

performers, or copied from manuscripts of different origin. The index only includes publications of charms with reference for the source. Thus, the preface clearly defines the borderlines and limitations of the presented material.

The editors' preface is followed by an overview of the previous publications of East Slavic charms (pp. 8–15). Focused and concise, this historical overview positions *Восточнославянские Заговоры: Аннотированный Библиографический Указатель* among the different publishing contexts and their development.

After the list of abbreviations (pp. 16–17), comes the index itself (pp. 18–170). It includes 340 Russian, around 100 Ukrainian, and around 40 Belarusian sources, divided accordingly in three chapters. The publications in each chapter are arranged on chronological order. Each publication is described in eight points: name and full bibliographical reference; general description of the publication; place of the recording of the charms; time of the recording; information if the recording is written, oral or both; number and functions of the charms; general amount of the charms in the publication; commentaries accompanying the charms; information if the charms are published with any descriptions of their context, performance details, proxemics and paraphernalia.

To conclude, *Восточнославянские Заговоры: Аннотированный Библиографический Указатель* is a well-organized, comprehensive and helpful book. Clearly, it represents an important step in the research of verbal magic. Even more, it is a precious reference volume, a good starting point and a solid foundation for research for a number of disciplines: from folkloristics and ethnology to cultural history and philology. And finally, this excellent book reminds that such bibliographical indexes of charms in other traditions are still very much needed.

Svetlana Tsonkova

Central European University – Budapest / University of Tartu

T. A. Agapkina, *Vostochnoslavijskie lecebnye zagovory v sravnitel'nom osveshchenii. Siuzhetika i obraz mira* (East Slavic Healing Spells in a Comparative Light: Plot Structure and Image of the World), Moscow: Indrik, 2010, 823 pp. ISBN: 978-5-91674-091-2

The fairly sudden revival of interest in the study of East Slav (Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian) magic and charms in recent years is impressive. This is very much to be welcomed because the quantity of recorded charms in the Slav world is very large, which makes them especially amenable to comparative and typological study. In particular we should welcome two new monu-

mental works on charms published by the Moscow publisher Indrik in 2010, perhaps not entirely by coincidence since their authors are a husband and wife who acknowledge each other's assistance in their prefaces. The two books are, however, quite different in content and methodology: Andrei Toporkov's book (see my separate review in this number of *Incantatio*), is concerned with the historical written charm tradition in a specific area of Russia and is primarily a large annotated corpus of written charm texts, while Tat'iana Agapkina's book is concerned with the typology, motifs and structures of healing charms, primarily from the oral tradition, and their place in the world view of the East Slavs, peoples who have close ethnic, linguistic and religious links.

As one might expect of one of the editors of the encyclopedia of Slavic folk culture *Slavianskie drevnosti*, Agapkina's book is intellectually very ambitious and attempts, convincingly I believe, both a sophisticated theoretical framework and detailed analyses of particular charm types.

In Part 1, after a thorough history of the study and publication of East Slavic charms (Introduction, pp. 9–25) (“The plot structure [*siuzhetika*] of East Slav healing charms”), Agapkina launches into a general analysis of her topic, and a definition of terms. The latter may be a little daunting for non-specialists in Russian literary theory and *fol'kloristika* in that it invokes Veselovskii and Propp and requires some understanding of the use of the Russian terms *tema*, *motiv* and *siuzhet*, and Agapkina's own use of the words *tema* and *siuzhetnyi tip* in a terminological sense.

The last mentioned term is exemplified in Agapkina's first chapter “Universal plot [*siuzhet*] types” (pp. 29–87) in which the first section is “Appeal to the sacral centre”. This is the appeal to some magic object, personage, or creature [e.g. the King of Serpents] or demonic force to perform the healing function; this appears in more or less elaborate form (e.g. rising at dawn, washing, praying, going out into the open country (*chistoe pole*), or establishing some other sacral space – the ocean-sea, a magical island [e.g. Buian], where there may be a sacred stone [e.g. *alatyry* or variants] or tree [often oak], where there is some person, often a saint) at the beginning of many East Slav charms and is the commonest “universal plot type”. The second section of this chapter is devoted to another “universal plot type” entitled “The elimination of the illness”. Both sections are analytical and taxonomic in character, and are illustrated with a wealth of examples and variants.

Chapter 2 (pp. 149–245) is entitled “Polyfunctional plots [*siuzhety*], motifs, formulas, and poetical devices”. This is subdivided into “Magical enumeration”; “Dialogic ritual”, “The motif of equal knowledge”; “Formulas of the impossible and their motifs”; “Flew without wings, sat without legs”; “No water from a

stone, no blood from the wound”; “The first sews, the second embroiders, the third charms the blood to stop”.

Chapter 3 (pp. 248–565), “Plots and motifs of charms for individual illnesses”, is divided into sections grouping particular types of illness: charms for infant insomnia and crying; charms for *gryzha* (often hernia, but also covering a rather wide range of medical problems usually involving swelling or abscess); charms for childhood epilepsy; charms for bleeding and wounds; charms for dislocations; charms for skin diseases; charms for toothache; charms for internal problems, especially of the womb (*zlotnik*, *dna*); charms for fever (the Sisinnius legend, *triasavitsy*, daughters of Herod etc).

Part II (pp. 569–677) is more discursive and is devoted to an analysis of the image of the world in East Slav healing charms. It discusses concepts of time and space, the other world, time as a factor in the magical process, the human body. It concludes with a chapter on “Plot structure [*siuzhetika*] of East Slav healing charms viewed comparatively” which compares East Slav charms with parallels among the West Slavs (Polish, Czech, Slovak and border areas), South Slavs (Serbs, Bulgarians) with some reference to Greek and Romanian charms. The chapter ends with a section on “Charms and the book tradition”. This discusses the interaction of the distinct written and oral charm traditions, the importance of “apocryphal” prayers and biblical themes from Byzantine and South Slav sources, and the “folklorization” of these motifs.

Appended to the main text of the book (at pp. 681–788) is an important detailed study of the complicated ramifications of the Byzantine Sisinnius legend in the East Slav and South Slav manuscript tradition, and the long and elaborate charm prayer against the fever demons (*triasavitsy*), together with ten variants of the text of the prayer in the first redaction and fifteen variants of the second redaction, and thirty variants of the third short redaction, taken from both published and manuscript sources. This is a fascinating topic on which more remains to be discovered but this invaluable work by Agapkina has moved the subject a long way forward and is a sound basis for further research.

A final two short appendixes are entitled “The East Slav prayers against the *triasavitsy* and charms about the shivering Christ” and “South Slav prayers against the *nezhit* and Slavonic charms”, both with texts.

It is hard to do justice to such a massive and detailed book in a review – so let me just conclude that this is a vast, erudite, and authoritative contribution to charm scholarship. It adds greatly to the store of texts available to scholars, it makes a serious contribution to charm classification, and it handles historical and linguistic data in exemplary fashion. My only regret is that it has no index.

William F. Ryan
Warburg Institute, London