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European and American scholarship and the study of medieval Irish ‘magic’ (1846–1960)

Jacqueline Borsje

Introduction

Two millennia ago, the Roman intellectual Gaius Plinius Secundus (23–79 CE), also known as Pliny the Elder, wrote about remedies and medicine.¹ He formulates an ‘important’ and ‘never-settled’ question in his famous *Natural History*: ‘Have words and formulated incantations any effect?’² He begins by stating that the wisest men reject this belief, while the general public believes it unconsciously. Then, however, he gives many examples in which words (and rituals) have been effective.

What Pliny refers to are – what I call – ‘words of power’: words with which people believe themselves to be able to influence reality in a supernatural way. I use the term ‘supernatural’ as a descriptive tool for the non-empirical dimension of life, which is crucial to religious belief cultures. This neutral term can be applied to notions found in any religion. There are various verbal-power genres: curses, blessings, prayers, satire, spells and so on. All over the world, people use such utterances/texts as religious/linguistic proactive/reactive

strategic devices in order to enhance their lives. The doubts that Pliny expressed about their efficacy have multiplied in secularised cultures, but the use of powerful words has never been abandoned.

‘Magical texts’, such as spells, charms and incantations, form one genre among these words of power. Recent developments in international scholarship have shown an increased interest in this genre: many publications on various magical texts, objects and rituals have seen the light in the past decades.³ In 2000, however, John Carey noted the virtual absence of medieval Irish magical texts in these studies and a predominant focus on the twelfth century and later.⁴ Irish culture is a crucial hinge between late-antique and medieval culture.⁵ As is reflected in the present volume for instance, several Celticists are now researching this important field. It is worthwhile investigating what kind of attention Celticists paid to magical texts in the early decades of the discipline. We need to study which theoretical, and especially religious, concepts influenced them. If we do not position them within the mentality history of Europe and beyond,⁶ if we do not grasp which time- and place-bound concepts are implicit in their descriptions, our thinking is influenced by the biases inherent in them as well without our being aware of this. We need to study which historical, cultural, intellectual and religious factors were influential in the lives and output of these scholars. This brief chapter is a modest initiative for studying the following question. What scholarship was devoted to medieval Irish ‘magical texts’ from roughly the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century?

This chapter will give an introduction to the first century of research into verbal power by Celticists, focusing on the so-called magical texts – a term that I shall use to include charms, spells and incantations.⁷ I subscribe to the view that magical texts are characterised by a claim, sometimes implicit, that the words possess intrinsic power. They may contain foreign words and mysterious language that makes use of obscure, cryptic and highly symbolic utterances. Because this chapter is based on the views of our scholarly predecessors, I have included texts that fall under my umbrella term ‘words of power’ but that need not be magical texts in the strict sense. I will note when such sister genres occur and treat them as examples of the wealth of Irish forms of verbal power, without giving a full bibliography. I have divided the material under three headings: survey studies, clustered collections and studies of individual texts.

1. Survey studies

Pioneering work was done by Heinrich Friedrich Zimmer (1851–1910) from Germany. In 1895, he published an article on the term *éle*, which he translated as *Zauberspruch*, *Zaubergesang* (spell, incantation/charm).⁸ His etymology of the term was disputed by the Irish Whitley Stokes (1830–1909)⁹ and Danish Holger Pedersen (1867–1953).¹⁰ Despite the debatability of the etymology, Zimmer’s methodological approach of how to study such a text and textual genre can nevertheless be called exemplary. He discovered a spell in a ninth/tenth-century Old-English collection of medical reference books known as Bald’s *Leechbook* (London, British Library, Royal 12 D xvii).¹¹ The editor could not recognize the language of the spell,¹² despite the fact that the manuscript itself identifies it as Irish; Zimmer confirmed this identification. He interpreted the words *helæ* and *hæle* from the *Leechbook* spell as Old-Irish (*h*)*éle* – the self-referential term of the spell. He compared the language and

structure of this *éle*-spell with other medieval Irish verbal-power texts (especially those in the eighth/ninth-century Stowe Missal and Sankt-Gallen manuscript leaf; see below) and with texts in other genres. He made a survey of instances of the term *éle* as it is found in medieval Irish literature, and mentioned other spells called *éle*, of which one exists outside a narrative context (the *éle* from *An Leabhar Breac*, ‘The Speckled Book’; see below). This methodology is still valid today: Irish magical texts need to be studied not only within the context of verbal power but also in relation to all Irish literary genres; moreover, they need to be compared with spells in different languages. The often bi- or multilingual character of verbal power pleads for this approach.

The *Dictionary of the Irish Language* translates *éle* not only as ‘charm, incantation’, but also as ‘prayer’.¹³ The overlapping of the textual genres spell and prayer is highly problematic to certain dominant Christian discourse models, according to which the former is ‘unorthodox’ and the latter ‘orthodox’; yet verbal-power material displays such overlapping. Using the umbrella term ‘words of power’ may broaden our view beyond such dominant discourse/terminology so that we study differentiated religious belief cultures in an open, non-normative way. Various sorts of religious belief cultures may co-exist with dominant models and may even be adhered to by a majority of the population in certain places and periods of time. Numerically, supposedly ‘heterodox’ culture may be in the majority, while within the dominant religious power structure, it is judged as heretical, foolish or wrong.

The (Anglo-)Irish scholar Eleanor Hull (1860–1935) showed her awareness of this overlapping of genres when she published a survey article that emphasised the link between

hymns and charms.¹⁴ She first described protective hymns from the eleventh-century *Liber Hymnorum* that were accredited with supernatural power,¹⁵ and then devoted her article to another protective genre called *lorica* (literally: ‘breastplate’). She compared the medieval texts with modern ones from Ireland and Scotland, and rounded off by referring to the presence of charms in the Middle-Irish metrical tracts and in liturgical manuscripts and prayer books, such as the Sankt-Gallen leaf, the Stowe Missal, the Book of Nunnaminster (eight/ninth century) and the Book of Cerne (eighth/ninth century). She divided her material into two groups: first, the hymns that were formed upon a foreign ecclesiastical model – even though ‘composed as charms or believed by later reciters to contain definite charm-power’ – and second, the *lorica* genre together with the similar ‘native charms’.¹⁶ Hull’s article leaves the reader with an impression of the interconnectedness of the material in content, use/function and manuscript context, despite her use of a twofold classification loosely based on a foreign–native contrast.

Further important survey studies followed. The years 1911 and 1912 saw the appearance of ground-breaking work by the Breton Louis Gougaud (1877–1941); Gougaud catalogued *loricae*, followed by hymns and prayers comparable to the *lorica*.¹⁷ He described the literary-cultural background and international comparanda of the *lorica*, listed its structural elements, and explained its use. He dedicated a separate section to a comparison with magical texts, noting a deeply rooted popular belief in ‘the sovereign force of mysterious formulae, the efficacy of “powerful words”’.¹⁸ The American Fred Norris Robinson (1871–1966) described the importance of satire and its connection with spells or incantations in 1912.¹⁹ His article contains a useful survey of relevant terminology and portrays the Irish material (narratives and law texts) in an international context. Another

American, John Revell Reinhard (1893–1974), published his monograph on *geis* (prohibition, injunction, ‘tabu’, spell/incantation) in 1933; material of relevance to the present study plays an important role in this book, especially in the final chapter on ‘magic, spells and transformations’.²⁰ Zimmer’s wish that a Celticist should look at the Anglo-Saxon manuscript in which he found the Irish *éle*/spell was more than fulfilled in 1945, when another American, Howard Maxwell Meroney (1905–91), made a survey of Irish words and phrases in Old-English charms.²¹ Finally, the Irish scholar James Carney (1914–89) edited several healing spells from various medical manuscripts; his wife Maura (Morrissey) Carney (1915–75) translated and commented on them.²²

The survey studies discussed above cover three important areas of verbal power: healing, harming and protection. A somewhat different, although related area is divination or prophecy, the art of finding out about things hidden. There are some medieval Irish descriptions of rituals for acquiring this hidden knowledge. Although these rituals may involve magical texts, this area differs from other forms of verbal power, because the perceived direct influence of the words on reality is lacking or of a different nature. The area of mantics and prophecy is beyond the scope of this chapter and deserves a study on its own. For this reason, the description of this research area is brief. People observe signs and hear sounds that they interpret; these interpretations lead to the taking of decisions about actions or refraining therefrom. Misunderstood signs or utterances, the manipulation of signs and words, different possible interpretations – these themes have been creatively employed in the literature. Survey studies into well-known divinatory practices such as *imbas forosnai* were published by the American Robert Douglas Scott (born 1878) and the English Nora Kershaw Chadwick (1891–1972).²³

2. Clustered collections

Magical texts are sometimes clustered together in medieval and later manuscripts. Among the most renowned are the healing spells from the Stowe Missal and the Sankt-Gallen manuscript leaf.²⁴ The Sankt-Gallen incantations have received considerable scholarly attention. The earliest editions are by the German Johann Kaspar Zeuss (1806–56), who added brief, mainly grammatical annotations in Latin; and by Zimmer who reflected on Zeuss’s work and translated the ritual prescription of the third incantation, *Caput Christi*, ‘Head of Christ’, into Latin.²⁵ The German Rudolf Thomas Siegfried (1830–63) edited a variant version of *Caput Christi* from Dublin, TCD H.3.17, a manuscript best known for its important legal material; Stokes published Siegfried’s papers posthumously, noting that this version is ‘better’ than the version in the Sankt-Gallen manuscript.²⁶ In 1890, the German Ernst Windisch (1844–1918) attempted to translate and make sense of the Sankt-Gallen incantations.²⁷ The French scholar Henri d’Arbois de Jubainville (1827–1910) noted two emendations that had been proposed by the German Bruno Güterbock (1858–1940) and offered a French translation.²⁸ Henri Gaidoz (1842–1932), also from France, interpreted the third incantation – *Caput Christi* – as originally a general healing text. He contextualized this ‘enumerating/listing incantation’ as a kind of *lorica* and traced its conceptual framework of healing/protecting/exorcising back to ancient Egyptian religion. He disagreed with Windisch and d’Arbois de Jubainville concerning the interpretation of the Irish ritual prescription at the end of the Latin incantation.²⁹ This was followed in 1903 by the edition and translation of the four Sankt-Gallen incantations that have become standard, in the second volume of the collection *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus* by Whitley Stokes and the Scottish John Strachan (1862–1907).³⁰

In this collection of editions and translations of important medieval Irish texts, including hymns from the above-mentioned *Liber Hymnorum*, we also find the spells from the Stowe Missal together with a first attempt to translate them.³¹ Before their inclusion in the *Thesaurus*, Stokes had transcribed them in 1883; while Zimmer published corrections of his readings and translated the second *Segen*, ‘blessing’, into German.³²

The ‘charms’ from the Middle-Irish metrical tracts, noted by Hull, had been edited and partially translated into German by the Swiss Eduard Rudolf Thurneysen (1857–1940). The four texts, designated by the term *cétnad* that Thurneysen took as *cét-nath*, ‘first(?) saying/maxim, inaugural/initiatory song’ (*erster Spruch, Eröffnungslied*), seem to have a divinatory or protective function. The first of them is also called a ‘prayer’ (*ernaigthe*); Thurneysen referred to the fourth as a ‘prayer’ too.³³ The German Kuno Meyer (1858–1919) followed him in this when he published an edition and translation of the fourth *cétnad*. Meyer discussed the context of the text and its religious character, which he deemed to be ‘of undoubtedly pagan origin’.³⁴ Thurneysen had incidentally characterized other texts in the metrical tracts as *Zauber*, ‘enchantment, sorcery’.³⁵

Finally, clustered verbal-power texts from H.3.17 were edited and partially translated by the Irishman Richard Irvine Best (1872–1959) as a collection of charms.³⁶ Here the powerful text is usually in Latin and/or mysterious language (with the impotence spell as an exception although it contains mysterious language too), while the ritual prescriptions are in

Irish. Several of these are of the *lorica* genre. Previously, Best had edited and (partially) translated three other powerful texts from H.3.17: *Caput Christi* (cf. above on Siegfried) and two prognostic texts concerning ravens and wrens.³⁷

3. Individual magical texts

Various divinatory methods are forbidden in an Early Modern Irish poem, edited and translated by the Irish John O'Donovan (1806–61); the poem itself was used as a *lorica*.³⁸ Meyer edited a variant version and, interestingly, James Carney published an Old-Irish version that appears to reject the belief in protective texts such as the *lorica*.³⁹ An Old-Irish divinatory magical text from the ninth-century Codex Sancti Pauli (Unterdrauberg, Carinthia, Kloster S. Pauli, 86b/1), first edited by Zimmer, was edited and partially translated in the *Thesaurus*.⁴⁰

Some powerful texts occur in isolation in medieval manuscripts: in the margins, filling a blank space on a page, or written on a final page. The Stowe-Missal spells are clustered on the final page. Similarly isolated on a final page is a protective *lorica*-like text that became known as the 'Klosterneuburg incantation'. This was first edited and translated into Latin by Zeuss, and then by Stokes, who made an English translation.⁴¹ A short Middle-Irish text from a fifteenth/sixteenth-century manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B 512) displays a line that after some calculation would give the length of Jesus: those who see it are on that day protected from sudden death and Satan.⁴² The Canadian James F. Kenney (1884–1946) catalogued many protective texts, of which several were edited by Kuno Meyer.⁴³

The healing genre may also have a protective function: recipes against illness may contain *lorica*-like prayers.⁴⁴ The Old-Irish spell of Saint Patrick against poison, reconstructed and translated by the Austrian/Czech Julius Pokorny (1887–1970), was considered to be protective and antidotal.⁴⁵ Thurneysen edited and translated further Irish healing charms from Anglo-Saxon manuscripts.⁴⁶

Healing charms are often clustered in later medical manuscripts, while they are scattered throughout older miscellaneous manuscripts, such as *An Leabhar Breac*.⁴⁷ This has a tooth-charm on the top margin of page 177 (first published by Stokes and then by Meyer),⁴⁸ and also the above-mentioned ‘*éle*’ on the lower margin of page 99 (first transcribed by Stokes, then discussed by Zimmer and later edited by Meyer).⁴⁹ Meyer translated this *Heilspruch* (healing/salvation saying/spell) into German, deeming the first part to be pre-Christian, and the second Christian.

Conclusion

This article has presented a preliminary inventory of the published work of Celticists from the first century of the discipline. The oldest publication in this survey is O’Donovan’s article from 1846; the cut-off point is the collection of medical charms of the Carneys (1960). This survey has not been exhaustive, focussing on medieval Irish magical texts/charms/spells/incantations, and mentioning editions, translations and commentaries while adding references to major thematic studies into verbal power. Further inventories of

powerful texts are still to be made: for instance, surveys of charms embedded in narratives, and of still unpublished medical charms.

Our predecessors have made many of the magical texts available, and have left an impressive legacy. There is, however, still much work to do with respect to contextualization, analysis, commentary and interpretation. Moreover, research into the work of the early generations of Celticists should be extended in order to investigate their theoretical frameworks. Why did they use certain genre identifications? How did their genre identifications relate to the medieval ones? For instance, Old-Irish words for ‘spell, charm’, such as *epaid* and *bricht*, were treated mainly only in etymological notes; Zimmer’s pioneering work on *éle* is the exception to the rule. Was ‘magic’ defined, or was this highly problematic term loosely applied? Which theories from the History of Religions influenced the interpretation of the material?⁵⁰ What kind of debates and discussions were held on our topic – are there clues for instance in the correspondence between scholars?

I will close with one intriguing example of this last type of evidence. Joep Leerssen has kindly sent me his transcript of a letter from the German scholar Jacob Grimm (1785–1863) to John O’Donovan, dated 21 February 1856. Grimm disagreed with Zeuss on the Gaulish or Celtic nature of some of the medical charms of Marcellus Empiricus (or Marcellus Burdigalensis; fourth/fifth century CE), and stated that he had consulted various Celticists on this matter.⁵¹ It is possible that such letters also exist with respect to Irish magical texts.

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² 'Polleantne/valeantne aliquid verba et incantamenta carminum'; W. H. S. Jones, *Pliny: Natural History VIII* (London, Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 8–9.

³ See, for instance, the scholarly series *Religions in the Graeco-Roman World* (Brill), *Magic in History* (Penn State University Press) and *Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic* (Palgrave); and the journals *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* and *Incantatio*.

⁴ John Carey, 'Téacsanna draíochta in Éirinn sa Mheánaois Luath', in Ruairí Ó hUiginn (ed.), *Breis faoinár nDúchas Spioradálta: Léachtaí Cholm Cille 30* (Maigh Nuad: An Sagart,

2000), pp. 99–100. An exception to this neglect, which also helps to fill the gap between late-antique and late-medieval culture, is furnished by the extensive research into Old-English charms.

⁵ See, for instance, Immo Warntjes, ‘Seventh-century Ireland: The Cradle of Medieval Science?’, in Mary Kelly and Charles Doherty (eds.), *Music and the Stars: Mathematics in Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), pp. 44–72.

⁶ The scholars in this overview all were born in either Europe or North America. This does not preclude the presence of ideas and concepts in their thinking from or about religions from the other continents. Further study is needed.

⁷ The Germanic term ‘spell’ covers forms of supernatural speech, whereas singing is the basic connotation of ‘charm’ (from Latin *carmen*, ‘song, poem, oracular response, prophecy, incantation’) and ‘incantation’ (from Latin *incantatio*, ‘enchancing, enchantment’). English ‘charm’ also signifies objects with supernatural power.

⁸ Heinrich Zimmer, ‘Keltische Studien 13: Ein altirischer Zauberspruch aus der Vikingerzeit’, *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung auf dem Gebiete der indogermanischen Sprachen*, 33 (1895), 143.

⁹ Whitley Stokes, ‘Cuimín’s Poem on the Saints of Ireland’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 1 (1897), 72.

¹⁰ Holger Pedersen, *Vergleichende Grammatik der keltischen Sprachen*, vol. 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1909), p. 57. Pedersen appears to accept Zimmer’s etymology, although he slips up in that he says that Zimmer proposed that the word was borrowed from Old English, rather than from Old Norse as Zimmer actually argued (with thanks the editors of the present volume for this refinement concerning the debate).

¹¹ Richard Scott Nokes, ‘The Several Compilers of Bald’s *Leechbook*’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 33 (2004), 51–76.

¹²Thomas Oswald Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England*, vol. 2 (London: The Holland Press, 1961; revised edition of the original ed. of 1864–6), p. 113.

¹³E. G. Quin, (ed.), *Dictionary of the Irish Language: Based mainly on Old and Middle Irish Materials (1913–76)* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1983); <http://www.dil.ie/>.

¹⁴ Eleanor Hull, ‘The Ancient Hymn-Charms of Ireland’, *Folk-Lore*, 21 (1910), 417–46.

Others before (and after) Hull also noted this overlap, for instance the Scottish Alexander Macbain (1855–1907), who discussed some medieval Irish examples in ‘Gaelic Incantations’, *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 17 (1890–1), 225–32, 252–3.

¹⁵They were edited and (partially) translated by the Irish John Bernard (1860–1927) and Anglo-Irish Robert Atkinson (1839–1908) in *The Irish Liber Hymnorum*, 2 vols (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1898), vol. 1, pp. 3–13, 25–34, 43–8, 62–83, 87–9; vol. 2, pp. 3–7, 12–17, 19–20, 23–26, 28 (these page numbers refer to the hymns mentioned by Hull; there are more protective hymns than Hull mentions in her discussion).

¹⁶ Hull, ‘Ancient Hymn-Charms’, 425–6.

¹⁷ Louis Gougaud, ‘Étude sur les *loricae* celtiques et sur les prières qui s’en rapprochent’, *Bulletin d’ancienne littérature et d’archéologie chrétiennes*, 1 (1911), 265–81; ‘Étude sur les *loricae* celtiques et sur les prières qui s’en rapprochent (Suite)’, *Bulletin d’ancienne littérature et d’archéologie chrétiennes*, 2 (1912), 33–41, 101–27.

¹⁸ Gougaud, ‘Étude... (Suite)’, 117.

¹⁹ Fred Norris Robinson, ‘Satirists and Enchanters in Early Irish Literature’, in David Gordon Lyon and George Foot Moore (eds), *Studies in the History of Religions Presented to Crawford Howell Toy* (New York: MacMillan, 1912), pp. 95–130; cf. also the monograph by the American Robert C. Elliott (1914–81): *The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960).

²⁰ John Revell Reinhard, *The Survival of Geis in Mediaeval Romance* (Halle an der Saale: Max Niemeyer, 1933).

²¹ Howard Meroney, 'Irish in the Old English Charms', *Speculum*, 20 (1945), 172–82.

Meroney also published on satire: 'Studies in Early Irish Satire', *Journal of Celtic Studies*, 1 (1949), 199–226; 'Studies in Early Irish Satire', *Journal of Celtic Studies*, 2 (1953), 59–130.

²² James and Maura Carney, 'A Collection of Irish Charms', *Saga och Sed* (1960), 144–52.

²³ Robert Douglas Scott, *The Thumb of Knowledge in Legends of Finn, Sigurd, and Taliesin* (New York: Institute of French Studies, 1930); Nora Kershaw Chadwick, 'Imbas forosnai', *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, 4 (1935), 97–135.

²⁴ Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, D.II.3 (catalogue number 1238), fol. 67b; Sankt Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Codex Sangallensis no 1395, p. 419.

²⁵ Johann Kaspar Zeuss, *Grammatica Celtica* (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1853), pp. 925–7 (revised edition by H. Ebel, Berlin: Weidmann, 1871, pp. 949–50); Zimmer, *Glossae Hibernicae* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1881), pp. 270–71, with different manuscript readings in Stokes, 'Notes of a Philological Tour II: Switzerland', *Academy*, 30 (1886), 228. The most recent discussion of the *Caput Christi* charm is Ilona Tuomi's contribution to the present volume.

²⁶ Dublin, Trinity College, H.3.17 (catalogue number 1336), 15th–16th centuries; Rudolf Thomas Siegfried, 'Miscellanea Hibernica', *Transactions of the Philological Society* (1867), 300.

²⁷ Ernst Windisch, 'Das altirische Gedicht im Codex Boernerianus und über die altirischen Zauberformeln', *Berichte der königlichen Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, 42 (1890), 90–108.

²⁸ Henri d'Arbois de Jubainville, 'Documents irlandais publiés par M. Windisch', *Revue Celtique*, 12 (1891), 153–62.

²⁹ Henri Gaidoz, 'Une incantation énumérative', *Mélusine*, 5 (1890–1), 225–8.

³⁰Whitley Stokes and John Strachan, *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus: A Collection of Old-Irish Glosses, Scholia, Prose, and Verse*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), pp. 248–9.

³¹Stokes and Strachan, *Thesaurus*, vol. 2, p. 250; for the Irish hymns, see pp. 298–359.

³²Stokes, ‘The Irish Passages in the Stowe Missal’, *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung auf dem Gebiete der indogermanischen Sprachen*, 26, Neue Folge, Band 6 (1883), 513–14, 518–19; Zimmer, ‘Zum Stowe Missal’, *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung auf dem Gebiete der indogermanischen Sprachen*, 28, Neue Folge 8 (1887), 378–9. Zimmer generally calls these texts ‘spells’ (*Zaubersprüche*), but twice he calls the second one a ‘blessing’ (*Segen*; Zimmer, ‘Zum Stowe Missal’, 378; Zimmer, ‘Ein altirischer Zauberspruch’, 144 n. 1). Cf. G. F. Warner, *The Stowe Missal*, 2 vols (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1906–15) and E. J. Gwynn, ‘The Stowe Missal’, *The Irish Church Quarterly*, 9/34 (1916), 119–33.

³³Rudolf Thurneysen, ‘Mittelirische Verslehren’, in W. Stokes and E. Windisch (eds), *Irische Texte*, 3/1 (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1891), 51–4, 117–18.

³⁴Kuno Meyer, ‘An Old Irish Prayer for Long Life’, in Oliver Elton (ed.), *A Miscellany Presented to John Macdonald Mackay* (Liverpool: The University Press, 1914), pp. 226–32.

³⁵Thurneysen, ‘Mittelirische Verslehren’, 111, 124. This concerns divinatory ritual texts and satire. This collection needs to be more closely investigated for powerful texts.

³⁶Richard Irvine Best, ‘Some Irish Charms’, *Ériu*, 16 (1952), 27–32. Some texts are clustered on cols 672b-c; others are spread throughout the manuscript.

³⁷Richard Irvine Best, ‘The St Gall Incantation against Headache’, *Ériu*, 8 (1915), 100; ‘Prognostications from the Raven and the Wren’, *Ériu*, 8 (1916), 120–6. Cf. Meyer, ‘Altirisch *grácad*’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 13 (1921), 100; and Irish rendering of Latin lore on the raven, stemming from Pseudo-Albertus Magnus (*Liber Secretorum*), edited by the Irish

scholar Brian Ó Cuív (1916–99), ‘Miscellanea: A Fragment of Magical Lore’, *Éigse*, 8/2 (1956), 96–107: 100.

³⁸ John O’Donovan, ‘An Ancient Poem Attributed to St. Columbkille; With a Translation and Notes’, *The Miscellany of the Irish Archaeological Society*, 1 (1846), 1–15.

³⁹ Meyer, ‘Mitteilungen aus irischen Handschriften: M’aonarán dam isan sliab’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 7 (1910), 302–3; Carney, ‘M’aenarán dam isa sliab’, *Éigse*, 2 (1940), 107–13.

⁴⁰ Zimmer, *Glossae*, p. 267; Stokes and Strachan, *Thesaurus*, vol. 2, p. 293.

⁴¹ Zeuss, *Grammatica*, pp. 954–5; Stokes, ‘The Klosterneuburg Incantation’, *Revue Celtique*, 2 (1873–5), 112–15.

⁴² Meyer, ‘Miscellen 3: Die Leibeslänge Christi’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 10 (1915), 401–2.

⁴³ James F. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland: Ecclesiastical. An Introduction and Guide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), index svv. charms, hymns, *loricae*, magic. Besides those already mentioned in this chapter, two further examples of Meyer’s editions are ‘Neue Mitteilungen aus irischen Handschriften: Gebet um Schutz in Gefahr’, *Archiv für celtische Lexicographie*, 3 (1907), 6–7; and ‘Mitteilungen aus irischen Handschriften: Oracio Colum Cille .cc.’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 6 (1908), 258.

⁴⁴ Meyer, ‘Ein altirisches Bittgedicht an die Jungfrau Maria’, *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Phil.- hist. Klasse (1917), 442–4.

⁴⁵ Julius Pokorny, ‘Ein altirischer Zauberspruch’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 20 (1936), 488. Cf. now John Carey’s discussion of this spell in the present volume.

⁴⁶ Thurneysen, ‘Grammatisches und etymologisches 6: Ir. *marbu* ‘ich töte’’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 13 (1921), 106; ‘Irische und britannische Glossen A: Irische Glossen’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 21 (1939), 280–90.

⁴⁷Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 23 P 16 (catalogue number 1230), *circa* 1400.

⁴⁸ Stokes, 'Irish Folklore I: The Cause of Toothache', *Revue Celtique*, 5 (1883), 391–2; Meyer, 'Anecdota from Irish MSS XIV', *Gaelic Journal*, 7 (1896), 116–17.

⁴⁹ Stokes, 'Irish Passages', 519; Zimmer, 'Ein altirischer Zauberspruch', 143–4, 146–7; Meyer, 'Ein altirischer Heilsegen', *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Phil.- hist. Klasse (1916), 420–22.

⁵⁰The earlier versions of this chapter contained a preliminary analysis of the theoretical frameworks of the Dutch Celticists Anton Gerard van Hamel (1886–1945) and Maartje Draak (1907–95).

⁵¹Email message, 30 May 2008.