

## A CONJECTURE ON THE OPENING OF THE SECOND MERSEBURG CHARM

by Joseph B. Wilson

There has been extensive discussion of the Merseburg Charms, particularly the second of the two, since their discovery by Waitz in 1841 and their initial publication and elucidation by Jacob Grimm.<sup>1</sup> The text of the Second Charm reads approximately as follows (dividing the words more in accordance with modern practice and regrouping and numbering the lines as alliterating verse) :

1. *P(h)ol ende uuodan*            *uuorun zi holza*
2. *du uuart demo balderes uolon*            *sin uuoz birenkict*
3. *thu biguol'en sinktgunt*            *sunna era suister*
4. *thu biguol'en friia*            *uolla era suister*
5. *thu biguol'en uuodan*            *so he uuola conda*
6. *sose benrenki*            *sose blutrenki*            *sose lidirenki*
7. *ben zi bena*            *bluot zi bluoda*            *lid zi geliden*
8. *sose gelimida sin*

While the scribal hand is relatively clear, the division into words and phrases is indistinct and a number of letters could be disputed. The metrical arrangement of the last three lines (as cited above) is debatable (the entire charm is written continuously in the manuscript, as if it were prose). The first word—the greatest enigma of the charm—is written *Pol* with an *h* added over the *o*; precisely how this was intended to be read no one knows. Obviously the normalizations found in the literature (or even the minimal editing employed here) do not allow unprejudiced study. Such study must, of course, primarily base on the manuscript itself (or faithful reproductions).<sup>2</sup> In respect to the problem I wish to discuss here, it should be particularly noted that the scribe uses *u* and *uu* ambiguously and that therefore the commonly encountered normalizations of these, such as *uuorun* to *vuorun*, *uuodan* to *Uuodan*, *uuola* to *wola*,<sup>3</sup> etc., have no foundation in the manuscript.

The overall meaning of the charm is admirably apparent, which

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fact one should not lose sight of nor fail to appreciate when debating the more obscure details. A generally acceptable translation into modern German would read something like this:<sup>4</sup>

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|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. <i>Pfol</i> [or <i>Vol</i> ] <i>und Wodan</i> | <i>fuhren zu Holze;</i>             |                           |
| 2. <i>Da ward dem Pferd Balders</i>              | <i>sein Fuß verrenkt.</i>           |                           |
| 3. <i>Da besprach ihn [den fuß] Sinthgunt,</i>   |                                     |                           |
|  | [und] <i>Sunna, ihre Schwester;</i> |                           |
| 4. <i>Da besprach ihn Friia,</i>                 | [und] <i>Volla, ihre Schwester;</i> |                           |
| 5. <i>Da besprach ihn Wodan,</i>                 | <i>wie er es wohl konnte:</i>       |                           |
| 6. <i>Sei es Beinverrenkung,</i>                 | <i>sei es Blutverrenkung,</i>       |                           |
|  | <i>sei es Gliederverrenkung,</i>    |                           |
| 7. <i>Bein zu Bein,</i>                          | <i>Blut zu Blut,</i>                | <i>Glied zu Gliedern,</i> |
| 8. <i>Als wenn sie geleimt seien!</i>            |                                     |                           |

The great importance of this charm is that it is the only professedly pagan Germanic literature extant from Germany. In these few lines we have not only a glimpse into pre-Christian poetic form and heathen practices (which the First Merseburg Charm also affords), but also the only poetic employment of old Germanic gods in all of Old High German and Old Saxon literature. Even the modern reader is infected by Grimm's enthusiasm in his report on the discovery of this charm, which in its eight lines mentions almost as many old Germanic deities. Indeed, while five of the deities are known from other literature (principally Old Norse), *Phol* (which on the face of things seems to signify a god) and *Sinhtgunt* are attested only here. The only other references at all to the ancient gods in Old German writings—far inferior to those here, but precious nonetheless—are found in the "Old Saxon Baptismal Vow" (*ec forsacho allum dioboles uuercum and uuordum, Thunaer ende Uuoden ende Saxnote ende allum them unholdum, the hira genotas sint* "I renounce all the devil's works and words, Donner [Thor] and Wodan and Saxnot and all those evil ones that are their fellows")<sup>5</sup> and in the charm "Gegen Fallsucht" (*doner dutigo dietewigo*, evidently a no longer understood invocation of Donner surviving only as a magic formula).<sup>6</sup>

It is consequently not surprising that the major controversy in the study of the Second Merseburg Charm has centered about the interpretation of these deities. The problems involving the goddesses of lines 3 and 4, which will not be gone into further here, concern their identity and interpretation and, specifically, whether the reading is "Sinthgunt (and) Sunna, her sister" and similarly "Friia (and) Volla, her sister" or rather "Sinthgunt, Sunna's sister" and "Friia, Volla's sister." Since they play only a minor role in the charm itself, their essential interest lies in their testimony for

continental Germanic mythology. Much more important are the problems of the introduction, which concern primarily the clarification of *Phol* and *Balder*. The interest of the scholars has naturally focused on these two words, since even the simple understanding of the narrative introduction (the *Analogieerzählung*<sup>7</sup>) of the charm depends on their identity (e.g., Who is present? Whose horse is injured?). The mysterious *Phol* is apparently a companion of Wodan and therefore one of the chief gods, but nowhere else is such a god attested. Moreover, why does the poem not mention Balder (evidently the god of light—and son of Wodan and Friia—well known from the Eddas) at the outset, since the whole situation revolves about his horse? Already Jacob Grimm found a solution which still is widely accepted today: Pfol (the pronunciation most naturally represented by *Phol*) is held to be another name for Balder (an assumption which bases upon the similarity of place names beginning with *Pholes-/Pfoles-* and *Balderes-*), thus explaining both the identity of *Phol* as well as Balder's apparent lack of mention in the opening line. The essentials of Grimm's view were universally accepted for forty years. This "Grimm school" (Kuhn, Grienberger, Niedner, etc.) considered the original heathen Germanic nature of the charm self-evident, and the narrative was given romantic nature-mythological interpretations, basically to the effect that Balder symbolized the sun on its daily ride, from which any threat of hindrance (represented by the sprained horse's hoof) had to be repelled quickly. The first to challenge this school's basis, ingenious as it was, was the famous Scandinavianist Bugge (op. cit., pp. 284 ff.), who noted that the Old English form of the word *balder* does not signify a god at all but rather merely the common noun "lord," which would justify the rendition here in the second line as "the lord's [i.e., Wodan's, or perhaps even *Phol*'s] horse" and allow other possibilities of interpretation of *Phol*. The connection with the god Balder and the resultant "day-myth" is consequently rejected. Other scholars (especially Krohn, Mansikka, Christiansen, and Ohrt) furnished further evidence for this less colorful line of reasoning, so that an opposing basic school arose, denying even the original heathen origin of the charm. Although the individual conjectures of the scholars seemingly know no bounds, the two fundamental schools remain even to this day. Other suggestions that have been offered for *Phol* are a god or goddess Vol (which, with Pfol, is the most widely accepted), Paul, Apollo, Hol, Wol, etc., while others have rejected this track altogether and taken, for instance, *Pholende* together as an adjective or participial

phrase modifying Wodan, i.e., *Pholen te wuodan* "Wodan on horseback" (Wadstein) or *volhendi wuodan* "full-handed (helpful) Wodan" (Krogmann).<sup>8</sup>

Remarkably enough, the crucial evidence for the form and interpretation of *Phol* has been sought in the modest little verb *wuorun*, whose identity as *fuorun* has never been questioned.<sup>9</sup> The main stave of the line has always been considered to be the *f* of this *fuorun*, and since *wuodan* obviously does not alliterate with it, it has been taken for granted that *Phol* must do so and consequently, whatever it is, it must begin with [f] or at least—because the spelling and the placenames support *Pfol*—with [pf]. While the interpretation as *Pfol* is very attractive and may well be correct, the alliteration of *pf* with *f* is impossible; at least—to avoid falling into the pit of absolute negation which I later here condemn—it contradicts all that is certain about Germanic alliteration. Unfortunately, since *pf* occurs only in Old High German and since so little Old High German alliterative poetry has survived, we have not a single instance of its use as stave. However, the ironclad rule for every other consonant group in any Germanic dialect requires alliteration with the first consonant of the group (or with the first two in the case of *sk*, *sp*, and *st*), never with the second; thus *pf* would alliterate with *p* (if indeed with anything besides itself) but not with *f*.<sup>10</sup> The case for *Pfol* is consequently supported by the spelling and the place names but undermined by the alleged alliterative connection with *wuorun*, while conversely *Vol* is upheld by this alliterative connection and weakened by the spelling<sup>11</sup> and the place names. I think there is good reason to believe that this alliterative connection is erroneous. If this is correct, the onset of *Phol* could—as far as the alliteration is concerned—be any phoneme, i.e., the spelling could be interpreted as *Pfol*, *Vol*, *Pol*, *Wol*, *Thol* (in the last two, taking *P* as the wen or thorn rune), etc., or we would be much more at liberty to suggest emendations of the spelling or even of the whole word, which may very well be necessary in order to arrive at the correct wording and sense of the poem.

What I want to suggest as the first necessary step toward the solution of this complex of intertwined problems is a reevaluation of the key word *wuorun*. Taken as *fuorun*, the alliteration of the first line has always been considered to be *ax:ax*, i.e., having the stave borne by the first of the two accented syllables of each half-line. While this is (with *aa:ax*) the most common alliterative scheme, it contrasts sharply with all the other alliterating lines in the poem, in which the second of the two accented syllables of the

first half-line carries the main stress and the stave (lines 2, 3, 4, and 5 thus exhibit the pattern *xa:ax*; lines 6, 7, and 8 are metricaly unclear but do not contradict this principle).<sup>12</sup> I find it particularly noteworthy that the stress curve of every first half-line of the charm is rising, so that each line begins with a crescendo which even to the modern's uninitiated ear seems appropriate for incantation.<sup>13</sup> This indeed appears to be the regular stress (and consequently alliterative) pattern of the old Germanic charms, contrary to the predominately falling stress and resultant *ax* or *áa* scheme of the other poetry; the First Merseburg Charm uses it (*xa* and *áá* in the first half-lines, with clear crescendo) and so do a number of others.<sup>14</sup> Particularly parallel to the case at hand is such as *Christ unde Johan giengon zuo der Jordan* (Steinmeyer, p. 379), in which the second person mentioned bears the stress and the stave. The metric pattern of the entire rest of our poem and of similar charms thus strongly suggests that the stave-bearer of the first half-line is not *Phol* at all, but *uuodan*, especially in view of the parallel to line 5: *thu biguol'en uuodan, so he uuola conda*. This scansion furthermore would give *Wodan* the eminence it naturally deserves, since *Wodan* is both the superior deity mentioned (indeed, the chief of all Germanic gods) and also the main figure in the poem.<sup>15</sup> Whatever *Phol* or *Pholende* means, *Wodan* will remain the most important word in the first half-line, and as such it would most naturally bear the stronger of the two stresses and carry the stave.<sup>16</sup>

Let us then assume for the moment that the stave of the first half-line is the *w* of *Wodan*. With this hypothesis *uuorun* cannot be *fuorun* but rather must be something beginning with *w*. A solution is immediately apparent: *uuorun* must be *warun* ("waren") and the line becomes *Pfol* [or something] *und Wódan wáren im Holz*.<sup>17</sup> The sense has not changed greatly as against the previous interpretations, but the stress and alliteration scheme now is the same as in the rest of the charm; *Wodan* has the place of prominence it merits, and the troublesome forced alliteration of *Phol* with *uuorun* is eliminated.

There are, of course, a number of hurdles to be taken—some more, some less obvious—before we can consider *warun* a serious contender for the position in which *fuorun* seems so well entrenched. Looking first at the spelling, we see that the initial *wu* is ambiguously used by our scribe (and generally in Old High German) and can just as well designate [w] (or [wu]) as [fu]: note, for instance, *uuola* (=wola) versus *uuoz* (=fuoz); as a matter of fact,

*uu* is generally much more common in Old High German for [w] than for [fu], which latter is almost always spelled *fu*. The last three letters, *run*, likewise apply equally well to either interpretation, *warun* or *fuorun*. The obvious, and remaining, obstacle, as far as the spelling is concerned, is the *o*, which would be highly unusual in a rendition of *warun*; however, we may leave the *o* as an inexact spelling or a variant pronunciation, or we may emend it as an error<sup>18</sup> (all of which possibilities are, of course, common philological practice in dealing with Old High German texts) and accept at worst a small negative quantity in our balance. Turning again to the metrics, this time to confirm the possibility of *warun* as stave-bearer, it can be demonstrated that *warun* (*war*, etc.) did frequently serve in this role, e.g., Heliand 157, 717, 2012, 5684;<sup>19</sup> a rather exact parallel (where *was* bears the main stave) is to be found in Heliand 3044: *uuis uuarsago, the her giu uuas lango*. If we look next at the sentence thus construed, we find that *uorun zi holza* can very well be taken as "waren im Wald," since *zi holza* can mean "in the woods" as well as "to the woods"; the former meaning was, to be sure, a subsequent development from the latter, but was available already in Old High German.<sup>20</sup>

If, finally, we compare the narrative introduction here with that of similar charms in old and later Germanic, we do, to be sure, note that most of the parallels speak for the interpretation *fuorun* by their employment of a verb of motion, e.g., *Quam Krist endi sancti Stephan zi ther burg zu Salonium* (Steinmeyer, p. 367), *Oden rider över sten och berg* (Bugge, p. 287), but others similarly testify in favor of *warun*, e.g., *St. Peter saß auf einem Stein*,<sup>21</sup> and *Oden staar paa berget, han spørjer efter sin faale* (Bugge, p. 287). The variant versions of the charm "Gegen Fallsucht" (Steinmeyer, p. 380) use both types: one has *quam* where the other twice uses *stuont*. The First Merseburg Charm would, on the face of it, support *warun*, since it apparently begins *einst saßen Idisen*; however, *sazun* might here mean *setzten sich*, which would be less clear, or even support *fuorun*.<sup>22</sup> At any rate, the parallel narratives of similar charms do not by any means exclude the interpretation *warun zi holza*, but rather demonstrate its plausibility.

To recapitulate, I have endeavored to show that the meter, the sense, and the difficulties with *Phol* strongly suggest that the stave-bearer of the first half-line is *Wodan* rather than *Phol*, that the second half-line can with striking ease be reinterpreted to alliterate with *Wodan*, and that this reinterpretation is credible from the

viewpoints of the spelling, the metrics, the meaning, and the parallel charms. *Pfol* [or something] *und Wodan waren zu Holze* is not only a possible alternate reading, it is actually preferable to the generally accepted rendition in that it gives *Wodan* its natural prominence and in that the meter then accords with the rest of the poem and with the charms in general. The important further consequence is that *Phol* no longer has to alliterate, and so the chief barrier to more satisfying interpretations of this mysterious word is lifted.

## NOTES

1. Grimm's historic lecture was before the Königliche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin on Feb. 3, 1842; the text is available in the *Philologische und historische Abhandlungen* (1842) of that society and also conveniently in Jacob Grimm, *Kleinere Schriften* (Berlin, 1865-1890), II, 1-29. One can only stand in awe before the genius of the father of Germanic philology, who in this initial report of the discovery of the charms already saw and explained most of the problems and possible solutions. On the ensuing discussion, even until the present, note the typical comment by Adolf Spamer in his recent article "P(h)ol ende Uodan," *Deutsches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde*, III (1957), 347; "Aber dieser allbekannte Zweite Merseburger Zauberspruch ist nicht nur der meist gedeutete und doch in manchen Fragen bis heute noch wie zu Zeiten seiner Entdeckung umstrittenste Text des deutschen Altertums."

2. Photographs are available, for instance, in Hanns Fischer, *Schrifttafeln zum althochdeutschen Lesebuch* (Tübingen, 1966) and Gerhard Eis, *Altdeutsche Handschriften* (Munich, 1949); neither is very legible in places. There is an excellent facsimile appended to Grimm's *Kleinere Schriften*, II.

3. These three examples are taken from S. Bugge's important discussion in his *Studier over de nordiske Gude- og Hellesagns Oprindelse* (Christiania, 1881-1889), p. 285.

4. Cf. similar translations in Ehrismann's and Kögel's literary histories.

5. Elias v. Steinmeyer, *Die kleineren althochdeutschen Sprachdenkmäler* (Berlin, 1916; reprint 1963), p. 20.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 380.

7. Cf. Irmgard Hampp, *Beschwörung, Segen, Gebet* (Stuttgart, 1961), pp. 174 ff.

8. Surveys of the history of the research are given in a number of the longer articles; see especially Reidar Th. Christiansen, *Die finnischen und nordischen Varianten des zweiten Merseburgerspruches* ("Folklore Fellows Communications," No. 18 [Hamina, Finland, 1914]), pp. 1-17, which reviews the early scholarship from the viewpoint of the Bugge school, and, for instance, Spamer, *op. cit.*, which is recent and partisan to the Grimm school. See, of course, also the handbooks, notably J. Knight Bostock, *A Handbook on Old High German Literature* (Oxford, 1955), and Heinz Rupp, "Forschung zur althochdeutschen Literatur 1945-1962," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für*

*Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, XXXVIII (1964), Sonderheft, pp. 63 ff.

9. Bostock's statement, *op. cit.*, p. 23, is typical: "The only detail which is fairly certain (in regard to *Pholl* is the initial consonant, for it should alliterate with *vuorun*." Those who construe *Pholende* as modifying *uodan* require *fuor* singular and therefore understand the following as *fuor unzi* ("fuhr bis zum"); the argument concerning the alliteration remains unchanged.

10. The question of the possibility of the alliteration of *pf* with *f* has never been thoroughly investigated. The scholars (e.g., Schück, Grienberger, Brate, Gutenbrunner) have intuitively labeled it poor, imperfect, or impure, without rejecting it altogether. Our feeling for *pf* is contaminated by the subsequent shift *pf > f* (e.g., 'feiffen, 'ferd), so that to our ears initial *pf* is associated more with initial *f* than with initial *p*, but there is little reason to think that this was so in Old High German (some spellings do seem to support the association with *f*, but then again others testify for *p*). We should not expect, until the contrary is proven, the rime *pf/f* any more than *gr/r* or *fl/l*. The only support for such alliteration would come from the few instances of *hl/l*, *hr/r*, and *hw/w* in Old English and Old Saxon, but these are only rare exceptions (probably representing phonetic *l/l*, *r/r*, and *w/w*) to the many regular alliterations of *hl*, *hr*, and *hw* with *h*; see W. P. Lehmann's valuable compilations: *The Alliteration of Old Saxon Poetry* ("Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap," Suppl. Bind III [Oslo, 1953]), and (with Virginia F. Dailey) *The Alliterations of the Christ, Guthlac, . . .* (University of Texas, Austin, 1960). It might be pleaded that the shift *pf > f* had already taken place in our charm so that we have *Fol* (<*Pfol*)/*fuorun*, but this contradicts the very evidence (besides the spelling) upon which the case for *Pfol* is built, namely the place names in *Pfoles-* (cf. Hugo Gering, "Der Zweite Merseburger Spruch," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, XXVI, [1894], 146).

11. *Ph* was, of course, the common Old High German spelling for *pf*. Although Friedrich Kauffmann, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, XV (1889), 208, has demonstrated that initial *ph* did occur sometimes as a spelling for *f*, it was evidently rare, as a perusal of Graff's actual entries shows. In our charm, *f* is spelled three or four times with *u*, and once with *f*. Even on the basis of Latin orthographical convention, *ph* should here represent *pf*, as Ferdinand Wrede's analysis has shown, *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin), Philologisch-historische Klasse*, 1923, pp. 85-89.

12. Andreas Heusler, *Deutsche Versgeschichte*, Vol. I (Berlin, 1925), §129, calls attention to this preponderance of the otherwise limited *xa* pattern in our charm.

13. Cf. Heusler, §270; "Der besondere Rhythmus der *xa*-Verse fällt in die Ohren," and Felix Genzmer, "Germanische Zaubersprüche," *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift*, XXXII (N.F., I, 1950-1951), p. 31 (referring to our charm): "Das Ganze durchzieht ein mächtiges Crescendo. Von den ganz schlicht ansetzenden Eingangszeilen an steigern sich Kraft und Spannung unaufhörlich. . . ." Genzmer, to be sure, is speaking of the crescendo of the entire charm, whereas my statement here refers specifically to the first



half-lines; I take the two viewpoints to be compatible and mutually supporting. The rising stress of each first half-line coupled with the fall of the second half-line gives each complete line a unique curve with its culmination at the second beat, precisely as Heusler, *Die altgermanische Dichtung* (reprint of 2nd. ed.; Darmstadt, 1957), p. 58, states in regard to the charm *Gang uz, nesso*: "Das stete Überwiegen des zweiten Iktus bringt eine eigene Kurve hervor."

14. On the predominantly falling stress, cf. Heusler, *Dte. Versg.*, I, §138, and Eduard Sievers, *Altgermanische Metrik* (Halle, 1893), §19,3. Heusler, *ibid.*, §129, gives statistics on the ratio of *aa* to *ax* to *xa* in the first half-lines for various works; the percentage of *xa* fluctuates between seven and thirty percent. Other charms with *xa* are, for instance, *Gang uz, nesso* (Steinmeyer, p. 374; cf. the Heusler quote in note 13 above), *Wola, wicht* (Steinmeyer, p. 389), and *Daz tu niewedar nigituo* (Steinmeyer, p. 383). Others have the predominant crescendo (sometimes even in the second half-lines), but with *ax* alliteration (*Tumbo saz in berke*, Steinmeyer, p. 375), with mixed impure alliteration and endrime (*Kirst, imbi ist hucze*, Steinmeyer, p. 396; *ic dir nach sihe*, Steinmeyer, p. 397), or with endrime alone (*Ih besuere dih, sunno*, Steinmeyer, p. 373).

15. Even if we assume the poem to have evolved from the Balder myth, in its present form Wodan is the central figure; cf. R. M. Meyer's review of Fr. Losch's *Balder und der Weisse Hirsch* in *Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum*, XIX (1893), 211. The fact that Wodan is mentioned second does not alter this; cf. Spamer, p. 352.

16. Cf. Sievers, §19,3: "Steht nur ein Stab [in the first half-line], so trifft er die stärkere der beiden Hebungen. . ." While this is usually the first stressed word, and there is furthermore the general rule that the first of two nouns ordinarily bears the stave, these rules do not hold if the second stressed word is more important and consequently especially accented (Sievers, §§19,3 and 23,2; cf. also H. Kuhn, "Zur Wortstellung und -betonung im Altgermanischen," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, LVII [1933], 72). There can be great harm in overly emphasizing these general rules, such as the rules of word rank in alliteration (first of two nouns, noun over verb, etc.), in the way that, for example, Karl Helm does in his article "Erfundene Götter" in *Studien zur deutschen Philologie des Mittelalters* [*Festschrift Fr. Panzer*] (Heidelberg, 1950), pp. 1-11; note that these same rules which are cited to exclude *Wodan* from alliterating (first of two nouns) would also exclude *uorun* (no matter whether it is *fuorun* or *warun*, because in either case it is a verb before a noun), and I find nobody suggesting that. Moreover, line 2 of our charm would be impossible, since its second noun (*uolon*) alliterates. It is a most unfortunate but tenacious misuse of statistics that "infrequent" becomes equated with "incorrect" or even "impossible" (as in Heusler, *Dte. Versg.*, I, §§138 f.). Although Sievers himself is guilty of such, he admits (§126) that none of these rules hold very well for Old High German poetry. In regard to *balderes uolon*, Helm quite correctly points out that if *balder* were a person not previously mentioned it would most naturally bear the stress and alliterate, and since it does not, Helm considers that it must be an appellative for a person already named, but his distinction between appellatives and proper names as a further strict rank of alliteration is without basis (cf. H. Kuhn,

"Es gibt kein balder 'Herr'" in *Erbe der Vergangenheit, Festgabe für K. Helm* (Tübingen, 1951, p. 45), and he is incorrect in stating that the two exceptions to the "first of two nouns" rule cited by Heusler, *Die. Versg.*, I, §139, are the only ones found in West Germanic (even Sievers gives others, see §23,2).

17. H. Schück, *Studier i nordisk litteratur- och religionshistoria*, Vol. II (Stockholm, 1904), p. 218, and S. Gutenbrunner, "Der Zweite Merseburger Spruch im Lichte nordischer Überlieferungen," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, LXXX (1943), 1-5, failed to see this possibility, which would have supported their conjectures (*Phol* = *Wolth*, resp. = *wol* or *hol*).

18. I can find no Old High German spelling of *warun* with *o* in the stem, but Grimm's dictionary lists similar forms for the modern dialects, notably for Thüringisch, which was considered by Grimm and Steinmeyer to be the dialect of the Merseburg Charms and which is at any rate geographically close. The scribe may even have been influenced by the *o* of the preceding *uuodan* to write *uuorun* instead of *uuarun*. Such influences were common; note, for instance, Gerhard Eis's much more drastic suggestion ("Eine neue Deutung des Ersten Merseburger Zauberspruches," *Forschungen und Fortschritte*, XXXII [1958], 27 ff.) that, in the First Charm, *hera duoder* is a mistake for *hera muoder* (*m* replaced by *d* because of the following *d*).

19. Cf. Lehmann, *Old Saxon* (op. cit., note 10 above).

20. Cf. Notker, Ps. 73,4, and Edward Sehr, *Notker-Glossar* (Tübingen, 1962) under *holz*; similar phrases using *zu* in the sense of "at" or "in" with other nouns (*holz* being rare in Old High German) are very common, cf. Sehr under *ze* and Johann Kelle, *Glossar der Sprache Otfrids* (Regensburg, 1881), under *zi*, contrary to Grimm's dictionary (XVI, 206) which incorrectly says this usage is restricted in Old High German to place names and superlatives (but does concede that such phrases as *waren zu Holze* were among the first to take on the meaning "at, in").

21. K. Müllenhoff and W. Scherer, *Denkmäler deutscher Poesie und Prosa aus dem VIII. - XII. Jahrhundert*, 3rd. ed. (Berlin, 1892), II, 47. See especially also Hampp, op. cit. (note 7 above), in regard to these and other parallel charms.

22. Grimm (*Kleinere Schriften*, II, 4) and Th. von Grienberger ("Die Merseburger Zaubersprüche," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, XXVII [1895], 435), among others, take it to be *saßen*, while Müllenhoff and Scherer (op. cit., p. 43) supports *setzten sich*.