den leuten vnd auch von seinen feinden vnd mag in fewr oder streitten vnd wasser nit verderben noch kain gericht vnd jeher tod on rew vnd an beicht noch on gotes leichname nicht ersterben. Vnd welch fraw den brief bey ir trait so sie ains kinds nider komen will der mag nit milsingen. Das erst wort. Pater ignosce illis que nesciunt quid faciunt. Spricht teusch also Vatter vergib den wann sie nit wissend was sie tund. Das ander wort Ecce filius tuus ecce mater tua Sich deinen sun Johanes deinne muter Das dritt wort Hodie mecum eris in paradiso Heut wirst du mit mir sein in dem paradeiß Das vierd wort Consumatum est. Es ist alles vol bracht. Das sechst Deus deus meus ut quid derelinquisti me Mein got mein got wie hast du mich verlassen Das sibend In manus tuas commendo domine spiritum meum. Herr ich enpfilch dir meinen gaist in dein Hend + Famulum tuum Johanez protege + Salua Benedic + sanctifica + Morbos auerte corporis et anime.

Herr wann du hast mich erlost Mein got mein herr erlos mich vnd verker mir alles mein ubel Caspar bracht den mirren Melchior bacht den weirrach Walthasar bracht das golt.

Das ist der brif den pabst leo Konig Karel sant vnd ist offentlich bewert vnd wer in altag an sicht ez sej fraw oder man dem mag des tags kein lait wider faren vnd mag in kain waffen verschneiden vnd mag auch nymant die possen gaist vnd als pos gespenst nicht geschaden alz dan an dem anfrage vorn geschriben stet.

Johannes. Lucas. Marcus. Matheus. Die vier ewangelisten. Die müssen vnser end fristen ...

Jhesus nazaremus rex Judeorum.<sup>67</sup> (HOLZMANN, 2001: 265-267).

This long text includes two references to protection against enemies: may Christ's cross, face and blood protect the petitioner from all his enemies, both visible and invisible, known and unknown and may the Virgin take care of him, as she did of her own son (*Cristus creucz xps antlutz xps plut sein mir heut fur allzmenig gelub gut*

vnd muß heut also wol behutet sein vor allen minen veinden sichtbar oder vnsichtbar gelert oder vngelert vnd beschirmt sein als die lieb Junkfraw maria waz do sie irs lieben Kindes genas; whoever brings along the amulet will be loved by God and by people and also by his enemies (*wer die bei im trait der ist lieb gehabt uon got vnde den leuten vnd auch von seinen feinden*). The final part of the blessing also includes a reference to weapons: whoever – man or woman – sees Pope Leo's letter every day will, among other things, not be wounded by any weapon (*wer in altag an sicht ez seij fraw oder man dem mag des tags kein lait wider faren vnd mag in kain waffen verschneiden*).

Another High German – Allemanic – version of Pope Leo's letter can be found in Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, Ms. C 101, fol. 106r (15<sup>th</sup> century):

Dis ist der brief den babist Leo sante konig Karlen die er fart. Wer den by eme treit, dem kan keine leit geschen in wasser noch in für, noch kein armrost mag en gesciessen noch messer stachel etc. kan jn nitt verwonden, vnd welich fräwe mitt eime kinde get, die genest gare gnedelichen vnd wirt das kind selig gehalten. Auch tonner ader blicke mag dem menschen nitt geschaden, der ine by eme treit, vnd wann er vor gerichte get ader stet so kan er sin sache nitt verlisen mitt rechte. † Cristus ist ein wares liecht † Cristus sy mitt mir. auch herre, wan din heilges crütze geheilget haust mitt dim rosenfarwen blude, behüde mich herre in diner hude. † Cristus sy mitt mir an stegen an wegen und wo ich bin Cristus sy mitt mir vnd min frede schilt vor allen minen finden mördern vnd röbern, sie sin sichtbar ader vnsichtbar vnd behüde mich vor werntlichen schanden vnd vor helschen banden vnd vor eime schnellen tode vnd vor vngerechtem gude, min gott, min schöpper min hölfer min erlöser min zükünftiger richter. Ich manen dich vnd beden dich das du din rosenfarwes blut nümer an mir lausset verlorn werden vnd an der cristenheit. † Cristus viuit † Cristus imperat † Cristus regnat † Cristus me Gallum benedicat et defendat Amen. † Caspar † Melchior † Balthasar. Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat † Lucas † Marcus † Matheus † Johannes cum omnibus sanctis et electis dei me benedicat et custodiat Amen. † Thetragramaton † Emanuel † Sabaoth † Agios † O theos † yschiros † Athanatos. Das heilige crütze vnsers lieben herren die wissagung ysaye die barmhertzzikeit Daudis der lobesang Salomonis die truwe Jonathe die güte Abacuc die gestalt Moysi die truwe Danielis vnd die gedult Johannis vnd Jesu Christi die miltekeit vnsers lieben frauen fride des heiligen crüces si züschen mir Gallo vnd allen min finden vnd behüde mir min lib vnd min sele min güt min ere. Amen.<sup>68</sup> (WERNER, 1888: 233-234).

The positive effects for those who carry the present amulet are listed at the beginning of the text and include protection from water and fire, weapons (no crossbow, knife or spike will hurt them), lightning and thunder, as well as easy delivery for pregnant women and success in court cases. The formula itself is structured as a series of invocations to God followed by some liturgical phrases (e.g. *Cristus viuit*, *Cristus imperat*, *Cristus regnat*, a variation on the first line of the *Laudes Regiæ: Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat*) and biblical quotations (*Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat*),<sup>69</sup> as well as by various names of God and of biblical characters, such as the Three Kings and the Evangelists. Another feature of this text is represented by the presence of a name – Gallo – identifying the petitioner. The insertion of personal names, which can already be found in what we consider to be the oldest High German representative of this tradition (München, Universitätsbibliothek, Fragm. 135, where the name Ulrich is present),<sup>70</sup> indicates that these blessings were no more thought for the whole monastic community or for an anonymous person, but for the scribes themselves or for their clients (ERNST, 2011: 294).

Generic protection prayers and amulets can also be found in the English tradition and, in particular, in a number of 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>-century Middle English texts which are transmitted in manuscript rolls showing evident signs of use, possibly as birth girdles. Some of these texts are related to the motif of the letter sent by a pope to a king, even though “both the popes and their worldly counterparts vary from text to text” (BÜHLER, 1964: 271). This is, for example, the case of the amulet transmitted in London, British Library, Rotulus Harley MS T 11 (15<sup>th</sup> century), in which Pope Innocent VIII is mentioned along with Charlemagne:

Pope Innocent the viij hat grauntyd that who-so-euer, man or woman that beth, beryth the lenght of the naylis upon hym & worshipith deuoutly the iij naylis of oure Lord Ihesu Crist with .v. Pater Noster & .v. Auez & a Crede, he shall haue grauntyd hym vij yeftiz: the first yefte, he shall not dey of no soden deth nor evyll deth; the second yeft, he shall not be slayn with no swerd nor with no wepyn; the iij, that his enemys shall haue no power to ouer-comme hym; the iiij, that no poyson nor fals wyttensse shall not greue hym; the v<sup>th</sup> yefte, he shall haue suffycient gooddes & honest lyuyng in this world; the vj, he shall not dey without receyuyng the Holy Sacramentes of the Church; the vij<sup>th</sup> yefte, he shall be deleueryd from all wykyd spyritz, feuers, pestelens & other malicyeus. And thys ys the very lenght of Cristiz naylis which most be holdyn as relekys & worshipid deuoutly with saying of v Pater Noster & v Auez & a Crede.

This is the mesur of the blessyd wounde that oure Lord Ihesu Crist had in his right syde, the whiche an angell brought to Charlamayn, the nobyll emperour of Constrantyne, wyth-in a cofer of gold, saing this in hys tityll, that who-so-euer, man or woman, hauyng this mesur on hym shall not be slayn wyth no swerd nor spere, nor no shot shall not hurt the, nor no man shall not ouercomme hym in batell, nor fire nor water shall not noy hym, & yf a woman be trauelyng of child that day, that she shuld haue sayn the sayd mesur, that day she shall not perysh, but the child to haue Crestendom & the modur puryfycacion, for this ys provyd for euery man that goth to a sault of armes, hauyng thys mesur on hym, shall haue the victory & honour upon hys enemys. (BÜHLER, 1964: 277).<sup>71</sup>

The text is constituted by two supplications employing the motif of the length of the nails used to fasten Christ to the cross and of the wound made in his side by the spear of Longinus. Protection against dangers such as weapons, enemies, sudden death, fire, water, wicked spirits and difficult delivery is, therefore, committed to these two measures, which have to be worn and worshipped on a daily basis. Another significant measure – that of the length of the body of Christ – is referred to in another 15<sup>th</sup>-century scroll, London, British Library, Rotulus Harley MS 43. A 14:

This cros XV tymys metyn ys þe lenght of oure Lord Ihesu Criste. And þe day þat þou beryst it vpon þe or lokist þer-vpon, þou shalt haue þise gret giftis þat folowyth: The furst is þou scalt die no soden deth; The seconde is þou schalt not be hurte nor slayne with no maner of wepyn; The iij is þou shalt haue resonabull godis & helth vn-to þy lyuys ende; The iiij is þyne enmys shall neuer ouyr-com þe; The v<sup>th</sup> is no maner of preson nor fals wytnes shall neuyr greue þe; The vj<sup>th</sup> is þou shalt not die with-oute the Sacramentes of the Chirche; The vij<sup>th</sup> is þou schalt be defendid from all maner of wykkid spirites, tribulacions, & disseis, & from all infirmitees & disseis, & from all infirmitees & sekenes of þe pestilence; The viij<sup>th</sup> is yf a woman be in trauell of childe lay þis vpon her wombe & þe childe schall haue Cristendom & þe moder schall haue purificacion, ffor Seynt Cerice & Seynt Julitt, his moder,

desirid þise graciose gyftis of God, which He grauntid vn-to þem, and þis is regestird in Rome.

Salue decus paruulorum, miles regis angelorum. O Cerice, cum beata Julitta. Christe & Maria nos saluet in hora mortis nostre. Amen.

Preciosa est in conspectu Dei mors sanctorum eius.

Deus qui gloriosis martiribus tuis Cerico & Julitte tribuisti dira nephandi iudicis tormenta superare tribue michi Willelmo famulo tuo humilitatem in virtute gloriose longitudinis tue et venerabilis crucis tue preciosique corporis & sanguinis tui & omnipotenciarum & virtutum per intercessionem sanctorum tuorum concede michi triumphum omnium inimicorum meorum vt possum semper retinere constanciam per Christum Dominum nostrum Amen A.M.E.N. (BÜHLER, 1964: 274-275).<sup>72</sup>

As the first supplication in Rotulus Harley MS T 11, this prayer presents a numerical list of the great gifts (*gret gyftis*) that one will receive from bearing or looking upon the cross and then invokes the protection of Saints Quiricus and Julitta, the child and mother martyrs often mentioned in birth girdles. Variants of this formula can, among others, be found in Yale Library, Beinecke MS 410,<sup>73</sup> New York, The Morgan Library, Glazier MS 39<sup>74</sup> and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley MS 177 and London, British Library.

Three generic protection amulets are also included in the Icelandic *Galdrarbók*. The first of these, which is introduced as a prayer to be worn on oneself that can also be read shortly before meeting one's enemies, is made up of a rather long series of names of God and other, sometimes misspelt, biblical names and liturgical phrases in Latin (or Greek):

Þesse bæn á ásier ad berast i allskins háskasendum, vatz, siáfar og vopna, Item lesastz ádur madur sier móttodu menn sijna.

Iesus Christus Emanuel: pater et Domine. Deus meus Zebaoth, Adonaj, Unitas, Trinitas, Sapientja, Via, Vita, manus, Homo, usiono, Caritas et terus, Creator, Redemtor, Suos, Finis, unigienitus, Fons, Spes, jmas, et tu Ergomanus, Splendor, Lux, Grammaton, Flos, Mundus, imasio, paracletus, Columba, Corona, prophetas, Humilas, Fortissimus, Atanatos, Kÿrias, Kÿrios, Kÿrieleison.

Jmas, Lux, tua, Grammaton, Caput, Alpha, et primo Genue, isus, Agnus, ovis, Vitulos, Serpens, Leo, Vermus, unus Spiritus Sanctus, Helio, Heloj, Lamasabactanj, Consummatum est, jnclinate capite, Spiritus, jesus vinset, jesus imperat, Redemtor, Deus Abraham, Deus jsaac, Deus jacob. +

Uriel, Tobiel, Geraleel, Gabriel, Raphael, Michael, Cherubin, Cheraphin, Caspar, Fert miram, Meloiorus, Balthasar, Aurum, et trjva nomi, qvis Super pontavit, Solvetur, Avisibet, petate, Adam, Eva, jesus Nazarenius, Rex judiorum, jesus Christus Filj Dei, Miserer mej. +

Petrus, Andrias, jacobus, johannes, Philippus, Bartolomeus, Simon, judas, Matthias, Lucas, Paulus, Barnabas.

qvi me defendit a Canibus, in manus Comentuum Spiritum meum, Redemisti meum Verita tue Amen.<sup>75</sup> (LINDQVIST, 1921: 24).

The second formula of this kind in the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Icelandic collection prescribes carrying a magical name in order to be protected from hostile weapons, as well as from distress at sea and sudden death:

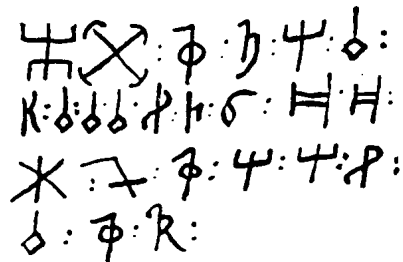
Huer sem þessi nofn ber a sijer þa ma hann eý i sio drukna og eý med uopnum illum æfast og eý mun hann illum dauda deygja og ey til skada verda:

Helon Hlouí Helion

Saa bonaij lux tetram Gramatus.<sup>76</sup> (LINDQVIST, 1921: 32).

Eluding anything evil is the aim of the third amulet preserved in the Icelandic book of magic:

Ef mann uill fordast það sem illt er haf þessa stafi aa þijer þa maa þijer einginn granda ey suerd og einginn pina ey ormr nie eytur huorki i mat nie drick.<sup>77</sup>



(LINDQVIST, 1921: 34).

Whoever wears these staves will not be harmed by swords or plague and will not find any worm or poison in his food or drink.

### 3. Concluding remarks

As the extensive – though not exhaustive – corpus of medieval and early modern protection formulas presented in this study should have shown, the possibility of a struggle certainly constituted a cause for concern for Germanic peoples, who, therefore, tried to advert it or, in case this turned out to be impossible, to obtain supernatural help before facing battle.

Protection charms and blessings can, according to their aim, be divided into two groups: those specifically aimed at protecting the petitioner from the risks connected with a combat situation and those invoking divine help and protection in a wide range of everyday situations and dangers (e.g. wolves, worms, difficult labor, robbers and thieves etc.). Specific in-fight protection formulas can be further classified according to their addressee – enemies or weapons – and, consequently, their *modus operandi*. A further category is represented by those texts which are aimed at preventing a possible consequence of a physical clash – capture – and / or at escaping from imprisonment.

Protection charms and blessings addressing enemies appear to be strongly influenced by Christian values and focus on making them as inoffensive as lambs (Swedish charm from Lönnemåla) or as a dead man (München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 850, fol. 61v) or on scaring them off (amulets transmitted in the Icelandic *Galdrarbók*) without damaging them. In some cases, both weapons and enemies are addressed in combination (München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm. 54, fol. 106b; Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2817, fol. 15b and 26a). Other weapon blessings adopt various Christian (e.g. Longinus, the Jordan, the Holy Five Wounds, Christ blunting swords and knives) and, in particular, Marian motifs (Mary's tenderness, milk and sweat, virginity and impossible second maternity), which often represent the point of comparison for the behavior of the enchanted weapon toward the petitioner.

In the case of negative outcomes, physical confrontation could result in imprisonment and captivity, a perspective which must have been as frightening as death,

as demonstrated by the very existence of charms and blessings aimed at avoiding the possibility of capture or at escaping from enemy hands. The most famous of these is certainly the first Merseburg charm, where three groups of Pagan female figures, called Idisi, cooperate to free a prisoner from the shackles. The same goal is pursued in a formula in Stockholm, Kungliga bibliotek, Cod. X 113, fol. 34v, which narrates how Mary saw Jesus escape from his enemies. Christian motifs are also present in two 15<sup>th</sup>-century High German prayers, which are aimed at preventing capture or, if this were not possible, at enabling an immediate escape, just as Christ did when he ascended to Heaven.

Protection against both enemies and weapons can be included in more generic invocations for help in various circumstances of everyday life, which can take the form of prayers to recite after waking up or before lying down or of textual amulets. In the High and Low German language area, many of these prayers and amulets are often to be ascribed to the long-standing tradition of Pope Leo's fictional letter to Charlemagne, which is intertwined with other different and recurrent Christian motifs, such as the invocation to the Holy Cross, Christ's Five Wounds or last seven words. In the English tradition protection amulets are often transmitted in manuscript rolls showing evident signs of use and appear to be based on the measurement of the length of either Christ's body or of the his nails and side wound. In the three amulets transmitted in the Icelandic *Galdrarbók*, on the other hand, we find two completely different typologies of formula, one going back to the Christian-Judaic use of the names of God as magically effective words and one employing magical – originally runic and Pagan – staves (Icelandic *galdrarstafir*).

This variety of both Pagan and Christian elements suggests that the fear of combat and, consequently, the wish and need for some form of supernatural help in order to avoid situations of this kind or, at least, to make the best of them, were equally present among Germanic people both before and after Christianization. For this reason, old protection formulas adapted their form and imagery to the new religion, but continued to respond to the same need for reassurance and confidence in the run-up to a fight that people had experienced long before conversion and the start of the Middle Ages, and would still experience long after their end.

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<sup>1</sup> The mainly defensive and appeasing attitude of medieval blessings addressing enemies is epitomized by the adoption of the motif of the Holy Trinity mediating between the parties, which is seen, for example, in the final part of a High German formula dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and preserved in London, British Library, Addit. ms. 17527, fol. 14b: “[...] Der water sei mit mir der son sei mit allen meinen winden. der heilige geist czwischen vns beyden. Der mus vns mit libe vnd mit togunt scheiden. et dic tribus vicibus.” (PRIEBSCHE, 1894: 18) ([...] May the father be with me, may the son be with all my enemies and the Holy Spirit between the two of us. This must divide us with love and virtue. et dic tribus vicibus). In this case, however, the aim of the text is not so much to guarantee protection against the physical attack of an enemy, but rather to put an end to a long-lasting enmity.

<sup>2</sup> Our Lord went to court and all the Jews fell silent. Similarly, all those who hate or envy me must be silent in front of me today. Amen. This should be pronounced when someone has to appear in front of court.

<sup>3</sup> “If you want your foe to be afraid of you whenever he sees you, then carve these staves on an oak branch and wear it in the middle of your breast – and see to it that you see him before he sees you.” (FLOWERS, 1989: 62).

<sup>4</sup> “If you want your enemies to fear you, always carry this stave under your left arm.” (FLOWERS, 1989: 64).

<sup>5</sup> “Carry these following staves with you, and your enemies will fear you.” (FLOWERS, 1989: 65).

<sup>6</sup> “If anyone carries these staves on himself, nothing can harm him all day, and his enemies will not have any power over him.” (FLOWERS, 1989: 63).

<sup>7</sup> When I see my enemies in front of me, may they stand in front of me as a lamb and may I be their wolf. May all people hold me so dear as God holds dear my soul.

<sup>8</sup> A good blessing for those wishing to be protected against their enemies. Make a † on the forehead and a † on the mouth, a † on the heart and say: “May the words which were inside our Lord Jesus Christ bless me today and may the peace which grew in our dear Lady when she gave birth to her baby bless me today together with the blessing which our dear Lord Jesus Christ will give to his chosen dearest friends on the Doomsday, amen.” Pronounce this blessing three times with three Pater Noster, three Ave Maria and one Creed.

<sup>9</sup> For your enemies say these words: “Si me queritis, sinite hos abire: Christus nobiscum in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.”

<sup>10</sup> Another good blessing. I look at you with good eyes and admonish you by the mild blood of Jesus Christ that you have no bad attitude toward me, let it fall beside me as our dear Lord Jesus Christ did with his sweat and his blood when he was on the holy cross, may you hurt me no more than a dead man from the grave where he is. In the name of God, amen. Recite five Pater Noster and five Ave Maria, amen.

<sup>11</sup> Oh Mary conceived without sin, there were seven women when you gave birth to your dear baby. Later you went sadly with him toward the bitter death. O Mary, I beg you in the same desperation that you distract all my enemies and impair all their limbs, so that no weapon may hurt me today and forever. Amen. Ave Maria.

<sup>12</sup> Lord God, protect me N. today by the holy spear wound made in your side by Longinus when he broke your holy heart; and may the blood which gushed out of the same wound protect me, so that all my enemies avoid me without pointing their weapons at me and all swords and blades do not hurt me as my Lady retained her virginity when God himself penetrated her.

<sup>13</sup> The Biblical basis of this motif, which is widely seen in healing remedies in particular for wounds, against bleeding and for the eyes, is provided by John 19, 34: “But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.” In the apocryphal *Acta Pilati* (5<sup>th</sup> century) this anonymous soldier began to be referred to as Longinus (SCHNEEMELCHER, 1990: 413). Over time, the legend around Longinus developed and other details were added. In particular, Longinus was more and more often described as a blind Jew, who regained sight after coming into contact with Christ’s blood (SCHULZ, 2003: 90-93; 137-138).

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, LEXER, 1872: col. 151.

<sup>15</sup> Though without mentioning any sexual intercourse between Mary and God, the motif of Mary’s virginity is not uncommon in protection formulas. See, for example, Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, Ms.

675, fol. 258v (15<sup>th</sup> century): “Ach herr got von himelreich, pehütt mich / durch dein vil heilligen sperstich, / den dir Longinus durch dein seyttten stach / das dir dein heillig hercz zeprach; / vnd peschirm mich durch das heillig plüt / das aus der selbigen wunden wütt, / das wir allen unser feintten entbeichn / vnd all ir baffen vor mir verbleichen, / ... . mich hewt vermayde / vnd vor mir pehalde ir sneyde, / als Maria ir maitum pehielt / das si maid wessent ir purd. / gott, pehutt mich vor aller schuld / durch den vnd durch das pratt / das gott sein heilligen jungern patt. / in gottes namen. / amen. / Maria, hilff uns hie / zu dein genaden ie.” (HOLZMANN, 2001: 274). (Oh, Lord from Heaven, protect me by your holy side wound, which was made by Longinus, who broke your holy heart; and protect me by your holy blood, which gushed out of the same wound, so that we avoid all our enemies and all their weapons fail in front of me. May ... avoid me today and refrain from cutting me as Mary preserved her virginity throughout her pregnancy. God, protect me from all guilt by this and by the bread which God gave to his disciples. In the name of God, amen. Mary, help us now in your grace.)

<sup>16</sup> If you want to enchant a dagger or a sword, so that it cannot cut, then say three times: “I enchant you, sword or dagger in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, may you be as sweet and humble while cutting as Mary when she gave birth to the Holy Christ. In the name of God, amen.

<sup>17</sup> I beg you, sword, by the holy blood of Christ’s wounds: may you become today as sweet toward my body as my Lady Saint Mary’s milk and sweat was when she gave birth to her dear child, may you not hurt me and no weapon or blade ever forged since Christ’s birth [hurt me], with the exception of my own. This must cut and pierce, unless it falls from my hand. In that case may it be enchanted as all other weapons. May this spell be as strong and effective as the holy Pater Noster pronounced by the priest during the Mass.

<sup>18</sup> I enchant all the weapons by God and by his holy blood, by his holy five wounds, which were made through his side. May all weapons be as mild against me, under me and over me and behind me and in front of me and beside me as the sweat of our Lady Saint Mary when she virginally gave birth to her dear baby; may no weapon ever forged since Christ birth hurt me. In the name of God.

<sup>19</sup> See *infra*.

<sup>20</sup> Our dear lady threw a rod in the Jordan. The rod stood still. So may all weapons be good toward my flesh and blood in the name of God, amen. May all weapons be good and sweet toward my flesh and blood as Mary’s sweat was when she gave birth to the holy Christ, in the name of God, amen. If the weapon falls from my hand, may it be enchanted with the same spell, in the name of God, amen, etc.

<sup>21</sup> The biblical basis for this tradition is represented by the episode narrated in Joshua 3:14-17: “So when the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of the harvest), the waters coming down from above stood and rose up in a heap very far away, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, and those flowing down towards the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, were completely cut off. And the people passed over opposite Jericho. Now the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firmly on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all Israel was passing over on dry ground until all the nation finished passing over the Jordan.” In some blessings, for example, the motif of the Jordan is connected with the most famous New Testament episode involving the river: Christ’s baptism by John. In these texts the water of the river is said to have stood still because of Jesus’ intervention, which was solicited by John, who needed the water to stop in order to be able to baptize him. See for example Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Pal. germ. 264, fol. 12r: “Christus vnd Sant Johannes gingen zu dem Jordan. Do sprach Jhesus, der gudt man: dauff du mich Johannes. Er sprach: ich enmage, herr. Der bach fleust zu sere. Vff hube Cristus sein handt. Also müs dem menschen geschehen [...]” (Christ and Saint John went to the Jordan. Christ, the good man, said: “John, baptize me!” He said: “I cannot, Lord. The river flows too quickly.” Christ raised his hand. Similarly must happen to this person ...) or fol. 14r: “[...] So sprach J. Cristus: worumb dauffstu nit? Da sprach der gudt Sant Johannes baptist: sie, lieber herre meinster mein, Nun fleust der Jordan. Vff hub unser lieber herre Jhesus Cristus sein gödtlich handt vnd thet sein segen über den Jordan, das er gestünde. Also gestand dir N. dein vngerechtes bluet [...]” (So J. Christ asked: “Why do not you baptize [me]?” The good Saint John the Baptist said: “See, dear Lord, the Jordan flows.” Then our dear Lord Jesus Christ raised his divine hand and cast a spell on the Jordan, which stood still.) In some other blessings the motif is connected with the staff Moses used to divide the waters of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:16: “Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.”), which becomes a rod, which is thrown into the river by the Virgin rather than by Moses. See also EBERMANN, 1903: 24-35.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, the Middle English theft charm in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale nouv. acq. lat. 693, fol. 193rb (early 14th century, possibly between 1311 and 1314): “God was iborin in Bedlem; / Iborin he was to Ierusalem, / Ifolewid in þe Flum Iordan, / Þer nes inemned ne wolf ne þef. / Crist and Seinte Trinite, Crist in Seinte Trinite, / Child with wolf and þef ous and alle oure au[h]te / And alle Godes crafte, / Seint Huue and Seint Luc / Withinne woves and withoute; / Seine ous alle aboute, / [Cr]ist and Seint Iohan þe Baptist. / Þat þou ne me <sup>P</sup>smitte / <sup>P</sup>Ne <sup>P</sup>þu <sup>P</sup>ne <sup>P</sup>b[i] <sup>P</sup>te! / <sup>P</sup>þou <sup>P</sup>stond <sup>P</sup>sti <sup>P</sup>lle <sup>P</sup>al <sup>P</sup>s a <sup>P</sup>stone, / <sup>P</sup>Starc <sup>P</sup>al <sup>P</sup>s a <sup>P</sup>ded <sup>P</sup>mon! / <sup>P</sup>Stond <sup>P</sup>alle <sup>P</sup>wey <sup>P</sup>sti <sup>P</sup>lle / <sup>P</sup>Ti <sup>P</sup>lle <sup>P</sup>hich <sup>P</sup>hab<sup>P</sup>be <sup>P</sup>ydon <sup>P</sup>mi <sup>P</sup>wil<sup>P</sup>le!” See also SMALLWOOD, 1989: 207.

<sup>23</sup> Saint John threw a rod in the Jordan. The rod stood still. So may all weapons refrain from hurting my flesh and my blood today, as our dear Lady on the Good Friday, when she saw her dear child imprisoned among the Jews. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen.

<sup>24</sup> Another good blessing, when someone does not want to fear his enemies and say so: “In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Today I want to surround myself with the holy five words, with the sun and the moon and with the holy body of the Lord; may those who are not good toward me today lose their force and courage, may they be as harmless toward me as a dead person who cannot move. May my weapon become as hard as steel and that of my enemy as weak as silk; may he be as unable to hurt my body as the Virgin Mary is unable of having another son. May the man who found his death on the holy cross help me in this, amen. And say three Pater Noster, and Ave Maria.

<sup>25</sup> See also ZINGERLE, 1891: 318.

<sup>26</sup> Our Lord Jesus Christ rode on an expedition, he blunted all swords and knives, ten fingers and two hands and told them never to cut or to cause bleeding, unless the Virgin Mary gives birth to another son. She has done that once and will not happen again.

<sup>27</sup> See also OHRT, 1917: 352: “Vorherre hand foor i herrefærd, / hand døved alle dragne sverd; / alle dragne vabne og verie hand saa, / dem tog hand od og eggen fra. / Stål, bliv som steen, / bid ej j kjød, skind eller been, / för Maria føder en anden søn / til at genløse menneskens kjøn! / Det var en gang, og aldrig det sker; i nafn (†††).” (Our Lord went on an expedition, he blunted all swords, he took all the weapons he saw, he deprived them of point and edge. Steel become as stone and do not bite into flesh, skin or bone before Mary gives birth to another son to redeem mankind. This has happened once and will not happen again. In the name...). The motif of Christ blunting the edge and point of weapons is independent from that of the second maternity of the Virgin, as witnessed by OHRT, 1917: 353-354: “Vor here Jesus Christus reed i hereferd, / døffuede hand alle dragne suerd; / alle dij vaaben som hand saae, / dem tog hand eg och odde fra / med sine 2 hender och met sine 10 fingre, met sit velsignede blod, met sin verdig hellig aand och met hellige kors, met sine 12 engle och met sine 12 apostle / fra klod / och vd til od. / Det huide skal iche bide, / det røde skal iche bløde, / förend Christus sig igien lader føede; det er skeet och skeer aldrig mere.” (Our Lord Jesus Christ rode on an expedition, he blunted all swords, all weapons he saw. He deprived them of edge and point with his two hands and with his ten fingers, with his blessed blood, with his Holy Spirit and holy cross, with his twelve angels and his twelve apostles, from the pommel to the point. The white one will not bite, the red one will not bleed before Christ is born again, which has happened once and will not happen again.)

<sup>28</sup> The motif of the Five Wounds of Christ – alone or along with that of Longinus – occurs frequently in charms, in particular in those aimed at healing wounds and/or at staunching blood, but also at guaranteeing protection, as we will see. See also SCHULZ, 2003: 72-74.

<sup>29</sup> Our Lord rode on an expedition, blunted all good swords with his blessed blood, all bad swords with his holy five wounds. In the name of the Father etc. Then read five Pater Noster and five Ave Maria. So he blunted them and I today for me and for everything which could damage me!

<sup>30</sup> Our Lord rode on an expedition, he blunted all swords: “Point and edge will not hurt me more than a wall could; iron and steel, cut and stab, you will not cut anymore and wil not bite more than a flat raffia does.” In the name of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. Amen.

<sup>31</sup> May the cross of Christ be with me, may the cross of Jesus Christ be over all crossbows ans swords, points and arrows, may the cross of Jesus Christ be over me, under me and around me in all four directions!

<sup>32</sup> This cross should be preserved at war: I want to rise again, said Christ, I want to go to Heaven. Heaven must be my shield and the Virgin Mary must be my sword, in the name of Jesus, amen.

<sup>33</sup> “Once sat women, they sat here, then there. Some fastened bonds, some impeded an army, some unraveled fetters: escape the bonds, flee the enemy” (JEEP, 2001: 112-113).

<sup>34</sup> See also HOLZMANN, 2001: 181; STEINHOFF, 1987: col. 410-418; SCHIROKAUER, 1954: 361; EIS, 1958: 27-29 and SIEG, 1960: 364.

<sup>35</sup> My Lady Saint Mary saw herself oversea and surrounded by a Pagan army. There she saw her dear child imprisoned and bound. He escaped from his enemies' bonds. In the same way, may I (escape) from the hands of my enemy.

<sup>36</sup> I walk on the path, on which our Lord Jesus walked, may it be sweet and good to me. May his holy blood and his five wounds help me, so that I never get caught. May they protect me from my enemies, may the Lord protect me today. May he protect me from flowing water, swords and projectiles, from all terrible battles, bold companies and adventures. May all my bonds be immediately loosened as our Lord when he ascended to Heaven. Amen.

<sup>37</sup> I walk on the path, on which our Lord Jesus walked, may it be sweet and good to me. May his holy pink blood and his five wounds help me, so that I never get caught or bound. May they protect me from my enemies, may the Lord protect me today. May he protect me from flowing water, swords and projectiles, from all terrible battles, bold companies and adventures. May all my bonds be immediately loosened as our Lord when he ascended to Heaven. Amen.

<sup>38</sup> + I want to get up today. I want to go on in God's name. I want to be surrounded by God's words, by the armor, by all positive things, so that everything may be favorable to me today, the sun and the moon and Christ himself amen. May the Hell be closed to me, may all weapons be blunt in front of me and cut and stick as they are told, amen.

<sup>39</sup> See also WACKERNAGEL, 1843: 42.

<sup>40</sup> I slept so sweetly all the night long at the feet of the blessed holy Christ. The blessed holy Christ let me get up and go in his blessed holy peace. His blessed holy peace is so good, may it protect me well from places, edges, women and man. May God and the good Saint John help me.

<sup>41</sup> Be welcome, dear Sunday Lord, I send you out to a messenger, to the almighty God, so that he keeps and protects me, so that no dog bites me, no wolf assails me, and no weapon ever forged since the holy Christ was born hurts me and that no witch casts a spell onto me and no magic damages me. In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

<sup>42</sup> See also SCHMIDT, 1881: 143-144.

<sup>43</sup> I'm going out today, may my angels come with me, three governing me, three keeping me, three protecting me, may they bring me to a good shelter, so that no accident takes place on the way and no weapon ever forged since Christ's birth hurts me. If my weapon is taken from my hands, may it be retrieved and, once it is back in my hand, may it bite and cut through both stone and bone. May I be committed to the holy cross, may the holy heavenly savior be over me.

<sup>44</sup> See also SCHÖNBACH, 1885: 348-349.

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, BENATI, 2017: 127-128: "Dat cruzce vnseß heren Jhesus Christi sy alle tyt myt my. Dat cruzce iß dat ick anbede. Dat cruzce vnseß heren Jhesus Christi iß my eyn wal heyl. Dat cruzce Christi vor wynnet alle smerte. Dat cruzce Christi up loset de bande deß dodeß. Dat cruzce deß heren Jhesus Christi iß my eyn wech aller dogeth. vormyddelst deme cruzce ga ick eynen nouelcken wech. Dat cruzce Christi openbart alle gut. Dat cruzce Christi mote my aff nemen vnd van my halen dat ewyge vuer vnd pyne. Dat cruzce Christi bouen my vnd achter my, to der lucteren hand, to der vorderen hant vnd in hwat steden he my an vecthyt so mote he van my vleen. In deme name deß vaderß, vnd deß sones, vnd deß hyllighen geysteß. Amen." (May the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ be always with me. The cross is what I adore. The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is my safety. The Cross of Christ overcomes all pain. The cross of Christ loosens the bonds of deaths. The cross of the Lord Jesus Christ is a path to all virtues to me. Through the cross I walk on a new path. The cross of Christ reveals everything good. May the cross of Christ preserve me from the eternal pain and fire. May the cross of Christ be over me and beside me, on my left and on my right and wherever I am. May my enemies flee in front of me. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, amen); 129: "Dat hyllige cruzce sy myn stech. Maria godeß moder sy myn wech. de hylligen vyff wunden moten my bewaren vor qwade selscop vnd vor qwade anweckynge nu vnd to allen stunden. In godeß namen. Amen." (May the cross of Christ be my bridge and Mary, the mother of God, my way. May the Holy Five Wounds preserve me from bad companies and bad awakenings now and forever. In the name of God, amen.); 132: "Duseß heren hyligen cruzce hyllige my, vnd sy ewych myt my, awer my, vnd bescerme my, vnd behode my vor warlicke schande, vnd vor deme snelicken dode. Dat cruzce godeß lose my vor den benden deß vngevuerß + Benedicat me imperialiß maiestaß + Protegat me realiß drinitaß + Custodiat me sempiterna deitaß + Benedicat me gloriosa veritaß + Dirigat me inestimabiliß veritaß + tangat me potensio patriß + In nomine patriß + et filii + et spirituß sancti. Amen." (May this holy cross bless me and be eternally with me, over me. May it keep and protect me from eternal shame and sudden death. May the cross of God loosen me from the bonds of reprobation + Benedicat me imperialiß maiestaß + Protegat me realiß drinitaß + Custodiat me sempiterna

deitaß + Benedicat me gloriosa veritaß + Dirigat me inestimabiliß veritaß + tangat me potensio patriß + In nomine patriß + et filii + et spirituß sancti. Amen.)

<sup>46</sup> Lord, make me free from all my sins through your holy five wounds. May God's holy five wounds be my medicine now and forever. Jesus of Nazareth a king of the Jews, Jesus went among the Jews in peace. Jesus is the living son of God, who has been crucified. May he bless and lead me to the eternal life and may he preserve me from all evil. May God protect me. May Christ protect me from all malice. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

<sup>47</sup> May the noblest pain on which the sun ever shone bless me today, may the noblest cross which ever grew bless me today, may the holy five wounds, which were never bandaged, bless me today. They must protect me from all my enemies today, so that I take no damage either in body or in soul, either in honor or properties. They must protect me from betrayal and from all bad things, so that I never fail with the help of the four claps which have embraced Heaven and Earth, and the holy heavenly children who are in Heaven. My Lady Saint Mary must protect me on ways and bridges and wherever I am in the name of God, amen. Pater Noster.

<sup>48</sup> See also ZINGERLE, 1880: 319.

<sup>49</sup> See also FLOWERS, 1989: 124.

<sup>50</sup> "Byrnie-prayer. HEAT THOU ME, HOLY TRINITY, Father, Son and holy ghost, sole lord, Shaper of all things, ruling in glory with all the saints. Be thou a byrnie and a shield for my soul, my life, and my body, inside as well as outside, for seeing and hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling, for flesh and blood, veins and sinews, cartilage and bone, bowels and all of my body's movements and connections. Indeed, for thy name's sake, lord, may all my joints and limbs receive life and spirit, to move, and to be strengthened and become whole. Protect me, my lord, on the right and left sides, forward and backward, above and below, from the inside and outside, when I bow down and when I rise up, in hard weather, in waters great and small, in the sea, in high waves, and in confusing darkness, when I am walking, standing, sitting, in sleep and while awake, in silence and while talking, and in all my body's workings. Protect me, my lord, days and nights; help me, almighty God in holy trinity – ADONAIJ AGIJOS OTHEOS AGIJOS YSKYROS AGIOS ATHANATOS ELEYSON YMAS ZEBAOTH EMANUEL – save me, my lord, from deadly dangers that threaten from land, from the waters and sea, from all beasts and monsters of the ocean, birds and beasts that go on four feet, and all creeping beasts. Protect me, my lord, from all evil, from fire and claps of thunder, from snow and hail, from rain and wind, from earthquakes and all kinds of movements in the earth, and from all dangerous situations, from worms, from all the devils of darkness and midday, and flying shots from them that daily are going out into the darkness of this world. Protect me, my lord, from all the hostility of the enemy, who wants to withhold from me all good things, here before death, and in death, and in the other world after death, thou lord god, who ever lives and rules in holy, perfect trinity, one god in all ages of ages. Amen." (FLOWERS, 1989: 66-67).

<sup>51</sup> In his Swedish translation of the text LINDQVIST, 1921: 41 correctly renders the word *ouinarin* as *djävulen* "the Devil".

<sup>52</sup> The term "Heaven's letters" derives from the legendary introduction, according to which they were letters fallen or sent from Heaven, in order to reveal God's will. The texts can be described as protection formulas aimed at prevention of diseases and wounds (in particular those caused by weapons), as well as from outbursts of fire and other accidents. This protection is very often connected with the observance of Sunday rest, which, in the original form of Heaven's letters, constituted the divine revelation sent to Earth in written form. This original nucleus was expanded in various ways, giving birth to two different textual types: the so-called "Gredoria (or Grodoria)" and "Holstein-type". The first type, whose name could go back to a distorted form of the phrase *Gloria Deo*, guarantees protection against lightning, fire and water as well as a good death to all those who recite the prayers listed in the letter and fulfill some moral requirements. The second type, on the other hand, is characterized by contamination from originally independent protection charms, among which the so-called "Charlemagne blessing". According to the legend, in fact, this blessing was sent by God to Saint Colomanus for his father, the king of Iberia, who did not believe in its protective force and tested it on a criminal. Seeing that the man could not be hurt by swords, poison or fire, the king finally had the letter copied. One of these copies was then sent by Pope Leo to Charlemagne, who had its text painted in gold onto his shield. See also STÜBE, 1918: 9; STÜBE, 1932: col. 22; STÜBE, 1932: col. 1007-1008; CLOSS, 2001: 656-658; ERNST, 2011: 291-300.

<sup>53</sup> This is the letter of Babylon, which the angel sent to King Charles and has been preserved ... no iron can hurt him and he cannot drown in water or in ... carries it will like the path and whoever has the blessing with him must ... with him will never be affected by weather and must day by day ... woman, who has with her the letter when she is pregnant, will never miscarry and whoever ... the blessing will never be ruined + May Christ's Cross be with me + Christ's Cross is always what I adore + Christ's Cross

... glory of God ... Christ's Cross looses the bonds of death + Christ's Cross is a venerable weapon + ... May Christ's Cross be my protection + May Christ's Cross preserve me Ulrich from any evil for the sake of virtue ... your Ulrich, amen + May Christ's Cross take away all eternal pain from me + May Christ's Cross save ... me + And behind me + In the name of the Father + and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit recite five Pater Noster ... May I be as well blessed as the chalice and the wine and as the bread which ... day offer + Our Lord Jesu Christ's letter came and was sent to King Charles ... because you have not seen and believed in me. Many saw and did not want to believe in me, but because. ... come the time to go back to my father, I will send one of my disciple named Thomas, who ... danger Ulrich + may he protect me and may the rise to eternal life as Christ ... letter ... my hand ... time + always safety in storm and if he is in not formidable danger ... may ... be wherever he is + bely +.

<sup>54</sup> The blessing *Crux Christi mecum, crux est quam semper adoro, / Crux mihi refugium, crux mihi certa salus* is attested as a distich from the 8<sup>th</sup> century onward. See also ERNST, 2011: 291-292; BISCHOFF 1967.

<sup>55</sup> ...overcome with no weapon. + May God's Cross be my shield. With God's Cross I can go everywhere and travel safely. + May God's Cross give me averything good. + May God's Cross take out from me the seed of eternal death. + May God's Cross save me N. and be eternally with me, over me, under me, in front of me, behind me and beside me. + Today I commend my soul and my body to the blessing of the Holy Spirit + and to the blessing, which all priests pronounce on God's body: may they always take care of the reputation of my body and soul in the name of God, amen.

This ist he letter which Pope Leo sent to King Charles: it is dense and high regarded. Whoever sees or reads it everyday will suffer no pain during the day and no weapon will hurt him. He will not die in fire or drown in water and who carries it everyday with him will never be ruined and will increase day by day his life, his goods and his reputation. Who has it with him at the time of death cannot be damned. Amen.

<sup>56</sup> ... Father I commit my spirit in your hand + Jesus of Nazareth + rex iudeorum + Caspar Balthasar Melchior and ... / ... and one Ave Maria + I commit myself in the hidden virtue, in which the divinity is hidden, in the ... / ... the high divinity hides. In the hands of the priest and you are really there with your holy humanity, with your soul and with ... / holy flesh and with your holy blood. May the holy Trinity be a mantel to me in front of my enemies and may it protect me... / ... + May the holy cross be my shield against all disgrace and say a Pater Noster and Ave Maria + I, Johannes Veria, a ... / ... God received his eternal Son and you committed his soul in his hand when you want to leave this misery to ... / the letter which Pope Leo sent to King Charles. It is meaningful and has repeatedly been appreciated. Whoever reads or listens to someone reading this letter every day ... / ... and will never suffer and will never burn in fire or drown in water ... / ... be cut ... / ... Christ's cross is real safety + Christ's cross is stronger than the sword + May Christ's cross always protect me ... / ... may the Lord's cross be my shield against all my enemies, both visible and invisible. My God ... / ... future judge + My savior I admonish you by the blood which flew from your side + Vch + enoch ... / ... + May Christ be stronger than my enemies + May Christ be my friend + May Christ's cross be my protection against everything which could damage me ... / ... goods and honor and all things which are useful to achieve eternal life. Caspar + Balthasar + Melchior + Luke + Mark ... / ... John + and may all heavenly hours protect me today and every day + In the name of the Father, the Sona and the Holy ... + a ...

<sup>57</sup> See also SCHÖNBACH, 1889: 393-394.

<sup>58</sup> This is the letter which Pope Leo sent to King Charles and it is valuable. Whoever wears it, reads it or listens to someone reading it, will have forty days indugence and nothing bad will happen to him. He will not drown, burn or be hurt by any weapon. The house in which it is kept will not be damaged by fire. And if a woman wears it when going into labor, she will have a happy moment, will be blessed and dear to God and whoever wears these words when going in court will not lose his cause.

<sup>59</sup> See also SCHÖNBACH, 1880: 187.

<sup>60</sup> The same double use of text as prayer to read and as amulet to carry is mentioned in another 15<sup>th</sup>-century formula preserved in Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, Cod. I D 8, fol. 157r: "Das ist der brieff, den bobist Leo hot gesant konigk karelo vnnd ist bestetiget, wer den brieff alle tage horet leßen, der vordynet hundert tage apas. Ader wer den brieff bey ym tret, der magk den tagk keyn herczleyt viderfaren. Auch in welchem hawsse der briff Ist, do magk keyn eygen fewer außkommen vnnde welche frawe dyßen brieff bey yr tret, dy do swanger ist, der kan iß nicht misselingen an der gebort. vnnd das kynt wirt allen lewten lip. † Cristus crewcze sey mit mir Anne. das wir alle tage anbethen † Das crewcze cristi ist das wore heyl † Das crewcze cristi sey mit mir Anne vnnd hinder mir. wo ich hyn kere vnnd wende yn allen enden, wen do hot deyn crewcze selbest geheliget host mit deynem heyligen rosenfarem blute † Das crewcze cristi sey mit mir Anne yn steten, yn dorfern, hewsern vnnd ym wege, wo ich hyn gehe. Ich schloffte ader wache. Ich sey off dem felde ader ym holcze † Das crewcze cristi sey mit mir



Anne, meyn schirm, schilt vor alle meyne finde. Gebenedey vor allem vbil. Amen. Caspar. Melchiar. Balthasar. vnnnd cristus gingk yn das mittel der Juden yn dem fade † Cristus von nazaret eyn konigk der Juden † heiliger got † starker got † heiliger vntotlicher got. Irbarne dich vber mich Annam † heyliger lucas † heyliger Marcus † heyliger Matheus † heyliger Johannes vnnnd alle heyligen gebenedey mich Anne vor allem vbel † behut mich die gewalt des vaters † behut mich dye weyßheyt des sones † Erlewchte mich dy togunt des heyligen geistis. † Das hewt Cristi das crewcz cristi dye weyssagunge Ysaie Dy barmherzigkeyt dauidis Die weyssagunge Salomonis Die tren Abrahe Die gestalt Moyses Das blut abel Dy kunst danielis Dy gedolt Job Dy gnode Johannis Die demutigkeyt vnsser liben frawen. Dy faden des heyligen crewczes Sey mit mir ym frede vnnnd behut mich vor allem vbel vnde sunden, dy mogen schedelich seyn an dem leybe vnnnd an der zelin, an gut und an ere. Hirre got behutte mich Annam. Durch des brotes vnnnd weynes wille das dyr aws deynere seytt floß vnnnd wünten behalt mich bey dir alz maria ir reynißmaytum behylt, do duo dich selber eyn vorslossen host, do sy eyne reyne mayt bleyb vnnnd ymmer ist ane ende. O hirre behut mich Annam vor aller not vnnnd vor eynem snellin ende vnde snellen tode. Got der seligmacher vnnnd ouch seyn blut Sey hewte meyn schilt vnd behutte mich vor sunden vnnnd vor schanden vnnnd vor boßer gesellschaft, von fewer vnnnd vor wasser, vor stechen vnd vor hoen vnnnd slegen vnnnd vor allem, das do magk begeben das lebenn, das fleisch vnnnd das gebeyn. Dw starcker got genant Der sey hewte meyn schirm vor allen sunden. meyn herre got erlöse mich noch hewte also du durch mich host geliden den bitteren todt. Die mayt dy Jesum Christum gebar, dye neme hewte meyner zelin war vnnnd meyner lebis vnd halde mich yn erer gewalt durch ere gutte manchfalt von der heiligen crafft wart sy mutter gemacht, das vyr starck an erer gnoden sollen seyn sy weyle wyr lebin. Das gebrawche durch eren son Jesum Christum, der got vnnnd mensch ist. herre got gesene mich deyne heylige dreyfaldykeyt, herre got durch mich mit deynere grundelöben barmherzigkeyt, herre got geseynne mich mit deynem lebendigen crewcze auß dir selbir host gemacht, domit du irlöst host die gancze cristenheyt, mich Annam yn der ewigkeyt Amen. Sprich drey pater noster. Drey Ave maria gote zcu lobe vnnnd seynem bitteren leyden. Amen.” (KLAPPER, 1907: 36-37). (This is the letter which Pope Leo sent to king Charles and is verified. Who hears this letter every day will have hundred days indulgence. But who carries this letter as an amulet will not suffer heat pain. No fire will break out in the house where this letter is kept and if a woman carries it when she is pregnant, she will not miscarry and the child will be loved by everybody. † May Christ’s cross, which we invoke every day, be with me, Anne. † Christ’s cross is the true salvation † May Christ’s cross be with me, Anne, and behind me, wherever I go, because you have blessed your cross with your holy pink blood † May Christ’s cross be with me Anne in towns, villages, houses and on the way, where I go, if i sleep or if I am awake, if I am on the country or in the forest † May Christ’s cross be with me Anne, my protection and shield against all my enemies, blessing against all evil, amen. Caspar, Melchior, Balthasar and Christ went into the fence among the Jews † Christ of Nazareth, a king of the Jews † holy God † strong God † holy immortal God, have mercy on me, Anne † May Saint Luke † Saint Mark † Saint Matthew † Saint John and all the Saints bless me Anne against all evil † may the force of the Father protect me † may the wisdom of the Son protect me † may the virtue of the Holy Spirit illuminate me. † The cross of Christ, the prophecise of Isaiah, the mercy of David, the prophecies of Solomon, the tears of Abraham, the image of Moses, the blood og Abel, the art of Daniel, the patience of Job, the grace of John, the humility of our dear Lady. May the thread of the holy cross be with me in peace and protect me against all evil and all sins, which can damage both the body and the soul, the goods and the honor. Lord God protect me Anne. By the bread and the wine, which flew from your side protect me as Mary retained her virginity because you have kept her for yourself, so that she remained virgin forever. O Lord protect me, Anne, from all dangers and from a sudden end and a sudden death. May God the Savior and his blood be my shield today and protect me from sin and shame, bad company, fire and water, blows, wounds and everything which can damage life, flesh and bones. You, God, who are called strong, be my protection against all sins today. My Lord God, who have suffered a bitter death because of me, redeem me today. May the virgin who gave birth to Jesus Christ take care of my soul and my body today and keep me in the grace, which let her became mother, so that we are in her grace as long as we live. May this happen through her son Jesus Christ, who is God and man. Lord God, may your holy Trinity bless me. Lord God with your infinite mercy bless me, Anne, forever with your living cross, through which you have redeemed the whole Christianity, amen. Recite three Pater Noster, three Ave Maria in honor of God and of his bitter pain, amen.) See also SCHNELL, 1983: col 32.

<sup>61</sup> This text is followed by a futher – Latin – version of Pope Leo’s letter (fol. 65v) focusing on the motif of Christ’s wounds.

<sup>62</sup> Christ’s cross is a true light + Christ’s cross is stronger than the sword + May Christ’s cross be with me, John, beside me, over me. May Christ be with me on paths and bridges or wherever I am + May

Christ's cross be a protective shield to me, John, against all my enemies, both visible and invisible + May Christ's cross be beside me and over me + May Christ's cross be with me, when you, Lord, has sanctified your cross with your pink blood + Christ's cross be my shield against all my enemies, both visible and invisible, and may it protect me today + and every day from earthly damages and deathly sins, false humility and sudden death. My God, my Lord, my savior and my future judge, I implore you by your martyrdom and death and the pink blood you have given on the holy cross. For me and for all dead sinners I beg that you, dear Lord, do not let your pink blood be lost on me, poor sinner, Saban Sathan *Jhesus jseam sable salua principem viem + Finis no vinat + Cristus vinat + Cristus regnat + Cristus imperat et defendat me Johannem amalo + Caspar + Melchior + Baltisar + Cristus autem transiens per medium eorum ibat in pace Sanctus lucas Sanctus marcus Sanctus Johannes Sanctus matheus et omnes sancti benedicat Johannem imperialis maiestas + dirigat me in estimabilis bonitas + foueat me gloriosa veritas + protegat me regalis diuinitas + Defendat me in mensa deitas et trinitas regat potencias potencia et beneficiat me sapiencia filij Illumiet me virtus spiritus sancti Alpha et o deus et + homo in mensa in vocato salus et protectio in nomine patris et filij et spiritus sancti Amen. May the head of Christ, the holy heart our Lord Jesus Christ, the prophecy of Isaiah, the mercy of David, the wisdom of Solomon, the goodness of Abel, the company of Moses, the faith of Daniel, the patience of Job, the grace of John, the mildness of our dear Lady Saint Mary, the peace of the holy cross be between me, John, and my friends, both visible and invisible and may the protect me, my mind, my honor, my body and soul, my goods and my courage. Amen.*

<sup>63</sup> Part of this text has been edited in ERNST, 2014: 293-294.

<sup>64</sup> In nomine patris et filij et spiritus sancti. This is the letter which Pope Leo sent to the noble king Charles + and it is also largely known. Whoever wears this letter and reads it every day, listens to someone reading it or sees it will not be damaged by fire, water or iron and will not become poorer and will increase day by day his force and his goods. And if a woman wears it when she goes into labor, she will not miscarry and whoever has it during his last days will not be damned in front of God + May Christ's cross be with me, John. The cross + of Christ I implore. The cross + of Christ a real blessing + the cross of Christ defeats all weapons + May the cross of Christ free me, John, from all need + May the joyful sign of Christ be with me on the way, with the sign of Christ I, John, win all evil. May the sign of Christ free me, John, from all seeds of the eternal death + May the divine cross of Christ bless me an be in front of me, over me, besides me and under me by the five wounds, which he suffered + amlighty God Ely. Holy God + Elaysen God + Adonay Strong God. Tetragramaton Royal God + Fons + Virtus + Spes + Caritas + Inseparabilis maiestas, rege an Johanni ab omni malo + Caspar + Balthesar + Melchior, may all the three royal names protect me, John, from all evil, amen + enemies, visible and invisible, amen. H X X X X.

<sup>65</sup> Pope Leo sent this blessing to King Charles when he had to face war. Whoever carries this letter will not be deceived by scandal mongers, hurt by weapons or damage by thunder and lightning. The houses in which this letter is kept will not be damaged by fire. Futhermore, the woman who carries it with her when she goes into labor will receive gifts from God and have a good life. Those who carry it when going to court will never lose their cause, goods or honor and will be kept in good consideration by people. This is the same blessing, but the words are different.

<sup>66</sup> The first attempt to number and group together Christ's utterances on the Cross we have knowledge of is Bede's Latin prayer *De septem verbis Christi in Cruce*: "Benedictum sit dulce nomen Domini Dei nostri Jesu Christi, et dulcissimæ virginis Mariæ matris ejus in æternum et ultra. Amen.

Domine Jesu Christe Fili Dei vivi, qui septem verba ultimo vitæ tuæ in cruce pendens dixisti, ut semper illa sanctissima verba in memoria habeamus, rogo te, per virtutem illorum septem verborum, ut mihi parcas et indulgeas, quidquid peccavi et commisi per septem peccata mortalia, vel ex eis procedentia, scilicet de superbia, avaritia, luxuria, invidia, ira, gula et acedia. Domine Jesu Christe Fili Dei vivi, sicut tu dixisti, *Pater, ignosce crucifigentibus me*, fac ut ego amore tuo parcam cunctis mihi mala facientibus; et sicut tu dixisti matri tuæ, *Mulier, ecce filius tuus*, deinde dixisti discipulo tuo, *Ecce mater tua*, fac ut matri tuæ me societ amor tuus et charitas vera: et sicut tu dixisti latroni, *Hodie mecum eris in paradiso*, fac me ita vivum, ut in hora mortis dicas mihi, *Hodie mecum eris in paradiso*. Et sicut dixisti, *Heli, Heli, Lamma Sabachtani*, hoc est. *Deus meus, Deus meus, ut quid derelinquisti me*, fac me dicere in omni tempore angustiae et tribulationis meæ, *Pater mi Domine, miserere mihi peccatori, rege me Rex meus et Deus meus, qui tuo proprio sanguine me redemisti*. Et sicut tu dixisti, *sitio*, scilicet salutem animarum sanctarum, quæ in limbo erant, adventum tuum exspectantium, fac ut ego semper sitiam te diligere, fontem aquæ viventis, fontem æternæ lucis, et ut toto corde desiderem te. Et sicut tu dixisti, *Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum*, fac ut in hora mortis meæ perfecte et libere possim dicere tibi, *Pater, in manus tuas, commendo spiritum meum*. Recipe me venientem ad te, quia non constituisti certum

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tempus vitæ meæ, et sicut tu dixisti, *Consummatum est*, quod significat et dolores, quos pro nobis miseris peccatoribus susceperas, jam finiri: fac ut in egressu animæ meæ audire valeam illam dulcissimam vocem tuam, Veni anima mea dilecta, quia jam disposui penurias tuas consummare: Veni ut mecum conscendas cum sanctis et electis meis in regno meo epulari, jocundari, et commorari per infinita sæcula sæculorum. Amen.” (MIGNE, 1862: col. 561). See also THURSTON, 1899: 5 and 41. Though not particularly frequent, the motif of Christ’s last seven words is attested in other blessings and amulets. One example of this was a Low German protection amulet transmitted in København, Kongelige bibliotek, GKS 3487 8<sup>vo</sup>, fol. 105b: “Ick bevele my in de segeninge, dede priester awer deme altare awer den hyllichen lyckam vnd dat benedyde bloet vnseß heren Christi spreck. Dat synt de hylligen souen wort, de de got sprack an deme cruzce. Dat erste wort, de du det also in syck heft, Welcker mynsche de dessem breff by syck heft de weet synen doet thovoren souen daghe. Dat ander iß dat em neyn mynsche fangen mach. Dat drudden iß dat he nich besetten wert van deme bosen geyste. Dat veerde iß dat awer em neyn ordel geuen wart. Dat vofte iß dat he nich steruen mach sunder godeß lyckam. Dat soste iß wylcker vrouwe, de dese breff by syck heft wen se geyt to der bort vnd kann der bort nich genesen, de legge desse breff vp ere navel so wart se geloset.” (BENATI, 2017: 126) (I commit myself to the blessing, which the priest pronounces on the altar over the holy body and blood of our Lord Christ. These are the holy seven words, which were pronounced by God on the cross. The first word: whoever carries this letter will know the moment of his death seven days in advance. The second is that he will not be captured. The third is that he will not be buried by bad spirits. The fourth is that he will not be judged. The fifth is that he will not die without the holy Communion. The sixth is that the woman who carries this letter when she goes into labor and has a difficult delivery should put the letter onto the navel in order to deliver). The peculiarity of this text is represented by the fact that, instead of recalling the evangelical passages referring to Christ’s seven utterances, it labels as Christ’s words six positive effects of bringing along the amulet.

<sup>67</sup> I bless me today with the good hours, with the holy five wounds. I bless me with the holy three nails, which were hammered into your hands and feet, dear Lord. I bless me today with the spear, which wounded your right side, dear God. I bless me today with the pure crown of thorns, which was put onto your head, dear God. May the wide cross on which God suffered his martyrdom bless me now. May those who want to hate or hit me today be unable to hurt me, my body, soul, goods or honor, may they lose their anger and let it go as our dear Lord Jesus Christ did when he let his blood flow during his martyrdom. In Christ’s name, amen. God’s name, then pronounce five Pater Noster and five Ave Maria in honor of our dear Lord Jesus Christ. Christ’s cross, Christ’s face, Christ’s blood be favorable to me today and may I be well protected against all my enemies, both visible and invisible, both cultivated and ignorant and my I be as safe as the Virgin Mary when she gave birth to her son, amen. May my house be in the hands of the holy Christ. May these four rooms be protected by angels, may the Pater Noster be its doors and the Ave Maria the locks, so that I am from now on protected against thieves, fire and all disgrace as you, Lady Mary, were when you gave birth to your dear baby. May the virginity of our Lady and the peace of all the Saints of God be today between me and all my enemies, both visible and invisible, both known and unknown, so that I am so safe and protected as you, Virgin Mary, when you gave birth to you dear baby. Lord Jesus Christ I commit to you my body, my honor and my goods by the pink blood which came out of your back on the holy cross. Lord Jesus Christ, may your blessing sanctify me, may your body preserve me, may your pink blood fill me. May the water, which flew from your side, wash me from all my sins, amen. In the name of God may the Lord Jesus Christ help us. I beg you that you are eternally with me, so that the maleficent enemy flees from me whenever he sees or hears me, amen. Oh Mary, help me by the death of your child, who hang in front of you bleeding, so that I get the angel’s bread before I die. You, God’s name, should be pronounced by the whole Christianity, amen. This is the length of the three nails, which were hammered through our Lord’s hands and feet. Whoever carries it will have great advantages. The first is that on the day a person sees it, seven deadly sins are forgiven to him/her. The second advantage is that no-one can damage him with lies. The third that no spirit can damage him. The fourth that neither his honor or his goods can diminish in the name of God, amen. These are the seven words, which our Lord pronounced on the cross while hanging with lowered head, whoever wears them is loved by both God and people and by his enemies as well, and will not perish in fire, battle or water, will not be condemned in court and will not die without confession and communion. The women who have this letter with them when they go into labor will not miscarry. The first word: Pater ignosce illis qui nesciunt quid faciunt. In German: Father forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing. The second word: Ecce filius tuus ecce mater tua. See your son, John, see your mother. The third word: Hodie mecum eris in paradiso. Today you will be with me in Heaven. The fourth: Consummatum est. It is completed. The sixth: Deus deus meus ut quid derelinquisti me. My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? The seventh: In manus tua commendo domine spiritum meum. Lord, I commit my spirit in your hands +

Famulum tuum Johanez protege + Salua Benedic + sanctifica + Morbos auerte corporis et anime. Lord when you saved me, God my Lord save me and turn all my evil actions into good. Caspar brought myrrh, Melchior brought incense, Balthasar brought gold. This is the letter which Pope Leo sent to King Charles and it is widely appreciated and whoever sees it everyday, both man or woman, will suffer no pain and no weapon will hurt him/her, no bad spirit of ghost will damage him/her as it is written at the beginning. John. Luke. Mark. Matthew. The four evangelists must protect us. Jhesus Nazarenus rex Judeorum.

<sup>68</sup> This is the letter which Pope Leo sent to King Charles before he left. Whoever carries it, will suffer no pain in water or fire and no crossbow will shoot him or knife or spike will hurt him. Pregnant women will deliver without problems and the child will be blessed. No thunder or lightning will damage the person who wears it and when he goes into court he will never lose † Christ is a true light † May Christ be with me, also when, Lord, you have sanctified the holy cross with your pink blood, keep me, Lord in your protection. † May Christ be with me on the way and wherever I am, may he protect me from all my enemies, from murderers and robbers, both visible and invisible, may he protect me from worldly disonor, infernal bounds, a sudden death and unjustified good. My Lord, my creator, my helper, my savior, my future judge, I beg and implore you that you do not let your pink blood be waisted on me and on Christianity. † Cristus uiuit † Cristus imperat † Cristus regnat † Cristus me Gallum benedicat et defendat Amen. † Caspar † Melchior † Balthasar. Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat † Lucas † Marcus † Matheus † Johannes cum omnibus sanctis et electis die me benedicat et custodiat Amen. † Thetragramaton † Emanuel † Sabaoth † Agios † O theos † yschiros † Athanatos. May the holy cross our dear Lord, the prophecy of Isaiah, the mercy of David, the praise of Solomon, the faith of Jonathan, the kindness of Abacuc, the figure of Moses, the faith of Daniel and the patience of John and Jesus Christ, the mildness of our dear Lady and the peace of the holy cross be between me, Gallo, and all my enemies and may they protect me, my body, my soul, my goods and my honor. Amen.

<sup>69</sup> This sentence is borrowed from Luke 4:30: “But passing through the midst of them, He went His way” and appears in various protection charms, mainly for traveling, but also against bladed weapons, enemies, murderers, criminals in general and thieves. See also LECOUTEUX, 2014: 186-187.

<sup>70</sup> See also the blessings in München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm. 850, fol. 61v and Clm. 11601, fol. 183va-185va, in both of which the petitioner is repeatedly mentioned and is called Johannes, or the one in Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, Cod. I D 8, fol. 157r, which, on the other hand, appears to be aimed at protecting a woman called Anna.

<sup>71</sup> See also SKEMER, 2006: 263-264.

<sup>72</sup> See also MORSE, 2013: 194-197.

<sup>73</sup> MORSE, 2013: 196-197: “Thys crosse .xv. tymes moten is þe lenght of our lorde ihesu criste & what day ye loke þeron or blysse ye þerwyth or bere it upon ye with deuocion þer shall no wykyd spyryt nor none enmyes haue pour to hurte ye slepyng nor wakyng. nor thundryng. nor lyghtnyng. wyndes nor wedirs on lande nor water nor wyth no wapen be slayne ne dye withoute confession and yf a woman haue this crosse on hyr when she trauelith of chylde þe chylde & she shall be departyd without peryll of dethe be the grace of god. Saynt Cyryace and saynt Iulite hys modyr desyryd thys petycyon of god and he graunted it them. As it is regystred in Rome at saynt Iohn latynes.”

<sup>74</sup> BÜHLER, 1964: 275: “This crosse .XV. tymes metyn is þe trew lenth of our Lorde Ihesu Criste. And þat day that þou lokes on it er beris it a-pone the, that day sall no wekid sprete haue pouer to hurte þe. Thonour ne leuenyng, slepyng ne wakyng, shal not harme the. In batell þou shalt not be slayn, ne dy of no maner of wepyn, with-uten the Sacramentes of the Kirke ne þou salt not dy no sodan ne evill dede. Fire ne water salt not hurte the. And if a woman trawell of childe, take þis crosse and lay it one hyr wome and she shalbe hastely be delyuerede with joy with-uten perell, the childe to haue Cristendom and þe moder purificacion of Haly Kirk. For Seynt Cerice ans Seynt Julite, his moder, desired thes of almyghty Gode, the wich He grauntede þame. This is registrede at Rome in Seynt John Laternence.

Antiphona. Salue decus paruolorum miles reges angelorum. O Cerice cum beata genitrice tua Iulitta. Christe et Maria nos saluet in hora mortis. Amen. Versus. Preciosa est in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum eius. Deus qui gloriosis martiribus tuis Cerice & Julitte dira nephandi iudicis tormenta superare fecisti, tribue michi famulo tuo N humilitatem et virtutem gloriose longitudinis tue, & venerabilis crucis tue, preciosique corporis & sanguinis tui, & omnipotencias & virtutes tuas, et per intercessionem sanctorum tuorum concedas michi triumphum omnium inimicorum, vt et possim semper retinere constanciam. Amen.”

<sup>75</sup> “This prayer ought to be worn on oneself in all kinds of dangers that threaten from water, sea, and weapons. It should also be read just before one sees one’s enemies [...]” (FLOWERS, 1989: 59).

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<sup>76</sup> “Whoever carries this name on himself cannot be drowned in the sea, nor be struck by hostile weapons; now will he die an unpleasant death, and neither come to harm: Holn Heloui Helion Saan bonaij teram Gramatus.” (FLOWERS, 1989: 63).

<sup>77</sup> “If you wish to elude something that is evil, then carry these staves with you so that nothing can harm you, no sword and no plague; neither [will there be] any worm nor poison in your food or drink.” (FLOWERS, 1989: 65).