

INTRODUCTION

Members of ISFNR Charms, Charming and Charmers working group has studied data from different eras and regions including texts, material objects such as amulets, religious norms and practices, and incantations. Different periods and regions have their own specific variations, intertextual transmissions, poetic and linguistic realisations, text types and motifs. The diversity of charm research is highlighted through published monographs, dissertations and articles. At the same time, databases have been developed in several countries, the creation of which stems from personal initiatives and the research needs of scholars with digital collections and databases being opened in Hungary, Latvia, Romania, Russia (Vepsian material), Belarus, and Estonia. Several novel techniques to assist in content analysis were used alongside quantitative research.

One aim of the journal is to introduce novel theoretical results in the field, and at the same time give the floor to smaller linguistic spaces and, accordingly, to the results produced by these researchers.

Charms are a syncretic form of culture. Such forms are created within the cultural processes occurring in living communities, and within active human communication both in the past and the present. The introduction of scientific works have led to the demonstration of different approaches to the study of charms, highlighting new aspects of this essentially universal or at least largely comparable phenomena. These works have led to different schools and researchers offering their own systematic and theoretical approaches to the data as well as observations of the changes in these processes with emphasis is on various aspects of charming and the charmer in the broader sense.

Research papers published in smaller languages are often out of the reach of the English-speaking reader. The preservation of linguistic diversity is an important but taxing task. As a researcher and a representative of a small language, one has the responsibility to cover topics at a high level as well as collecting, systematising and interpreting subject matter. Further, there is the need to mediate this knowledge to other scientists and a wider circle of interested actors.

This time *Incantatio* focuses on the Udmurts, including the Udmurt community living in Bashkortostan and the Bashkirs of Bashkortostan. The Udmurts (a Finno-Ugric group of approximately 500,000 people) live east of the Urals on the banks of the Kama and Vyatka rivers and their tributaries. About half of the populated Udmurt territory is covered with forest, the rest is arable land. Two-thirds of Udmurts reside in the Udmurt Republic with the remainder living in Bashkortostan, Tatarstan,

Perm and Kirov regions, and the Mari El Republic; in Siberia, etc. Some Udmurts left elsewhere starting in the 16th century when escaping from the Orthodox Church, war and taxes.

In Udmurtia, but especially outside the main Udmurt area, older religious customs, song culture and narratives were preserved. Udmurt folklorists have contributed, generation after generation, to the collection of Udmurt material, and to the linguistic, ethnographic and folkloric study of the collected material. Tatiana Vladykina has been engaged in the study of Udmurt charms, prayers, riddles, calendar customs and mythology. In her article, she looks at the names of stars, which are usually based on mythological cognition. Along with the sun and moon the stars have been used as metaphors in Udmurt song culture, prayers and charms for centuries.

Dreams are an area where the experiences and interpretations of religious professionals and lay people meet. Tatiana Minnijakhmetova's study focuses on the process of dream telling in Udmurt communities, and how the very situation of telling a dream becomes ritualistic. Dreams are also signs that provoke particular reactions from dreamer and listeners.

Reader will find a classification of magical activities in Tatiana Panina's paper, which analyses the actional code of Udmurt healing. Panina's proposed classification is based on the system developed by Elena Levkijevskaya for the study of Slavic protective amulets.

Bashkiria is located in the southern part of the Ural Mountains; most of the territory is in Europe with a small area in the east geographically belonging to Asia. The oldest signs of human activity date back to the Paleolithic period between 200,000 and 100,000 years ago. Many peoples migrated to the region from the 16th century, because of Orthodoxy, war, and taxes. The Udmurts of Bashkiria have preserved their holy places, original animistic religion and language to a significant degree. This is why various sacrificial rites continued successfully through different ideological periods and why there were still practicing sacrificial priests in the 1990s and later, as Ranus Sadikov writes in this issue. His article is devoted to the consideration of the current state of the priesthood in the Trans-Kama (Eastern) Udmurt tradition. Sadikov shows that since the revival of religious traditions in the 1990s, significant changes have taken place in the organisation of priests' activities, and how this is dictated by the modern realities of life.

Zifa Khasanova describes the customs of the Bashkirs, a Turkish-speaking Muslim nation. She studies the magical means (amulets, incantations) the Bashkirs used and still use to protect domestic animals in the Republic of Bashkortostan, looking at the period between the middle of the 20th and early 21st centuries. Magic items and amulets continue to preserve traditional methods of magical protection of livestock, with people even ordering such items on the internet today.

Ekaterina Kulikovskaya focuses on the intentionality and addressness of performative verbs in Russian incantation texts using Speech Act theory. Intentionality is characterized by a focus on objects of the real world or relatedness to them. Intention is associated with the emotional, psychological state of the speaker. The author demonstrates that the charm addressee is not only a real, or even supernatural person, but also an inanimate object. This object is incanted by a performative.

Some of the articles deal with the problem of traditional healers and witches and the transmission of their knowledge. Tatiana Agapkina examines the peculiarities of the transfer of the charms among East Slavic healers. In the second part of her article Agapkina explores the rules of healing when incantations are used as a magical tool, describing types of healer as well as regulations concerning charming practice.

Mare Kõiva looks at the features characteristic of 19th century and beginning of 20th century folk doctors in northern Estonia, where the decline in certain medical techniques (hirudotherapy, folk treatments using cupping) changes in light of massage and hydrotherapy. 'Official' medicine's consistent dialogue with innovation, the influence of esoteric movements and self-improvement and experimentation with various techniques are evident.

Heather A. Taylor examined charms against thieves in medieval English manuscripts. By identifying instructions for the practitioner contained within the texts and their associated rubrics, Taylor imagines how the performance of these charms may have looked in practice, and how, in some cases, there is a parallel with the parish ritual of 'beating the bounds'.

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