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BOOK REVIEWS

Tatiana Panina. *Slovo i ritual v narodnoi meditsine udmurtov* [Word and Ritual in Udmurt Folk Medicine]. Izhevsk: Udmurt Institute of History, Language and Literature, 2014. 238 pp. ISBN 978-5-7659-0795-5

The researches into Udmurt charms and prayers published by Tatiana Vladykina, Vladimir Vladyskin and Vladimir Napolskikh during recent decades have been intriguing. Now those who know Russian can have a more detailed overview of the Udmurt charming tradition. Tatiana Panina's monograph "Word and Ritual in Udmurt Folk Medicine" (*Слово и ритуал в народной медицине удмуртов*) is based on fieldwork and published materials. The heading refers to the intentional complexity of the book, a desire to view, besides the textual side of the charms, also practices associated with them. Timewise the analysed material dates back to the 18th century, while the most recent texts originate in the fieldwork in 2003. T. Panina explains the background on some Udmurt concepts (*pell'as'kon, kuris'kon*) and discusses charms as rhythmically organised texts with a certain psychological and functional orientation: they are meant to influence the outer world to produce the desired result. In her monograph the author uses different folkloristic methods: comparative-typological, synchronic descriptions, comparative-historical method, semantic analysis and the methodology of ethnolinguistics. This is inevitable in the case of a genre with variegated content, structure and ritual practice.

Due to the linguistic-cultural specific features, confessional circumstances (long-term ethnic belief, existence in the intersection of Christianity and Islam), and traditions of neighbouring peoples from different language families the material is fascinating and complex. The expelling of diseases is the most extensive sphere of application of charms, which involves the aetiologies of diseases and a myriad of treatment models, not to mention that the sphere itself covers everything from hygiene to illnesses, and from cure to social welfare. Panina defines healing rituals as a complete cultural system, as part of the Udmurt traditional worldview system, which helps to disclose the codes for verbal and non-verbal texts. The author brings to the fore the personal level of rituals and discusses the levels of space and time, attributes and actions in practices and verbal charms. She also analyses colour symbolism, and for the first time ever discusses the role of foreign (Russian) verbal charms and Christian prayers in the Udmurt tradition, which so far have deserved little attention.

As texts, religious views and activities are treated in an intentionally syncretic manner, the book enlightens us about the main facets of folk medicine,

introducing the reader to popular definitions of diseases, hygiene rules, and more general cure procedures. The second chapter describes a variety of temporary and permanent rituals, and gives an overview of calendrical rituals and those related to room cleansing, as well as of symbolic rituals (e.g. the symbolic re-birth of a child, which was used to fight so-called animal-origin diseases), transmissions of diseases, ritual deception of diseases, etc. The ritual “re-baking” of the sick person and many other rituals elicit the main features of the archaic range of methods. A separate subchapter gives an overview of the verbal charms for expelling a disease.

The following two chapters dwell upon the specific features of the rituals associated with charms and their verbal side. The author brings to the fore the personal code related to the text, which is divided between the addressee and the addresser, and secured by the status of the healer. The requirements set on the healer seem to be widely known and stereotypical, including those concerned with good health and existence of teeth, as well as other determiners of social status (e.g., the healer could be a widow or a woman who had given birth to several children).

Space requirements as well as attributes and the semantic side of the charms have been characterised in great detail, by concrete spatial objects (yard, window, sauna, crossroads, water bodies, etc.).

The monograph provides an overview of the researches on the collection and publication of the Udmurt material, which certainly constitutes valuable information for the reader. As concerns the study of charms on the international level, the most comprehensive overview is given of Russian publications, yet several significant sources are missing even here. A more detailed characterisation of the material in other languages has been hindered by global diffusion and problems in finding relevant books and articles. It is obviously a separate topic, as in many countries this genre features a long history with a wide range of theoretical approaches, and covering all this material in one book would have a negative impact on presenting the results obtained on the basis of own material.

The main value of the book consists in examining the Udmurt material from several aspects and discourses. It is a good academic publication, another achievement in the sphere of charm studies.

Mare Kõiva

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Rita Balkutė (ed.). *Galia užburti: kenkimo magija 1982–2012 metų užrašuose* [*The Power of Magic: Harmful Magic in Recordings from 1982–2012*]. Vilnius: R. Balkutės fondas, 2013. 752 pp. ISBN 978-609-95585-0-9

Given the increasing interest in magic and witchcraft, it is particularly important that authentic folklore material should be published to provide an alternative to all the sorts of secondary sources of information, of which (unfortunately) there are many. In this context, the unique and irreplaceable source of living material is that submitted directly by a collector. Materials collected by numerous folklore expeditions always offer exceptional value, but, as a rule, have the disadvantage that they usually are well hidden from the majority of the reading public and are available only to the elite. But here we have a happy exception: Rita Balkutė, senior archivist at the Lithuanian Folk Culture Centre, has published the result of her many years of fieldwork. For more than 30 years she has collected material on folk magic and medicine in Lithuania and abroad. The book contains material resulting from more than 140 expeditions in 19 regions of Lithuania, as well as in Lithuanian enclaves in Belarus and Poland. The book presents 882 texts, selected from more than 1,200 author's recordings.

The book is divided into seven parts, in each of these the field material proper is preceded by brief summaries of the texts to come. The first section is devoted to sorcerers and contains stories, folk beliefs and practices that describe the careers and characteristics of sorcerers: their aetiology (how sorcerers differ from exorcists, and how one can become a sorcerer), typology (what kind of sorcerers there are), their relationships, life and death; a separate section is devoted to portraits of individual well-known magicians, compiled according to the informants' accounts. The second part of the book includes a description of the methods of harmful magic. The chapters here cover magic by means of voice, hands, ringing, wind, etc.; magic items (salt, blood, food, clothing, money, etc.); love magic and wedding magic. A separate section describes how you may protect yourself from the effects of magic. The third part of the book is devoted to people with the “evil eye”. This section which forms a large portion of the book includes a classification of people with the evil eye (as well as the cause of the “evil eye”); description of the influence of the evil eye on people, animals, plants, and things; various methods of treating humans and animals suffering from the effects of the evil eye, and a section on how to escape from the evil eye. The fourth, fifth and sixth parts deal with people with “light” hand, “heavy” hand, and an “evil voice”. Finally, the last part is devoted to witches, who steal the milk of cows.

The book benefits from its numerous illustrations which depict the informants, as well as the objects used in magic rituals. At the end of the book there

are the references data regarding the informants and their geographical locations, as well as a glossary (because of the use of dialect vocabulary and other low frequency words by informants).

The undeniable advantage of the publication is to present texts in the form in which they are recorded by collector without any cuts and changes. The form of dialogue allows us to understand better the attitudes of informants to the subject; the reader feels included in the conversation. For the same reason, this material is interesting not only for folklorists, but also for linguists and dialectologists: the texts feature various dialectal features, besides part of the texts themselves being in different languages (in Russian, in Belarusian and Polish). All the texts have been edited from a linguistic point of view: the Lithuanian texts are edited by folklorist Dr Kostas Aleksynas, Polish texts were edited and translated by Dr Maria Romanova, and the Belarusian texts were edited and translated by the lecturer at the Center of the Belarusian language, literature and ethnic culture Nina Petkevich.

This book marks just a beginning to the planned publications of the collector. Her forthcoming books will include a collection of spells (“The Power of Spell”), the medical material (“Power of Treatment”) and materials on unusual abilities (“Magic Knowledge”). Undoubtedly, the present edition, and the ones to follow, will contribute greatly to the treasury of Lithuanian folklore recordings.

Maria Zavyalova
Institute of Slavic Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences

T. A. Agapkina, A. L. Toporkov, *Vostochnoslavijskie zagovory: Materialy k funkcional'nomu ukazatelju siuzhetov i motivov. Annotirovannaja bibliografija [East Slavic Charms: Materials for a Functional Index of Plot Structures and Motifs. An Annotated Bibliography]*. Moscow: Indrik, 2014, 320 pp. ISBN 978-5-91674-322-7

Charm scholars, and especially those who read Russian, will be well aware of both the individual and the joint work of Tat'iana Agapkina and Andrei Toporkov in the field of verbal magic charms and the wider field of the history of magic and folk belief among Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians (see articles in English by them in *Incantatio* 2 and 3, and reviews of two previous books by them in *Incantatio* 2; Professor Toporkov is a member of the editorial board of this journal). Their contribution has been outstanding, not least in their attempts to establish a taxonomy of charms and framework rules for a charm motif index. We are now indebted to them for a substantial new joint work which will be not only an invaluable tool for researchers in East Slavic charms but also for all folklore scholars concerned with the problem of classification in motif indexes.

The book is to some extent a reworking and development of the authors' earlier bibliography of 2010 and 2011, but it is updated and very much expanded, in particular with material from manuscript and Ukrainian sources. Even so, it is still a project in progress; it is restricted to certain types of charm and does not try to cover the whole extent of East Slavic verbal magic (hence the “Materials for ...” in the title). It does nevertheless cover a substantial part of the possible corpus.

The book is divided into two parts. The first is the motif index which classifies charms by function into 14 groups under two major headings: I (Agapkina) medical; II (Toporkov) social, hunting and fishing, military. Each of these two sections is preceded by an introduction explaining the content and methodology. Each motif is followed by a source list, with occasional commentaries, arranged by area: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus.

The second part is entitled “Annotated Bibliography”. It begins with a very detailed and informative 26-page essay by Toporkov on the history of the publication of East Slavic charms, with all the complications of censorship which that involved. This is followed by a methodological introduction by both authors, which explains in particular what is *not* included, e.g. the plethora of recycled and fake charm texts in post-soviet popular publications.

The bibliography which follows is also divided into sections for Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus and within those sections chronologically by author, with full details of publication and content, including the functions of the charms

listed. The total number of sources examined is about 650 (450 Russian, 150 Ukrainian, 50 Belarusian), giving a total number of charms about 30,000.

There is, alas, no index, but the structure of the book perhaps makes this less necessary than usual.

William F. Ryan

CONFERENCE REPORT

CHARMS SESSIONS AT THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIEVAL CONGRESS (JULY 7–10, 2014, LEEDS, UNITED KINGDOM)

The International Medieval Congress in Leeds is a unique event: a prominent scholarly forum with productive and inspiring atmosphere. It gathers thousands of researchers and artists together to present and discuss their studies and artwork. While its focus is on the Middle Ages, its papers, debates and performances reach far beyond the medieval period. In short, participating in such an excellent and rich academic event as the International Medieval Congress in Leeds is a wonderful and fulfilling experience.

This year the atmosphere was even better and richer, because the program contained two sessions on verbal magic. These sessions were sponsored by “Charms, Charmers & Charming” Section, International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR), and were efficiently organized by Jonathan Roper (Department of Estonian & Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu). Although he could not be present in person, his energetic efforts were visible and gave excellent results. All in all, the sessions on verbal magic were among the most interesting and productive at the entire congress.

The first session was entitled *Medieval Charms, Charmers and Charming, I: Charms in the Middle Ages and After*. It was chaired by Jacqueline Borsje and contained three presentations. The focus here was on the complex development of verbal charms – as texts and practices, but also on the meaning and usage of terminology.

Ciaran Arthur (Centre for Medieval & Early Modern Studies, University of Kent) gave a paper entitled *Reconsidering the Meaning of G(e)aldor in Old English: Condemned Pagan Practice or Christian Ritual?* He discussed the Old English term “g(e)aldor” and the development of its meanings. It was demonstrated that in the context of the Old English corpus, the majority of appearances of ‘g(e)aldor’ are condemnatory but these are always presented in compound form, and the term never appears in isolation as a condemned practice. When it does appear on its own, the contexts surrounding the word indicate that it signified divine insight of Christian mysteries. In the light of this evidence, it becomes clear that the Anglo-Saxons endorsed these rituals for their Christian

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Rita Balkutė (ed.). *Galia užburti: kenkimo magija 1982–2012 metų užrašuose* [*The Power of Magic: Harmful Magic in Recordings from 1982–2012*]. Vilnius: R. Balkutės fondas, 2013. 752 pp. ISBN 978-609-95585-0-9 (Maria Zavyalova)

T. A. Agapkina, A. L. Toporkov, *Vostochnoslavijskie zagovory: Materialy k funkcional'nomu ukazatelju suzhetov i motivov. Annotirovannaja bibliografija* [*East Slavic Charms: Materials for a Functional Index of Plot Structures and Motifs. An Annotated Bibliography*]. Moscow: Indrik, 2014, 320 pp. ISBN 978-5-91674-322-7 (Will Ryan)

CONFERENCE REPORT

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Charms Sessions at the International Medieval Congress (July 7-10, 2014, Leeds, United Kingdom) (Svetlana Tsonkova)

INTRODUCTION

The fourth issue of the journal *Incantatio* continues publication of the research articles based on the presentations at the Charms Symposium of the 16th Congress of the ISFNR (in Vilnius, June 25–30, 2013), supplementing them with other research articles. The main topics of the current issue include oral and written charming tradition, transmission of charms and their social functioning, as well as social and ethno-medical aspects of charms. The issue starts with papers dealing with the Baltic region and analyzing materials from Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus. In her article, Åsa Ljungström discusses charms' manuscripts compiled in Sandvik Manor, Sweden, during the eighteenth century Sweden, together with the life stories of the manuscripts' owners; the article reveals the biographical and social background to the written charms. The article by Daiva Vaitkevičienė is focused on the social functioning of verbal healing charms and presents the results of the fieldwork carried out by the author in 2010–2012 in the Lithuanian community of Gervėčiai, Belarus. The regional problematic is further dealt with by Tatsiana Volodzina, who has, upon special request from *Incantatio*, submitted a paper on the unique disease *kautun* (*Plica Polonica*), which is well-known across the cultural area comprising Lithuania, Belarus, and Poland. The article is amply illustrated by authentic narratives recorded by the author during her fieldwork and which describe the curing of this disease by charming practice in contemporary Belarus. Aigars Lielbārdis in his turn introduces two sides of the Latvian charming tradition: the oral and the written, giving special attention to the written books of the Latvian charms *Debesu grāmatas* (“Books of Heaven”) and tracing the route of their spread in Latvia. Continuing the theme of written charms, Laura Jiga Iliescu introduces the Central European analogue of the Latvian ‘Books of Heaven’ as they exist in Romania; her article focuses on the apocryphal “Legend of Sunday”, also known as “The Epistle Fallen from Heaven”, one copy of which was carried along by a soldier during the First World War. Last but not least among the research publications of this issue is a broad and exhaustive study by Haralampos Passalis dealing with “The Sisinnios Prayer” and discussing oral and written aspects of this interesting narrative in the Greek tradition with special attention paid to the oral tradition.