

by a glossary of dialect and archaic words, and an essay by S. A. Myznikov on the Karelo-Vepsian charms in the manuscript, including texts, Russian translation and critical apparatus (pp. 286–310). Some of the Russian charms in this *sbornik* are presented in English translation in an article by Toporkov published elsewhere in this number of *Incantatio*.

Part 2 (pp. 313–422) contains charms from eight 17th-century manuscripts; Part 3 (pp. 425–652) contains charms from eighteen 18th-century manuscripts; Part 4 (pp. 655–784) contains charms from nine 19th-century manuscripts. These are presented in the same way, with commentaries at the end of each section.

The book ends with a typological index, an index of personal and place names, a list of manuscript sigla and archives, and a 30-page bibliography.

The book is well produced and a worthy addition to the impressive list of serious scholarly contributions to Russian cultural history issued by the Moscow publishing house Indrik.

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*Charms, Charmers and Charming. International Research on Verbal Magic*, edited by Jonathan Roper, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 294 pp. ISBN 978-0-230-55184-8

The present volume represents a collection of nineteen researches dedicated to the study of charms, charmers and charming. Its editor, Jonathan Roper, is well known in the community of charm scholars: he authored the monograph *English Verbal Charms* (Helsinki, Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2005; FFC 288), and, for several years, he has been constantly promoted the creation of a network of researchers interested in this field and of their publications. This volume relies on such endeavours, and comprises many contributions which were presented in two conferences held in London in 2005 and in Pécs in 2007. Its organisation in two parts (*Topics and Issues in Charms Studies* and *National Traditions*) echoes another volume edited by Jonathan Roper, entitled *Charms and Charming in Europe* (2004, Palgrave Macmillan).

Nine studies are gathered in the first part of the volume. Two of them focus on the expression of impossibilities in charms. Natalia Glukhova and Vladimir Glukhov discuss the Mari Charms in this respect (*Expressions of Impossibility and Inevitability in Mari Charms*, pp. 108–121), while Éva Pócs focuses on the

Hungarian charms, but takes into account a larger corpus of texts attested during a long period of time. The variety of texts analysed allows her to draw important conclusions on the long-lasting employ of this motif, on its presence in charms meant to cure certain diseases and on the contribution of the Christian themes to the various expression of impossibilities (*Magic and Impossibilities in Magic Folk Poetry*, pp. 27–53).

Laura Stark discusses various evidence dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century regarding the means used in the rural milieu to protect and to strengthen the human body, and persuasively argues that the body was imagined as extremely ‘porous’ in the archaic communities (*The Charmer’s Body and Behaviour as a Window onto Early Modern Selfhood*, pp. 3–16). Paul Cowdell’s article provides with a diachronic description of the consistent structural elements of charms against rats and discusses their long use in relation with the information supplied by natural history (*‘If Not, Shall Employ “Rough on Rats”’: Identifying the Common Elements of Rat Charms*, pp. 17–26). On the basis of more than 500 Swedish snake charms preserved in documents of the 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Ritwa Hershfeldt addresses the problem of the informants’ and of the users’ gender, and connects her results to previous discussions on similar Swedish charms of the 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century (*Swedish Snakebite Charms from a Gender Perspective*, pp. 54–61). In a research based on charms from the Russian, Bulgarian and Ukrainian traditions, Vladimir Klyaus argues that the narrative character of a charm does not refer exclusively to the magical words, and discusses narration as at least “a function of the charm’s broader performative or objective nature” (*On Systematizing the Narrative Elements of Slavic Charms*, pp. 71–86). On the basis of the hypothesis that the transmission of charms discloses that they were “socially, medically and doctrinally respectable”, T. M. Smallwood analyses the variation of medieval English charms in order to reveal their inventiveness (*Conformity and Originality in Middle English Charms*, pp. 87–99).

In the second section of the volume, Andrei Toporkov illustrates the researches meant to re-establish the history of magic texts by a thorough analysis of the evolution of the formula “let her neither eat nor drink”, which is also present in the Russian charms (*Russian Charms in a Comparative Light*, pp. 121–144). Jonathan Roper discusses the frequency and the typology of the Estonian narrative charms and their relation to charms from other traditions (*Estonian Narrative Charms in Europe Context*, pp. 174–185). Daiva Vaitkevicienė debates on the relations between the Baltic charms, and analyses Lithuanian and Latvian texts based on invocations and comparisons, on dialogue structures and on narratives (*Lithuanian and Latvian Charms: Searching for Parallels*, pp. 186–213). Lea Olan focuses on a corpus of charms that circulated in manuscripts of one fifteenth-century medical recipe collection, and compares

the charms in the Leechcraft collections to charms in other recipe collections (The Corpus of Charms in the Middle English Leechcraft Reemedy Books, pp. 214–237). Mary Tsiklauri and David Hunt give an insightful overview of the words for ‘charm’ in Georgian and a structural description of the Georgian charms and classify them according to their aims and the conditions of their performance (The Structure and Use of Charms on Georgia, The Caucasus, pp. 260–272). Two studies focus on the tradition of charms and charming outside Europe: Verbal Charms in Malagasy Folktales; *Manteras: An Overview of a Malay Archipelagoes’ Charming Tradition* (Lee Haring, pp. 246–259; Low Kok On, pp. 273–287).

Through the important number of researches, covering various traditions, both European, and non-European, the volume represents a significant contribution to the study of charms, charmers and charming. Because it comprises numerous charms, all translated into English, it is a very useful tool for the specialists interested in such texts. Last but not least, through its focus on charms attested since the Middle Ages up to nowadays, the present book acquires a specific position in a research field dominated by studies dedicated to the ancient or to specific national traditions.

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