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## **Anglo-Saxon Metrical Charms: Structural and language patterns**

### **Abstract**

Old English charms, or *galdor*, combine elements of incantation and folk prayer, they may also contain a description of the accompanying ritual. These texts stem from Germanic custom of a vocal ritual that aims to change an unfavorable situation for the better. The current paper aims to examine the way structural and language features are manifested in the complex medieval Old English charm under the interaction of two speech forms, prose and poetry. Three of 12 the surviving metrical charms were selected as the material for this study, all written down no later than the 11th century. A range of methods is applied including textological analysis, linguistic method covering lexical, semantic, grammatical and phonological features, and pragmatic method. The results show, first, that all the three texts perform an appeal function grammatically manifested primarily by verbs in the Subjunctive and Imperative Mood and additionally with verbs in the Indicative Mood. Secondly, semantic indicators of dialogical nature of these texts were identified, expressed as three types of interactions of the actors. The results suggest that a metrical text forms the core of the Old English charm.

**Keywords:** verbal folk magic texts, folk prayer, Anglo-Saxon charms, *galdor*

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