Incantatio

An International Journal on
Charms, Charmers and Charming

ISNFR Committee on
Charms, Charmers and Charming

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INTRODUCTION

The first official meeting of the ISFNR's Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming took place in Pécs, Hungary, in 2007. But before this 'historical' meeting, there were two 'pre-historical' meetings of charms scholars held at the Warburg Institute in London, under the auspices of the [British] Folklore Society in 2003 and 2005. In organizing these events practically and financially, I had a great deal of help from Will Ryan, who at that time was both a committee member of the Folklore Society and Academic Librarian at the Warburg Institute. Indeed, without his support and advice, these events would not have taken place.

Late in 2023, we received the sad news of Will's death. And so it is that *Incantatio* has the honour of publishing his final article, a study of the Russian *Secret of Secrets*. Additionally, we publish his obituary in this issue. One of the authors of this obituary, Andrey Toporkov, appears in this number in another guise as the subject of an interview, the second in our series of interviews with charms scholars.

An issue of *Incantatio* usually finds the majority of its articles in contributions presented at the most recent conference of our committee. This issue has been a difficult one to assemble as due to the COVID situation and broader reasons, there was no full-scale meeting of charms scholars between that in Budapest in 2017 and that in Riga in 2022 (though we should not forget the interesting online charms sessions that took place 'in' Zagreb in 2021, as part of the large ISFNR Congress).

Nevertheless, we received an interesting and wide-ranging selection of papers. Eva Toulouze and Tatiana Vladykina discuss how the Udmurts (a Finno-Ugric people living in European Russia) address their God(s). Elsewhere, Alessandra Mastrengalo investigates a Swedish manuscript book of magic and Laura Jiga Iliescu examines taboo violation and charming initiation. The final article in the issue is that of Tuukka Karlsson on the identification of unnamed non-human agents in a specific kind of Finnish and Karelian charm. Happily, we are also able to publish Ilona Tuomi's review of Tuukka's recent thesis publication, and our issue closes with a report on the Riga 2022 conference by first-time attendee, James Deutsch, of the Smithsonian Institute.

I wish to close by expressing my gratitude to all the authors who have contributed with their papers to the successfull completion of this issue. I am grateful to various members of the Committee, most especially to Emanuela Timotin for advice and discussions during the long process of compiling this issue, as well as to other scholars. Thanks to their co-operation, *Incantatio* remains a beacon in charms studies.

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THE RUSSIAN *SECRET OF SECRETS* AND PATRIARCH NIKON'S BOOK CURSE

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Abstract: The topic of book curses has not hitherto been discussed in *Incantatio* and is often ignored in the wider literature on magic and magic charms, perhaps because it is neither folklore nor literature. Book curses can serve two purposes. The obvious one is to try to prevent the theft of books by terrifying potential thieves; the less obvious one is to attract readers or buyers with promises of secret or forbidden knowledge. In our article, we shall examine one of each kind found together in a single Russian volume.

Key words: Secret of secrets, Russia, book curses, Patriarch Nikon, classical inheritance

Book curses, as they are normally called in English, are a small but distinct category of written charm added to a manuscript or printed book. They are usually found at the beginning on the inside cover or flyleaf, or in the colophon. In their strongest form they call on God, or some other supernatural power, to punish physically or by anathema or by eternal damnation, anyone stealing or damaging the book, or even reading its 'secret' content if they are not initiates or 'worthy' persons. Such curses may be quite elaborate and inven-

tive, while in their mildest form they are not really curses at all but simply admonitions to late returners of borrowed books.

Book curses were known in the ancient world and more commonly in Greek, Arabic, and West European medieval manuscripts and later in early printed books. Medieval manuscripts and early printed books were expensive, and book curses were an attempt by their owners or custodians to protect a valuable and perhaps sacred asset. Book curses were normally written by the scribe of a manuscript, or by its owner or a librarian, i.e. they were written and read by literate people. There is a good general article with a bibliography on the subject (but nothing on Slavic book curses) in Wikipedia (US/UK) in the entry 'book curse'.[1]

Russia and the Orthodox areas of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania (now mostly in Ukraine and Belarus) have a tradition of book curses from about the fourteenth century onwards which is very similar in its essentials to that of Western Europe, which may have been its immediate source. In general, scholarly literature on inscriptions in manuscripts and printed books has tended to treat the book curse more as a brief note in a library catalogue than as a category of magic charm.

In this article I shall discuss two Russian book curses, one specific to a particular work, and the other found in a single copy of the same work, ostensibly written by Patriarch Nikon. This work is the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secret of Secrets*, in Arabic *Kitāb sirr al-asrār*, in Hebrew *Sod ha sodot*, in Russian *Tajnaja tajnyh*. This is a fifteenth-century translation of the Hebrew version into early Ukrainian, but more widely diffused in a later sixteenth-century Russified version. It contains an ancient book curse that is actually an integral part of the text.

The *Secret of Secrets* is a work originally written in Arabic, probably in the tenth century, but claiming to be a collection of secret letters written by Aristotle to his erstwhile pupil Alexander of Macedon about statecraft and all the branches of knowledge, practical, scientific, military, medical, magical, astrological and alchemical, which he would need to become a great king now that he had conquered Persia. There is a Short Form of the text and a

later expanded Long Form of the text but we are concerned here only with Short Form.

There is in fact no known Greek version of the *Secret of Secrets*, and the identity of the real author or authors (the text could well be a gradual compilation from various sources) is not known. Although no genuine works of Aristotle were published in Russian translation until the eighteenth century, Aristotle and Alexander were familiar figures to Russian readers from the Old Russian translation of the *Alexander Romance* and the Russian chronicles, and are generally seen as positive figures. Aristotle is even given prophetic status by his inclusion in the series of icons of the Old Testament prophets in the Dormition Cathedral in the Moscow Kremlin. The 'translator's' preface in the *Secret of Secrets* in all versions goes even further in its adulation of Aristotle – it says: 'And it is found in the books of the Hellenes that the Lord said to him: You should rather be called an angel than learned in innumerable sciences.[2]

The *Secret of Secrets* was widely known and read from the twelfth century onwards in most European countries both in Latin (over 600 extant copies[3]) and many vernacular versions. The main text has a preface that usually states, falsely, that it was written by Yaḥyā (or Yūḥannā) ibn al‑Biṭrīq (Patrikii/Patrekii in the Ukrainian/Russian version), a well-known ninth/tenth-century Assyrian translator from Greek into Syriac or Arabic. This 'translator' claims to have sought and found the work in a Greek manuscript written in gold letters and hidden in a mysterious temple of Hermes (or Aesculapius) in Egypt (finding secret books, scrolls, inscriptions or hidden treasure in secret caves and oriental temples are *topoi* of this genre). This manuscript, he says, he translated into Arabic at the bidding of the Caliph al-Manṣūr.

The Short Version of the *Secret of Secrets* was translated from Arabic into Hebrew, probably in Spain at some time in or after the twelfth century. This Hebrew version was then translated into early Ukrainian or Belorussian (the common language of the East Slavic population of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania), almost certainly by a Jewish scholar in Kyiv, Zechariah ben Aharon ha-Kohen, probably with a Slav helper, in the second half of the fifteenth century

(before 1483).[4] The earliest extant copy is probably of Belorusian provenance, slightly Polonized, from c.1560, but there are many later Russified copies. This Slavic translation also contains, as interpolations, three large extracts of medical works by Maimonides (*On Lethal Drugs, On Coitus* and *On Asthma*), and a physiognomy from Razes, *Ad Almansorem*, all of which appear to have been previously inserted into the Hebrew source used by the translator into Slavic.

The 'Arabic translator's' preface in the *Secret of Secrets*, mentioned above, is addressed to Caliph al-Manṣūr, and is followed by a second preface, supposedly written by Aristotle himself. This second preface is in the form of a reply by Aristotle to Alexander's letter requesting a written summary of all Aristotle's wise teachings. He concludes his message thus:

> [0.4.8] но во истинну ꙁнаменавахом таины раверене и печатлнⷩи притчами дабы не пала книга нша сїѧ в҇ ρжк недостоиных . [0.4.9] да внегда иꙁведають то, что имⷩ бг҃ъ не сдⷣилъ вдати. но бы хто ѧ раꙁорилъ ꙁаветⷮ того хтож мне тоє крыл . [0.4.10] а також тѧ ꙁаприсѧгаю, ꙗко и мене априсѧгали ѿ сїю вѣщь. [0.4.11] а хто оуведавъ сїю вещь таинꙋю. ѿкрыеть недостоиным. Оущепень [var. анафема] єсть сего с҇вета и ѿного. гс҃и силам оуховаи наⷭ ѿ сего амин.[5]

> *[0.4.8] … For in fact we have (only) hinted at the secrets scattered and sealed (therein) by means of parables, lest this our book should fall into the hands of the unworthy, [0.4.9] for if they should learn that which God has not permitted them to know, then I would be breaking the covenant of him who revealed it to me, [0.4.10] and I thus adjure you, just as I was made to swear in this matter. [0.4.11] And if anyone should learn this secret and disclose it to the unworthy, he shall be banned [var. anathema] from this world and the next. Lord of Hosts, defend us from this, Amen.*

> [The Russian and English texts here come from the edition of Ryan and Taube (2019), 88–9.]

This, as far as I can discover, is the first Russian non-clerical anathema, despite its reference to God, and the first book curse in a non-religious Russian text.

Even more interesting for both charm historians and historians of Russia, is the fact that one seventeenth-century manuscript copy of the Russian *Secret of Secrets* (MS MOSCOW, State Historical Museum, Synodal Collection 359) contains, in addition to the curse quoted above, a second, purely Russian book curse, together with the name of its author. This is a leather-bound quarto manuscript containing only one text. It has "Sija kniga Tajnaja tajnyh" (*This book is the Secret of Secrets*) stamped on the spine. There is a donation inscription (*vkladnaja*) at the beginning on the flyleaf which states, presumably truthfully but possibly by one of his scribes, that it was written by Patriarch Nikon and that he had copied the text"with his own hand" and placed the book in the Resurrection New Jerusalem Monastery.[6] Nikon had founded this monastery near Moscow in 1656 and collected a large library there.

Several of the older Russian catalogues of manuscript collections containing manuscripts owned or donated by Patriarch Nikon mention his donation inscription and book curse, and a few print the text, but all agree that the text of the curse is almost identical in all manuscripts. However, some later information is available. Of particular help have been a 1962 article by L. M. Kostjuhina on inscriptions in manuscripts in the Resurrection New Jerusalem Monastery library, and two recent Russian works, one a doctoral dissertation by V. P. Bogdanov (2023), and the other an extensive research paper by G. M. Zelenskaja and S. K. Sevast'janova (2021).[7] Although not devoted specifically to book curses, or treating book curses as a category of magic charm, or even mentioning the particular manuscript under discussion here, these do cast some new light on inscriptions in Russian manuscripts in general and early printed books in Russia, and include the texts of some book curses.

In the case of Nikon's copy of the *Secret of Secrets*, in the same hand as the donation inscription by Nikon, there is a book curse directed at anyone stealing or hiding the book. It is found on consecutive lower margins of the first few pages of the manuscript with just a

few words of the curse on each page (this method of adding marginal notes to the main text is also found in other manuscripts). The curse cites the Biblical accounts of the deaths by divine intervention of Ananias and Sapphira, a husband and wife who tried to cheat the apostles by withholding part of the money they had received for a piece of land which should have been given to the whole Christian community, and were both struck down by God for lying about their deceit (Acts 5:1–11); and also Achar the son of Karmi, who was struck down by God for stealing blessed things (1 Chronicles 2:7 – an obscure passage variously translated in different versions of the Bible). Nikon threatens the curse of God, spiritual and physical punishment, and perpetual torment. Presumably he had difficulty in finding more appropriate Biblical episodes, if there are any.

This book curse, with only minor variations of wording, appears to have been included in most of Nikon's many donation inscriptions in religious manuscripts and printed books – indeed, he appears to have been responsible for a considerable proportion of the book curses of seventeenth-century Russia. Nikon seems to have adopted this book curse, with its Biblical references, as a feature of his manuscript donation inscriptions before he became patriarch, although the reference to Ananias and Sapphira is also found in a shorter and slightly milder book curse at the end of the donation inscription in a 1645 multi-volume printed *Menaion* that was apparently placed in the library of the Saint Sophia Cathedral in Novgorod by Nikon, at that time Metropolitan of that city.[8] The inscription ends:

> хто будет забыв страх божий зделает святотатство и тех книг хто возмет книгу и того судит Бог в день судныи яко ж Ананию и Сапфиру

> [*Whoever forgets the wrath of God and commits a sacrilege and takes one of these books, that person will be judged at the Day of Judgment as were Ananias and Sapphira*].

I can find no record that these curses with these Biblical references occur anywhere in Russian manuscripts or books except in those donated by Nikon.

The most wordy specimen of Nikon's book curse reads[9]:

Лета 7169 [1661] сию книгу положил в дом святаго и живоноснаго Воскресения Господа бога нашего Иисуса Христа Новаго Иерусалима смиренный Никон, божиею милостию патриарх, а кто восхощет ю усвоити, яко же Ахарь сын Хармиев, или утаить, яко же Анания и Сапфира, да отымет от него господь бог святую свою милость и затворит двери святых щедрот своих, да придет на него неблагословение и клятва и казнь божия телесная и душевная в нынешнем веце и будущем вечная мука, а кто сие писание каким злым умышлением спишет от книги сея, да испишет его имя господь бог от книги животныя.

(MS MOSCOW, State Historical Museum, Synodal Collection, 1003, Weekly Gospels)

[*In the year 1661 this book was placed in the House of the holy and life-bringing Resurrection of the Lord our God Jesus Christ of the New Jerusalem by the humble Nikon, by the grace of God Patriarch, and if anyone should seek to steal it, like Achar the son of Karmi, or hide it, like Ananias and Sapphira, then the Lord God shall withhold his holy grace and lock the doors of his holy munificence, and there shall come upon him the imprecation and curse and punishment of God, and eternal torment both physical and spiritual in this life and the next, and if anyone should copy any of the text of this book with evil intent then the Lord God will expunge his name from the Book of Life.*]

This book curse is interesting in several ways. It does not appear to be recorded in Russia before Nikon and it always cites the two biblical episodes mentioned above, one from the Old Testament, the other from the New Testament. The references are simply to the names of the persons involved – the chapter and verse and contexts are not given. Both these episodes appear to be cited in order to justify

putting such a ferocious curse on book thieves, and were chosen because in the Biblical episodes cited, God had destroyed those who stole property that had been set aside for religious purposes.

This curse, with very minor differences but the same Biblical references, is also found in many other manuscripts, almost all liturgical or religious in content, as part of the donation inscription of Patriarch Nikon, a prolific donor of manuscripts, printed books, and 'holy objects' to churches, cathedrals, and monasteries. However, in neither of these Biblical episodes is there any mention of the theft or disclosure of the secret contents of books, and the *Secret of Secrets* is not remotely a religious work or 'holy object', even if it had been presented to a monastery library by a Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. It is certainly curious that a book curse otherwise inscribed only in 'holy' books or vessels used in the liturgy, altar cloths, icons, bells etc.), should have been used in the *Secret of Secrets*, thereby raising it by implication to the status of an ecclesiastically approved work.

Nikon was not the first to use these Biblical references in a curse, nor is it specific to Russia – the episode of Ananias and Sapphira is mentioned in a Latin curse in the tenth-century Noyon Cathedral sacramentary in the British Library (Add MS 82956) in which anyone stealing from the cathedral is condemned to burn in hell together with other figures of Biblical opprobrium Dathan and Abiram (opponents of Moses), and Judas Iscariot. This increases the possibility that Nikon took his book curse from a much earlier Western source, although admittedly the episode of Ananias and Sapphira has been a topic of lively theological debate since early Christianity and is still an occasional topic of discussion on the internet, both in English and in Russian.

Was Nikon trying to provide himself with a very tenuous scriptural justification for copying the obviously pagan and partly magical *Secret of Secrets* and protecting it with a lethal book curse which he normally employed only to protect Christian sacred objects? This could certainly be seen as inappropriate for a patriarch, and quite risky in view of the strength of the opposition to Nikon's reforms and the attempts by his enemies to find misdemeanours to accuse

him of, even if his book curse could conceivably be just a scholarly amusement following some West European models.

Avoiding ecclesiastical censure was also perhaps the reason Nikon omitted from his copy of the *Secret of Secrets* the onomantic table which predicted the outcome of conflicts by a form of numerology.[10] This was certainly heretical and banned in 1551 in the *Stoglav*,[11] and was also, probably for the same reason, omitted from all copies of the Latin *Secretum secretorum*. Russian canon law with regard to magic and divination and other pagan 'Hellenic' practices, and which was also used in civil law cases up to the eighteenth century, was still derived from the Greek canons of the Quinisext Council convened in 692 (the Synod in Trullo – not accepted in the Western Church).

Patriarch Nikon's book curse was not the only example of his use of Biblical texts in a curse. In 1658, just after he had vacated the patriarchate, Nikon was involved in a legal dispute over church land with a *stol'nik* (palace rank below boyar) Roman Fedorovič Boborykin, and attempted to intimidate his opponent by placing a curse on him. Boris Uspenskij, who has examined this episode in detail, points out that the manipulation of sacred texts so that they can be used for magical purposes constitutes semeiotic anti-behaviour, and thereby converts the text into an anti-prayer, i.e. a curse.[12] Uspenskji discusses Nikon's probable knowledge of the various kinds of semeiotic inversion in Russian folk magic but favours, as a possible on influence on Nikon, an obscure ritual in the Greek Orthodox Church (found in the 13th –17th cc.) which Nikon, as an ardent grecophile, may well have been aware of. This elaborate ritual – more magical than religious – is called in Greek *psalmokatara* 'psalm curse' and was used to anathematize criminals and heretics and condemn them to death from a painful disease.[13]

In the case of Boborykin, Nikon put together excerpts from Psalms 35, 69, 109 (Russian 34, 68, 108) in which King David calls upon God to protect him from, or punish, evil and deceitful and slanderous enemies. Psalmomancy in various forms was in fact widely used in magical procedures among Jews and Christians, including Russian Orthodox,[14] and when Nikon included this concatenation of psalm

fragments in a church service in the presence of Boborykin, the latter must have understood, or was told, that this was a veiled curse aimed at him. Boborykin retaliated by making the very serious formal accusation that Nikon had placed a curse on the Tsar and all his family. At the investigation which led to his removal from office Nikon denied this and said that his purpose was in fact to attack Boborykin himself.

Patriarch Nikon (1605–1681), seventh Patriach of Moscow and All Russia, was head of the Russian Orthodox Church from 1652 to 1666, in the reign of Tsar Aleksej Mihailovič (r. 1645–1676). He was of humble origin, a scholar and statesman and in many ways a reformer, in particular, in his attempts to bring the texts and practices of the Russian Orthodox Church more into line with the Greek. He was a friend and close adviser to the tsar, and for some time almost equal to the tsar in power. However, he was very authoritarian and made many enemies among the more conservative members of the court and the clergy such as the vituperative polemicist, the Archpriest Avvakum. Nikon was eventually removed from his post by a synod of bishops and foreign patriarchs, exiled, and reduced to the status of a simple monk. His reforms were nevertheless enacted, and he was pardoned in his old age.

During his patriarchate Nikon assumed control of the state printing house (Pečatnyj Dvor) and installed like-minded scholars with some knowledge of Latin and Greek (often from areas in present-day Ukraine or Belarus) as the *spravščiki*, the 'correctors' who were the senior officials responsible for what was published. I mention this, not as an aside, but because at least two of these important officials also owned manuscripts of the Russian *Secret of Secrets* (the priest Nikifor Semeonov, and later the ill-fated Silvester Medvedev). The eccentric monk historian Timofej Kamenevič-Rvovskij (Petrov), of the same period and with links to this circle, also made a copy of the Russian *Secret of Secrets* with emendations and comments on the text.[15] It is assumed that Tsar Aleksej Mihailovič himself had a copy, since he quotes it in correspondence.[16]

All of these, from the Tsar downwards, appear to have accepted the *Secret of Secrets* as a genuine work on statecraft and science

written by Aristotle. It seems the Printing House was even at one point preparing to publish it as a printed book – it appears in the form of an accurate list of the chapter headings from the *Secret of Secrets* in a printed catalogue of works considered worthy of translation and publication, without a title, but ascribed to Aristotle.[17] The acceptance in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Russia of the *Secret of Secrets* as an authentic work of Aristotle is less anachronistic than it might at first seem. The fact that the *Secret of Secrets* was dismissed from the corpus of authentic works of Aristotle by most Italian humanist scholars fairly early in the Renaissance does not mean that it was universally regarded as spurious. On the contrary, it continued to be very popular. The last scholarly Latin edition was published in 1555 by Francesco Storella,[18] but vernacular editions continued to appear as late as the eighteenth century, and copies of the work, both in Latin and vernacular translations, could be found in the libraries of scholars, universities, prelates, and rulers all over Europe. For example, the last printed version of an English translation of the *Secret of Secrets* was published in 1719. Its elaborate title page and dedication are worth quoting:[19]

> *Aristotle's secret of secrets contracted; being the sum of his advice to Alexander the Great, about the preservation of health and government. Formerly translated out of the original Greek [sic!] into Latin, and divers other languages; and being very scarce, is now faithfully rendred into English, for the good of mankind. Collected by a gentleman, a lover of his country, Edinburgh?, 1719.*

The Dedication on the verso of title page reads:

> Unto the Right Honourable Sir David Dalrymple of Hails, His Majesty's Advocate, and Dean of Faculty, and to the remanent members of the Honourable Faculty of Advocates; this second edition of Aristotle's advice to Alexander the Great, is humbly presented and dedicated by S. A. B.[20]

This continuing level of interest in England and Scotland in the eighteenth century may perhaps indicate that the interest shown by the Tsar, Patriarch, and the educated Russian elite in church and state in the seventeenth century is evidence that the *Secret of Secrets*, with or without book curses, was not so much a Russian anachronism as a potentially important influence in the history of Russian political thought in the turbulent seventeenth century, and certainly not merely an archaic medieval curiosity associated with the sect of Judaizers of the fifteenth/sixteenth century in Novgorod and Moscow, as the *Secret of Secrets* has often been portrayed.

NOTES

[1] The classic book-length study is Marc Drogin's *Anathema!: Mediaeval Scribes and the History of Book Curses*, Totowa NJ, 1983. It does not mention Russian book curses.

[2] For detailed discussion of this passage see W. F. Ryan and Moshe Taube, *The Secret of Secrets: The East Slavic Version. Introduction, Text, Annotated Translation, and Slavic Index*, Warburg Institute Studies and Texts, 7, London, 2019, §V.2.iv. 'Aristotle as Prophet and Angel'.

[3] See C. B. Schmitt and D. Knox, *Pseudo-Aristoteles Latinus: A Guide to Latin Works Falsely Attributed to Aristotle Before 1500*, Warburg Institute Surveys & Texts 12, London, 1985, p. 56. The authors list 96 pseudo-Aristotelian texts and estimate that more spurious Aristotelian works were read in this period than genuine works of Aristotle. There is no comparable survey of vernacular *spuria*.

[4] See Moshe Taube, 'The Kievan Jew Zechariah and the Astronomical Works of the Judaizers', in W. Moskovich et al., eds, *Jews and Slavs*, 3, Jerusalem, 1995, pp. 168–98. See also Ryan and Taube, *Secret of Secrets*, §IV.3.

[5] The Slavic version of this passage is a fairly faithful rendering of the Hebrew which, in its turn, is a fairly faithful rendering of the Arabic:

[Paris, BnF, ms. arabe 2421, f. 4a–b]

(0.4.8) واناومارمزت لك الاسرارالمحظورة وَعَوّزْت لك المعانى المكتومة لئيلا يقع كتابنا
هذا يدى جور مفسدين وفرعنة متجبرين (0.4.9) فيطلعون على ما لم يجعلهم الله

اﻬﻟا ﻢﻠﻌﻤﻟﻭ ﻻﺍ ﻢﻫﺎﻀﺗﺭﺍ ﻢﻬﻔﻬﻤﻫ ﻥﻮﻜﻳ ﺪﻗ ﺕﺮﺘﺨﺗ ﺪﻬﻌﻟﺍ ﻯﺬﻟﺍ ﺫﺧﺍ ﻰَﻠﻋ ﻒﻀﺤﺗ ﺍﺮﺳ
هﺮﺳ ﻉﺍﺫﺍ ﻦﻤﻓ (0.4.11) ﻰﻟﺍ ﺪﻬﻋ ﺎﻤﻛ ﻪﻈﻔﺣ ﻰﻓ ﻚﻴﻟﺍ ﺪﻬﻋﺍ ﺍﻧﺍﻭ (0.4.10) ﻰَّﻟﺍ ﻪﻠﻟﺍ ﻩﺮﻬﻇﺍ
ﻪﺘﻤﺣﺮﺑ ﺍﻧﺎﻳﺍﻭ ﻚُﻤﺼﻌﻳ ﻪﻠﻟﺍﻭ ﺔﻠﺠﻋﻭ ﺔﺒﻗﺎﻌﻣ ءﻮﺳ ﻦﻋ ﻦﻣﺁ ﺮﻴﻏ ﻮﻬﻓ

(0.4.8) *And indeed I only encoded the restricted secrets for you and revealed hidden meanings to you, so that this book of ours would not fall into the hands of tyrannical corruptors and arrogant evil princes* (0.4.9) *For then they would have access to what God did not make them worthy of knowing, nor did He allow them to understand, so I would have betrayed the covenant that was imposed on me and exposed a secret that God revealed to me.* (0.4.10) *And I entrust you to keep it just as it was entrusted to me* (0.4.11) *And whoever discloses his secret is not safe from a bad and swift consequence [or punishment]. May God protect you and us in His mercy.*

[Translation by Moshe Taube. Section numbering as in Ryan and Taube, *Secret of Secrets*]

[M. Gaster, 'The Hebrew Version of the Secretum Secretorum: A Medieval Treatise ascribed to Aristotle', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1907–8.]

.ואמנס רמזתי הסודות המפוזרות ומשלתי הענינים החתומים לבלתי יפוי הספרים ידיל היהירים
הספסידים הרשעים המתגברים. ועידו אלש ןתנ םהל האה רושת תעדל אותו ואלא הצר הבהז לבניהם.
זאל יתייה רפמ תירב הגמלה סוד הגילה ואתו האל ילא. ינאו משביער ךמו עבשהשו יתוא לע הז. ומי
.שידויע סוד הגלי ונמאצפ אניו וטבומ מהר עונה שנוע הרחמ. האל ךיל יציל יונילנ ברחמיו.

[Gaster's English translation]

'These various and scattered secrets have I merely indicated by tokens, and the sealed things have I clothed in likenesses, lest this our book fall into the hands of those proud men who destroy and of the wicked who covet power. They will then see that permission has been withheld from them to understand it, nor was it our intent that they know of it. And I would be breaking the covenant by revealing the secret which God has revealed to me. And I conjure thee, just as I have been conjured upon this subject (not to reveal it), and whoever knows this secret and reveals its hidden meaning is sure of a swift, bad punishment, from which the Lord keep thee and us and grant us mercy.'

I am very grateful to my friend and occasional collaborator Professor Moshe Taube for reading drafts of this article and sending me this note which adds clarity to the earlier history of this book curse.

[6] There is no mention of the book curse in the entry for this manuscript in the most modern catalogue of the Synodal collection: T. N. Protas'eva,

Opisanie rukopisej Sinodal'nogo sobranija (ne vošedših v opisanie A. V. Gorskogo i K. I. Nevostrueva), čast' I, Moscow, 1970, pp. 11–12.

⁷ L. M. Kostjuhina**, '**Zapisi XIII–XVIII vv. na rukopisjah Voskresenskogo monastyrja', *Arheografičeskij ežegodnik za 1960 god*, Moscow, 1962, pp. 230–90; Vladimir Pavlovič Bogdanov, *Zapisi na knigah kak istočnik po istorii knižnoi kul'tury (na materiale staropečatnyh kirilličeskih izdanij konca XV–XVII vekov)*, 2023 (online), pp. 94–132; G. M. Zelenskaja and S. K. Sevast'janova, 'Korpus nadpisej Patriarha Nikona na "svjatyh veščah": voprosy tekstologii i arhitekturno-hudožestvennogo oformlenija', *Germenevtika drevnerusskoj literatury*, sbornik 20, Moscow, 2021, pp. 479–547. I am very grateful to my friend Professor Andrej Toporkov for his invaluable and extensive bibliographical assistance in preparing this article, and in particular for drawing important recent publications to my attention.

⁸ Service Menaion for September, Moscow, Pečatnyj Dvor, 1645. See Bogdanov, *Zapisi*, p. 238 (n. 7 above).

⁹ Quoted from Kostjuhina**, '**Zapisi', No. 44.

¹⁰ See Ryan and Taube, *Secret of Secrets*, §V.2.viii and *ad indicem*.

¹¹ The Church Council of 100 chapters, 1551, Ch. 14 Question 22 'On evil heresies'. See Ryan and Taube, *Secret of Secrets*, p. 10, and W. F. Ryan, 'Ivan the Terrible, the *Stoglav*, and Russian Magic', in *Russian Magic at the British Library: Books, Manuscripts, Scholars, Travellers,* The Panizzi Lectures 2005, London, 2005, pp. 43–68, *passim.*

¹² Boris Uspenskij, 'Èpizod iz dela Patriarha Nikona (Stranička iz istorii grečesko-russkih cerkovnyh svjazej)', in Boris Uspenskij, *Ètjudy o russkoj istorii*, Azbuka, St Petersburg, pp. 371–92.

¹³ The details of this ritual are given in Uspenskij, 'Èpizod', pp. 378–80.

¹⁴ A. A. Turilov, '*Biblejskie knigi v narodnoj* kul›ture vostočnyh slavjan (K istorii Psaltyri kak gadatel'noj i magicheskoi knigi›, *Jews and Slavs*, 2, Jerusalem, 1994, pp. 77–86; also Ryan, *Bathhouse*, see index s.v 'Psalm'.

¹⁵ Moshe Taube and William Francis Ryan, "Chancellor Timofej Kamenevič and the Russification of the Тайная тайных", *Sub specie aeternitatis: Sbornik naučnih statej k 60-letiju Vadima Borisoviča Krys'ko*, ed. by I. M. Ladyženskij, M. A. Puzina, IRJa im. V. V. Vinogradova RAN, Moscow, 2021, pp. 779–808.

¹⁶ Ryan and Taube, *Secret of Secrets*, p. 65.

¹⁷ *Oglavlenie knig, kto ih složil* ('Table of Contents of Books and Who Wrote Them'), Moscow, 1665–6.

[18] See Charles B. Schmitt, 'Francesco Storella and the Last Printed Edition of the Latin *Secretum Secretorum* (1555)', in *Pseudo-Aristotle, the* Secret of Secrets. *Sources and Influences*, ed. W. F. Ryan and Charles B. Schmitt, Warburg Institute Surveys IX, Warburg Institute, London, 1982, pp. 124–31. For a more general but thorough survey of the diffusion of the *Secret of Secrets* in the West see Steven J. Williams, *The* Secret of Secrets. *The Scholarly Career of a Pseudo-Aristotelian Text in the Latin Middle Ages*, Ann Arbor, MI, 2003. See also *Trajectoires européenes du Secretum secretorum du Pseudo-Aristote (XIIIe–XVIe siècle)*, ed. by Margaret Bridges, Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas, Jean-Yves Tilliette, Turnhout, 2015.

[19] This is the 'Walwyn' version, appendix B in Mahmoud Manzalaoui, *Secretum Secretorum: Nine English Versions*, Early English Text Society 276, Oxford, 1977, Vol. 1, Text (Vol. 2, which was to contain the notes was, alas, not written). The Walwyn version was originally published in London in 1702 by H. Walwyn. It excludes several sections of the original *Secret of Secrets*, and all the occult material, but preserves 'Aristotle's' letter containing the book curse to protect the book from 'infidels'. Manzalaoui did not record this Scottish second edition.

[20] The dedicatee was Sir David Dalrymple, 1st Baronet of Hailes (1665–1721), Scottish advocate, prominent politician, collector, and bibliophile, who sat in the Parliaments of both Scotland and England. He was one of the Commissioners who negotiated the union of Scotland and England in 1702, and again in 1706. S.A.B. has not been identified.

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BIO

William Francis (W. F.) Ryan (born 1937) was a British librarian and scholar of Russian language and culture, perhaps most well-known for his monograph on Russian magic and witchcraft *The Bathhouse at Midnight* (1999). He was Emeritus Professor and Honorary Fellow of the Warburg Institute, London. Ryan was elected as Fellow of the British Academy in 2000. In 2005 Ryan delivered the British Library's Panizzi Lectures, which were subsequently published as *Russian Magic Books in the British Library: Books, Manuscripts, Scholars and Travellers* (2006). Between 2005 and 2008, Ryan served as President of the Folkore Society.

HOW DO UDMURTS ADDRESS THEIR GOD(S)?

OBSERVATION ABOUT THE LANGUAGE OF TRADITIONAL PRAYERS-INCANTATIONS

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Abstract. This article relies on a long-term fieldwork experience: Eva Toulouze has attended Udmurt animistic ceremonies in Bashkortostan over a period of ten years and has collected there the uttered prayers. These prayers are the corpus upon which our linguistic reflections are articulated. The language of the prayers represents a particular register of the Udmurt language. They are deeply dialectal, and while today they are mostly transmitted through writing and the magic aspect is less emphasised, they belong to the oral tradition of incantations. In this article, we comment upon some of the peculiarities of these prayers. We explore the multiplicity of ways that the Udmurts formulate their requests to the deities: the different use of verbs

and especially the sophisticated syntactical constructions. We are also interested by analysing the peculiar use of possessive markers, revealing that in the Udmurt worldview, the deity to which these prayers are addressed is all-encompassing: the happiness that the Udmurt ask for is the deity's happiness, as is the rain and the insects against which they ask protection. It is the first time that these phenomena have drawn scientific attention and have been commented on.

Key words: Udmurt religion, prayers, addresses to deities, possessive markers, expression of requests

INTRODUCTION

This article is centred on verbal ways of addressing Udmurt traditional deities in their contemporary prayers within their traditional practice. It is a rare treat: Udmurt ethnic prayers are very much alive but have scarcely been investigated so far. They have been commented on from the musicological point of view, but not really from the linguistic. The ways the Udmurt formulate their requests reveal a lot about their understanding of the world, which is the same world in which we live, within a globalised space and with high technology. The verbs they chose, the very formulas they use to ask favours, the way they assign possession of wealth and harm reveal an original way of understanding man's relations with deities that is not commented on so far even in linguists' translations.

The Udmurt are a community living in central Russia, east of the Volga and west of the Urals. Their core territory lies in a complex region where different ethnic groups have coexisted for centuries: communities speaking Finno-Ugric languages and initially practicing animist cults, generally evangelised after 1552; Turkic language speaking communities, mainly Muslim, that were at the head of an Empire before its collapse in 1552; and the dominant ethnic group today, the Russians, who are Orthodox and who gradually settled over the last millennium. This conglomerate of different languages and cultures is composed of groups whose ethnicity has been consolidated in the last centuries. While state-building nations such as

the Tatars and Russians have a rooted awareness of their ethnic identity, other groups are more fluid. Among the Finno-Ugric communities, the Mari and the Mordvinians, as well as the northernmost Komi, are divided along language lines: depending on the dialect, different written languages have been created which have their own peculiarities[1]. The Udmurt are the only group to have developed a single identity, relying on the fact that their dialects are in general intercomprehensible, in spite of clear differences especially in the lexical field: both versions, Northern with Russian loanwords and Southern with Tatar loanwords, have been integrated into the literary language (for example apple – *jablok / ulmo*; cucumber – *ogrech / kiyar*; street – *ul'cha / uram*, etc.). These cultural evolutions have been possible because of the early policies of the Soviet State, which fixed ethnicities and assigned territories to the most relevant.

Although the majority of the Udmurt has been converted, and forcefully so, to Orthodox Christianity mainly during the 18th century (Luppov 1999 [1899], Kappeler 1982, Zahidullin 1997), the traditional Udmurt religion did not totally disappear. On the one hand, depending on the actual pressure of the new religion, the older practice in many places merged with the newest and led to syncretism that still exists; on the other hand, some villages, unwilling to live in the new imposed conditions, migrated to more tolerant regions. In the core Udmurt regions, encompassed today within the Udmurt Republic, there are very few villages in which the traditional religious practice still dominates. The most remarkable is the village of Kuzebayevo (Alnashi district), where the population has been Christianised only recently and which pursues their traditional practice, with collective ceremonies along clan lines (the population is divided into three clans who each have their collective ceremonies, in which all participate). Not far from this village, another village is very well known for its dedication to ancestral ceremonies. Varkled-Bodya is situated in Tatarstan (Agryz district) and the population itself acknowledges that they have been spared by a Tatar elite that has allowed them to follow their uses without impediment. The inhabitants of this village are aware that their

ancestors migrated from the Udmurt core territory in search of an undisturbed place.

The regions where they sought sanctuary, often by whole villages, were situated to the east and were inhabited by Muslims, even further than today's Tatarstan. They generally settled beyond the River Kama, renting and finally buying land (Makarov 1915, Nikitina 2016, Toulouze and Anisimov 2020). In the new conditions they continued their own religious practice, doing so through history to the present day. This means that today there is a widespread practice of traditional ceremonies that are naturally accompanied by addresses to the deities.

THE UDMURT CEREMONIES

We have information about Udmurt traditional ceremonies thanks to elder scholars – linguists, folklorists, ethnographers, explorers – both from Russia and beyond, mainly from the end of the 19th century. Finnish and Hungarian scholars (the first of which were in fact encompassed within the Russian Empire) had their own particular reasons to investigate these communities as language kinship led them to seek the origin of their language, and thus of their identity through their easternmost language kin (Sadikov, Hafeez 2010, 2015). As they were looking to ancestral language roots, they collected the most archaic samples available, i.e. folklore or ritual texts known for their archaisms.

Thus, we are well informed about Udmurt religious practice before the revolution, for we have descriptions and even photographs of huge "pagan" ceremonies. However, the 1917 revolution put an end to this flow of scholarly information. Russia became a closed area, and no foreign scholar was allowed within. Moreover, religion became if not exactly prohibited, then a suspicious matter and religious practice became dangerous, which led to a discontinuation of the massive religious ceremonies as at the beginning of the 20th century.

During the Soviet period religious ceremonies partly faded away, but not entirely. Instead they were sustained by the elder generation,

while younger age groups were fully submitted to atheist campaigns and to the ideological weight of Soviet institutions. In the zones not touched by Orthodoxy, the practice continued, with phenomena of adaptation to a less favourable environment. Some ceremonies were renounced. Others were maintained, especially in places where the sacrificial priests were strong personalities. Since 1988, a revitalisation movement has occurred in the eastern zones, beyond the Kama, where the traditions were still very much alive, and today practically all villages have their ceremonies. Some of them were never discontinued, others stopped for some years or some decades. However, today, each village has its ceremony.

What is an Udmurt ceremony? It is a gathering of the village population to pray. The aim of the ceremony is to guarantee the well-being of the village community. These are the ideas developed in the verbal part of the ritual, the prayer, *kuris'kon*, addressed to the deity/deities. Why have we included in the title an alternative plural? It is well known that animistic agrarian religions are not monotheistic. They have a pantheon, to which we must add an infinity of different powerful beings, spirits that permeate the natural environment. This is a general statement, and indeed it corresponds to recent research in folkloristics (i.e. Vladykina 2021); earlier records of Udmurt prayers well reflect this plurality (Pervukhin 1888 III: 9, 10, 13, 15 etc.). However, the Udmurt are surrounded by monotheistic religions, both Christianity and Islam, and these have influenced their way of thinking. Thus, in the addresses we call prayers/incantations, the main addressee is Inmar-Kylchin. This phrase has two elements, and both are theonyms: Inmar is the supreme god, god of the highest spheres, and is also, translated into Udmurt, the name of the Christian god. Kylchin is more complicated to analyse. Clearly, it is a contracted form of another god's name, Kyldys'in, who in Udmurt mythology was particularly close to humans. At the same time, this word is the same that is used, mainly in a Christian context, for angel. When reading these texts, we have the feeling that they are generally addressed to one person: the address uses the second person singular, *ton* in Udmurt, and only very seldom *ti*, the plural form. So we have the impression that

kylchin is like an avatar of Inmar. We shall not decide here whether two gods are addressed or only one, which explains the alternative in the title. Let us only mention than in older prayers, such as those collected by Perhukhin and published in 1888 (Pervukhin 1888 III), in some places the addresses are limited to two deities clearly named: Inmar and Kyldys'in (Pervukhin III: 4, 7).

The village priest(s) is/are in charge of it, along with a team of assistants who take care of all the practical and spiritual aspects of the ceremony: having a sacrificial animal, fetching wood and water to boil the meat and the porridge, utter the prayer(s), offering the porridge to the gathered villagers and bringing it back to those who did not make it to the ceremony (see Toulouze, Niglas 2014). In places where ceremonies have never been discontinued, the ritual is more complex than in places where it has been revitalised recently.

The research team led by Eva Toulouze (including local Udmurt colleagues, Udmurts from Udmurtia, Estonians) has been investigating this religious practice for several years, and one of the project's goals is to study in depth the magic words of the Udmurt ceremonies and to publicise them. We started working in this area in 2013, with the agreement of the local community leaders. Our practice is the following: we first meet the sacrificial priest(s) to explain the aim of our presence and obtain their agreement to our being there and filming. This agreement has never been refused, on the contrary, the sacrificial priests have welcomed our initiative and we have always been met with friendly regard. When we were able to edit our material, we have shown the rushes to the sacrificial priests and recorded their reactions.

We must point out that Liivo Niglas's way of filming thoroughly differs from what our partners are accustomed to. They know how television journalists work. In the field, the journalists are the bosses and give instructions on what to do and what to repeat. As a visual anthropologist, Liivo has totally different principles: he never interferes with the ceremonies, never stages anything and only records what happens without disturbing the ordinary proceedings with his presence. His non-disruptive behaviour is certainly one of the reasons why we have been so well accepted in all villages (Toulouze, Niglas 2019, 2020).

After some years, in which we have gathered materials from different ceremonies, we made a first choice of ceremonies in order to have the material edited and presented to the local communities and to the general public. The corpus we rely on is composed of 111 prayers collected from 1770 to 2020 in the Eastern Udmurt regions. The main problem was for Liivo, who does not speak Udmurt, to have precise information about the spoken words, in order to make editing choices. He did this in cooperation with local Udmurt scholar Ranus Sadikov. This led to the achievement of four films, reflecting a whole cycle of ceremonies and focusing on the same characters, the team from Malaya Balzyuga, led by young sacrificial priest Fridman Kabipyanov (Niglas 2019).

THE TEXTS

We noticed that the sacrificial priests were eager to have texts to rely on. This gave us the idea of gathering the texts that we have collected. The situation with the texts is the following

Traditionally, the magic strength of the text was thoroughly connected with the way of transmitting it. The apprentice sacrificial priest had to attend ceremonies and to listen to the addresses to the deities, until the text was engraved in his memory in a process that was called 'stealing a prayer'. The informants were very clear, the text should not be learnt, it had to remain by itself in the head of the praying priest: 'the text of the sacrifice must not be learnt, only stolen. For him to learn [a priest] took with him a child. The latter, putting it in his ear, learnt. One must not just learn' (Sadikov 2019: 242)[2]. However, this transmission method no longer functions. In the Soviet period, the younger boys could not attend ceremonies, the day of which, Friday, was a working or school day. The opportunities of acquiring a prayer were thus limited. So when the time came, at the end of the 1980s, when State policy ceased to be hostile to religious ceremonies, the elder sacrificial priests published their prayers and the transmission format became written. And so it is now.

We do not think the difference is so significant. While the instrument for learning has indeed changed, the learning is nevertheless happening. The younger sacrificial priests rely on written text during ceremonies to feel comfortable. However, reading is but a different way to memorise the text. After some time, they become familiar with the text, with its stylistic peculiarities, and they become more and more independent from the paper. And when they achieve this, they may start to improvise, to change the order of the formulas, and even to add new items.

However, while usually in village ceremonies the priests have managed to have a text to recite, they may face difficulties on particular occasions. We have seen Aribashevo priest Aleksey Garayev using a collection of prayers made in Udmurtia in order to pray at a housewarming ceremony. We were saddened by this use of prayers that originate in a totally different region. In addition, Kizganbashevo priest Timerhan Apsalikov showed us the same book (Vladykin, Vinogradov 2011) and acknowledged that he used it in particular cases. These examples convinced us that a collection of local prayers would be welcomed by the sacrificial priests, and so we endeavour to make it.

What is the nature of these texts? There are ongoing discussions among scholars of different disciplines. Ethnographers from Bashkiria call them 'prayers', in Russian *molitva*, while folklorists from Udmurtia see them as incantations *zaklinaniye*. In this discussion, we'll point out arguments in favour of both positions. What supports the interpretation of the verbal dimension of ceremonies as incantation is the presence of magic that is implied by the requirement to 'steal' the text. While the satisfaction of the people's requests is indeed a prerogative of the deities, but in order to call their attention on the addressee more than ordinary words are requires. We have no doubt that the original perception of *kuris'kon* by the Eastern Udmurt was one of a magic text. In favour of the other thesis, that they are just prayers, is the fact that this interpretation corresponds to the understanding of local people. At the same time, the word used for it in Russian, *molitva*, may well be felt by people who live in a Russian environment (such as in Udmurtia, unlike

Bashkiria) to refer to Christian prayers and so be unfit to express the realities of Udmurt 'pagan' prayers.

We may add a remark about another possible evolution, which may explain subtle changes in perceptions and approaches: although magic has not disappeared at all from the Udmurt rural landscape, we may suppose that at the beginning of the 20th century, magic thinking is not unchallenged in the Udmurt worldview. What were certainly, at the beginning of the 20th century, and even later on until the middle of that century, magic words and closer to the genre of incantation, may have been evolving. Today they may be felt exclusively to be a genre closer to prayer, as in other religions, Orthodoxy or Islam, where the magic dimension has been overthrown by mere address to the deity. This comment is an element of debate in the ongoing friendly discussion between the authors, who have publicly used the term incantation, and Ranus Sadikov, who insists on their being merely prayers (Sadikov 2011, Sadikov, Toulouze 2019). We suppose that the reason for this difference in interpretation may be explained by these thoughts.

We mentioned that in improvising, sacrificial priests may add some items. This last aspect has triggered some discussions among the priests themselves. The need to include new requests and new concerns has long been felt. In a conversation with Evgeniy Adullin, one of the most important sacrificial priests of Tatyshly district, and with the organiser of his collective ceremonies, Farhulla Garifanov, this concern emerged (FWM 2015), i.e. are they allowed to add something to the prayer text? They even asked Eva, who was participating to their conversation, and who, of course, did not interfere.

Actually, this genre has been sensitive to change in the general context and has reflected them all along: older texts asked the deities to help pay taxes to the tsar, or requested success for their kolkhoz. Of course, we have no idea how these changes were made and with what procedure: probably when the time did not allow the previous text to be convincingly uttered. But as during the soviet times these questions were not investigated, we have no clue.

They solved the question four years later when the sacrificial priests of their group of villages met and updated the text of their

prayer, including excerpts from another priest, Anatoliy Galikhanov's, prayer. Galikhanov, the most prestigious of the new generation of priests, also started by reading his text. But now he composes newer and newer texts, and he is quite bold in his innovations. While usually the people are aware only of their own tradition, and do not know what their neighbours do, new conditions have shattered their isolation. For example, in 2008, the general ceremony of the Eastern Udmurt, *Elen vös'*, which had been forgotten since the 1920s except in the three villages where it rotated, was successfully revitalised. Once a year, the active sacrificial priests meet and pray together in Kirga (Kuyeda district, Perm kray), Staryy Varyash (Yanaul district, Bashkortostan) and Altayevo (Burayevo district, Bashkortostan). There, each of the sacrificial priests (one per district) utters his prayer so that everybody hears it. So the Tatyshly priest have had the opportunity to hear Galikhanov's text and its innovations. Generally, in a collective ceremony, at least in Tatyshly district, all the priests utter their prayers together, so that the texts are not easily identified or even heard, except when the leading priest interrupts the text to utter *Omin*, the equivalent of 'Amen', and everyone says the word and bows. We have seen the same system as in *Elen vös'* at Bol'shekachakovo's *Badzh'yn vös'*, where representatives of four villages gather (Toulouze, Vallikivi 2021).

In Asavka village, the sacrificial priest Vladimir Galiev, who has also inherited his prayer through paper, was disturbed that it presented a great deal of requests, without insisting on thanks. He proposed some changes to his village's elder, who accepted them.

Another event that shattered the isolation was the publishing of our recordings in 2019. We had for some years been recording ceremonies and finally delivered a DVD pack with four edited ceremonies attended by the same team and we gave these packs to both the teams concerned and to other sacrificial priests and helpers. In this way they discovered what their neighbours were up to.

In spite of innovations, our collection of prayers/incantations reveals that much has remained quite stable, for example, formulas, metaphors, linguistic means of expression. In this article, we will concentrate on some of them as they reveal on the one hand the way

the Udmurt think and on the other hand, the aesthetic dimension of the formulas. We hope that the abundance of examples, taken from our collected corpus (lately published in Sadikov, Toulouze 2023) will reveal the richness and diversity of these addresses to the deities.

We decided to draw attention in this article to the characteristic features in the language peculiar to these incantations, some of them even intriguing. The first is a review of the verbs used to ask for benefits, the second is the use of possessive suffixes in the requests, and finally the extremely varied syntactic forms of the verbal syntagms. We must observe that the language used is of course dialectal Udmurt. In Bashkortostan, the Udmurt speak peripheral southern Udmurt subdialects. Therefore, there will be lexical and phonetical differences with Udmurt standard language, which may explain some particular and unknown forms.

At the same time, through the example we aim to give some understanding of the kinds of request the Udmurt ask their gods to grant them. The texts considered come from a wide corpus of prayers collected throughout the years in the eastern part of the Udmurt area. Some were collected at the end of the 19th century. Of course, we have no oral recordings of these, as well as of those recorded during the Soviet period. But we have oral recordings of all those uttered in the ceremonies we have attended.

LEXICAL COMMENTARY: A REVIEW OF THE VERBS USED TO REQUEST BENEFITS

MAIN VERBS

The main verbs are the ones meaning 'give' and 'protect', which are meant in their direct meaning, as given by a dictionary:

> **s'otyny** 'to give'

> **saklany** 'to protect'

While those verbs are very frequent, and we shall meet them all along this article in different examples, they are not the only ones:

some other verbs are also quite frequent, as they are frequent in general language.

The first is **bas'tyny**, 'to take, to hold'.

> **Burd ylad karysa bas'ty (S-T 110)**
> *Making under your wing, take (us)*

> **Kabyl karysa bas'ty (S-T 33)**
> *Blessing (it) take [the sacrifice]*

This last expression is very frequent.

The context in which this verb mainly appears is in a gerundial expression: *bas'tyny* + a gerundive form, often with the verb *karyny*, to make. Here the verb *karyny*, the next to be commented upon, is wider than its ordinary meaning, at least under its gerundive form.

Thus, another important verb, also used to ask for something, is the verb *karyny* (to make). The idea here is to transform something into some other thing, or at least to ensure some quality to what is requested:

> **Ulonez dzh'ech kar (S-T 84)**
> *Make our life good*

> **Busy tyros achid kar (S-T 18)**
> *Make yourself the field full*

> **Dzhuon vuosses, s'ion turym"yosses cheskyt kar (S-T 18)**
> *Make the drinking water, the eating herbs tasty*

OTHER VERBS

Of course, these verbs do not complete the list of the possible verbs used to request something, and many verbs are very concrete and appropriate to particular requests:

voz'many 'to pasture'

> **Pudoosty dzhech vozhma (S-T 84)**
> *Pasture well the lifestock*

kis'matyny 'to mature', 'to allow maturing'

> **Yumes kis'maty (S-T 165)**
> *Let our cereals mature*

Vordis'kytyny 'to give birth', 'to allow to be born'

> **Vordis'konoosse shudo burdo vordis'kyty (S-T 109)**
> *To those who are supposed to be born, give the happiness to be born*

> **Viz'mynyz vodris'kyty val (S-T 83)**
> *With intelligence let them be born*

daltytyny 'to ripen'

> **Kiz'em-paltkem dzhuosyz zarni vyzhyen vyzhyyat-ysa daltyty (S-T 17)**
> *Let the cereals we have sown and widespread with golden roots ripen*

beryktyny 'to return', 'to give back'

> **Ponem zhuges'zes s'uen-s'ursen berykty val[3]**
> *The offerings put by them, give them back by hundreds and thousands*

There are also two other verbs, two very common verbs which are used in a special sense, with an almost non-semantic meaning, almost as auxiliary verbs allowing formation of fixed expressions in gerundive clauses, which are very frequent in ordinary Udmurt: they are the verbs *ulyny* (to live), and *mynyni* (to go). A third verb may appear, but seldom, in the same position, *kyll'yny* (to lie). These forms appear in constructions on which we shall comment later.

Achid az'inlyk"yoste s'otysa ul (S-T 109)
Yourself giving a future **live** *[= give (us) a future]*

S'ekyt töl-zoryosydles' saklasa ul val (S-T 90)
From heavy winds and rains protecting us live [= protect us from…]

Actually, in ordinary Udmurt there are such constructions, less complicated, which are not connected with requests, the aim of which is also only very slightly semanticised:

Mözmysa ug uly
I did not live being sad

Shundy pishtisa ule
The sun lives shining

However, this does not seem to be the case with the verb *mynyny* 'to go':

Shunyt ki vylad bas'tysa myn (S-T 58)
In your warm hand taking (us) go

Mil'es'tym vuttymteosyz achid vuttysa myn, (S-T 58)
What we could not achieve, yourself being able to go [= do yourself what we were not able to do (for lack of time)]

Pel'pum kapchilyk"yoste s'otysa myn val, (S-T 103)
To our shoulders giving lightness go.

Cheredles'-churedles' achid saklasa myn val (S-T 130)
From illnesses and diseases please go protecting us [= please protect us from…]

Here we are quite far from the direct meaning of the verb 'to go'.

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SYNTACTIC COMMENTARY: A REVIEW OF THE CONSTRUCTIONS USED WITH THESE VERBS

Moreover, there is an uncommon syntactic richness in the constructions used to ask for benefits, from the simplest to the more complex. The forms used take into account expressions of more or less politeness.

SIMPLE IMPERATIVE

In ordinary life, a requirement is usually expressed by the simple use of the imperative. Udmurt is not a language that has developed a complex system of polite alternatives. Clearly the simple imperative is not as brutal as it is, for example, in French. We are not surprised thence to find the imperative in addresses to the deities: *vay* (give), *s'ot* (give), *sakla* (protect)

> **Tazalyk s'ot (S-T 165)**
> *Give health*

> **N'an'mes s'ot (S-T 165)**
> *Give (us) our bread*

> **N'ebyt inty s'oty (S-T 85)**
> *Give (us) a soft place*

> **Yözorles' sakla (S-T 84)**
> *Protect (us, the harvest) from hail*

> **Kalykly shudo ulyny s'ot (S-T 85)**
> *give the people to live happily*

> **Mil'am kolkhozmyly uzyrmyny s'ot (S-T 85)**
> *Give our kolkhoz to become rich*

Here we must comment about the absence, in most cases, of a pronoun or a complement indicating the beneficiary of the gifts. In some cases, a dative noun or pronoun specify, but usually it seems not necessary to the Udmurt praying priest. In other cases, the pronoun is redundant and is clearly there for euphonic or prosody reasons.

SOFTENED IMPERATIVE

There are means to soften the possible brutality of the imperative form, in general particles: *vay-ay, vay-ka*. These are, especially the second, close to Russian use.

However, it is more idiomatic and politer to add the particle *val* to the imperative form. We call it a particle, but there are other homonymous forms that should not be mixed up with this one. The form *val* can be: 1. A substantive, meaning 'horse'. 2. A verbal form, meaning 'was'. Clearly, it is neither. It is a semantic instrument transforming the imperative into a kind of optative. It does not change the meaning of the verb, but rather its pragmatics: *vay val / s'ot val, ud-a s'oty* (would you not give?).

It is difficult to give an equivalent in English. The more polite English expressions encompass conditional forms, which will have equivalents much closer to them than *val*. Here, in order to show this softening particle, we just add "please".

Some examples:

Mar ke malpazy, soe s'ot val (S-T 84)
Whatever they think, (please) give it

S'in az' saz'yoste s'ot val (S-T 83)
(Please) give clearness in front of (our / the) eyes.

Tyledles'-puedles' sakla val (S-T 159)
From fires, from conflagrations (please) protect (us)

Pejmyt korkaedles', zhk'yyo kortedles' sakla val (S-T 158)
From dark houses, from iron chains (please) protect (us)

S'iyo shuis', bas'to shuis', kas murt"yosles' sakla val (S-T 73)
From evil hostile (people) who say 'I'll eat you', 'I'll take you', (please) protect (us).

Alama cher"yosles' sakla val (S-T 72)
From evil diseases (please) protect (us).

Kiyad-pydad bas'ty val (S-T 73)
(Please) take (us, our prayers) into your hands and feet

All of these forms are widespread.

THE EXPRESSION OF INVITATION: LET … (BE)

Med + FUT

This is not a very common construction in prayers, but in our corpus we have found it used several times and with several different verbs, therefore we cannot ignore it. The verb is in the future form, in the third person either singular or plural.

Pudoos taza lusa med ulozy (S-T 91)
Let our livestock live being healthy

Vyl' luono ken"yoslen shumpotysa ulonzy med luoz (S-T 91)
Let our future new daughters-in-law have a joyful life (a life rejoicing)

Dz"es' kalyk"yosly med luozy (S-T 35)
Let there be for good people.

Among them, there are two combinations which are more frequent: with the existence verb, *luyni,* for for example in the two above-mentioned examples. Another, more interesting verb is very often used, the verb *gozhtyny* meaning 'writing'. The combination *med gozhtoz*, 'let it be written, prescribed', is frequent enough, showing thus the relevance for Udmurts of fate and predestination:

> **Shumpotysa kuris'kyny med gozhtoz (S-T 80)**
> *Let it be written that we shall pray with joy*

> **Anaenyz-ataenyz tazalyken, tatulyken ulyny med gozhtoz (S-T 152)**
> *Let it be written that one shall live with one's mother and father in health and harmony*

> **oktyny kaltany med gozhtoz (S-T 81)**
> *Let it be written that we shall reap and harvest*

> **Kuz'yli kad' kyl'l'yny med gozhtoz (S-T 83)**
> *Let it be written that we shall live like ants*

> **Tyloburdoos kad' chirdysa kyl'l'yny med gozhtoz (S-T 83)**
> *Let it be written that we shall live singing like birds*

> **N'an'ykayyos daltysa, dzh'uen kyl'l'yny med gozhtoz (S-T 83)**
> *Let it be written that we shall live growing little breads, with cereals*

> **Tazalyken-baylyken shumpotysa kyl'l'yny med gozh-toz (S-T 158)**
> *Let it be written that we shall live in health and wealth, rejoicing*

We may notice that in almost all these examples the verb expressing the wish is *kyl'l'yny*, which is a dialectal form for the verb meaning 'to remain', 'to stay', which fundamentally expresses prolonged being and thus is the equivalent to an existence verb.

THE CONDITIONAL

But the most widespread construction is undoubtedly the use of the conditional phrase. We must observe that these constructions imply the use of the conditional conjunction *ke*, 'if'. Usually, it is positioned at the end of the phrase. Here, however, statistically, it mainly occupies the place before the verb, which means the penultimate place in the phrase. In general, the position of *ke* is right at the end of the phrase, and we have also here a couple of examples that follow this pattern. However, we may suggest that while in ordinary conditional sentences *ke* is at the end of the phrase, in situations where the conditional is not interpreted as a proper case in which a condition is set, but as a euphemism for a request, the position is changed. The conditional form is particularly used with the two most frequent verbs in the *kuris'kon:s'otyny* 'to give' on the one hand, and the verb *saklany / chaklany*[4] 'to protect' on the other. Let us present some examples of the first verb:

> **Chumol'yo vözy chumol'yo ke s'otysaled (S-T 81)**
> *Would you give (us) heap near heap*

> **Shunyt-n'ebyt zor''yoste ke s'otysaled (S-T 83)**
> *Would you give (us) warm and soft rains*

> **Kapchi ez'el''yost ke s'otysaled (S-T 83)**
> *Would you give (us) light fates / deaths*

> **Tyr tolez' kad' tazalykde ke s'otysaled (S-T 70)**
> *Would you give (us) your health like a full moon*

> **Tyr shundy kad' baylykde ke s'otysaled (S-T 70)**
> *Would you give (us) your wealth like a full sun*

> **Tulys vu kad' tazalyk ke s'otysaled (S-T 72)**
> *Would you give (us) health like spring water*

Tazalykde -baylykde s'otysalyd ke (S-T 98)
Would you give (us) your health and your wealth

Dyshmon"yosly erik ke öy s'otysaled (S-T 82)
Would you not give freedom to our enemies

And, with the verb 'to protect':

vylis'-vetlis' s'ekyt zor"yosydles' saklasaled ke (S-T 72)
Would you protect (us, the harvest) from your heavy rains that move above.

N'ukedles'-gopedles' ke saklasaled (S-T 82)
Would you protect (us) from your pits and your hollows

Alama zor"yosydles' ke saklasaled (S-T 129)
Would you protect (us) from your bad rains

S'ekyt zor"yosles' saklasalyd ke (S-T 73)
Would you protect (us) from heavy rains

"S'iyo" shuis'les', "bas'to" shuis'les'ke saklasaled (S-T 82)
Would you protect (us) from those who say 'I'll eat (you)', 'I'll take (you)'

Pejmyt korkaosles' ke saklasaled (S-T 82)
Would you protect (us) from dark houses

Dzh'ylo purt"yosles' ke saklasaled (S-T 82-83)
Would you protect (us) from sharp knives

However, while the most widespread examples use the two above-mentioned verbs, it is to be found also with other verbs, firstly with the verb meaning 'to do', 'to make', but also with semantically very diverse verbs, illustrating the diversity of the demands to the deities:

Vyle dis'ano ke karysaled (S-T 71)
Would you make (us) (something) to put on

Kytkon dzh'yro ke karysaled[5]
Would you make the harness sharp

Vordono tyloburdoosyz taza voz'ysalyd ke (S-T 109)
Would you grow the birds to be grown healthy

Kiz'em-pal'kkem n'an'akayyosyz dzh'es'kin ke kis'matysaled (S-T 71)
Would you mature well our sowed and beaten little breads

Kon'don-dzh'uges'mes s'uen-s'ursen ke beryktysaled (S-T 95)
Would you give (us) back our money and sacrificial alms by hundreds and thousands

Uan' bendeoste ogkad' adzh'ysaled ke (S-T 83)
Would you watch all your people, equally

Koshkis'se shumpotysa ke kelyasaled (S-T 83)
Would you see off the one who goes away with joy

Pyris'se shumpotysa ke pumitasaled' (S-T 83)
Would you receive the one who enters with joy

In addition, the conditional mode is also used in more complex formulas. They use some verbs as auxiliaries, and complete them with gerund forms, which are very widely used in Udmurt in a multiplicity of contexts. Let us have a look, starting from the verbs used as auxiliaries, the first of these being *ulyny,* 'to live':

Vordono ad'amioste tazalyken, baylyken vordysa ulysalyd ke (S-T 108-109)
Would you live growing the people to be grown in health and wealth

Dyshmon"yosles' chaklasa ulysalyd ke (S-T 108)
Would you live protecting us from (our) enemies

S'ekyt zor"yosles' chaklasa ulysalyd ke (S-T 109)
Would you live protecting (us) from heavy rains

Kiz'em-pal'kkem yuosyz udaltytysa ulysalyd ke (S-T 109)
Would you live reaping the sowed and beaten cereals

"s'iyo" shuis', "yuo" shuis', "bas'to" shuis' dyshmon"yosles' chaklasa ulysalyd ke (S-T 108)
Would you live protecting (us) from enemies who say 'I'll eat (you)', 'I'll drink (you)', 'I'll take (you)'

Another verb which often occupies this auxiliary position is the verb 'to go', *mynyny:*

Pel'pum kapchilyk"yoste ach'id s'otsa ke mynsaled (S-T 55)
Would you go giving yourself lightness to (our) shoulders

N'ebyt zor"yoste ach'id s'otsa ke mynsaled (S-T 55)
Would you go giving yourself soft rains

Musho vuen ulny ach'id s'otsa ke mynsaled (S-T 56)
Would you go giving yourself to live with honeyed water

Azbar tyr tchözh-dzh'azh'egen gurlashysa ulon s'otsa ke mynsalyd (S-T 56)
Would you go giving a life with a full yard of cooing ducks and geese

Kökyyn sabi kyl'l'e, kökyyn sabi kad' ulyny s'otsa ke mynsaled (S-T 57)
The child lies in his cradle, would you go giving (us) to live like a lying child in its cradle

Yshtek chesk"t vuoste turymn'oste ach'id s'otsa ke mynsaled (S-T 110)
Would you go giving yourself your tasty water and herbs

Kyryn vetlis' pudooslen pyd ulazy shynyt, n'ebyt turyn"yos dzhuzhasa mynsalzy ke (S-T 91)
Under the feet of the livestock, which goes out soft herbs would they go growing

Kyl dzh'angyshon"yosles' ach'id saklasa ke mynsaled (S-T 57)
Would you go protecting (us) yourself from mistakes of the tongue

COMPLEX CONDITIONAL PHRASES

As with the imperative, conditional sentences may also be completed with the form *val*, which turns the demand into a softer request and expresses the deepest respect towards the deity. As in the case of the imperative we conditionally translate it here with 'please':

Uapum vuon dyr"ya dzh'ech malpan"yosty dzh'ech kalykedly s'otysa ulysaled ke val[6] (S-T 53)
When the time comes to go, would you please live giving good thoughts to good people

Uzhan nunal"yoste s'otysa ulysaled ke val (S-T 53)
Would you please live giving (us) working days

Kuzpalenyz tatulyk ulon"yoste s'otysa ulysaled ke val (S-T 54)
Would you please live giving lives of harmony with the couple

Az'lapalan uzhan nunal"yosyn kapchilykde s'otysa ulysaled ke val (S-T 90)
Would you please live giving your lightness in the working days to come

MORPHOLOGICAL COMMENT: INTERESTING USE OF POSSESSIVE SUFFIXES

While studying and translating our corpus, we stumbled upon an interesting phenomenon, which is not reflected in any literature nor in any existing translations into Russian.

Udmurt is partly an agglutinative language, as Finnish and Hungarian are, and it can express possession through a suffix paradigm. Besides expressing possession, the possessive suffixes may also be used for other semantic uses, often, for example, for expressing definitude, as Udmurt is a language that has no articles.

But here, the use of the second person suffix cannot be confused with the wish to present something as determined. Or more precisely, it adds a definite aspect indeed, but in identifying the gift in relating it to God. God gives, or acts on something that belongs to him. In fact, in the previous sentences, we had already some samples of this use, which is reflected in our translation:

> **S'ekyt töl-zor"yosydles' saklasa ul val (S-T 90)**
> *Protect us from **your** heavy winds and rains …*

> **Shumpotysalmy, shudde-burde s'otsa myn val (S-T 23)**
> *We would rejoice, if you would give us **your** happiness and joy*

We may thus understand that, in addresses to god/to the deities, his will is the central element, and all which is concerned with the requests, belongs to him and is subject to his will, both the good (for people) and the bad, the illnesses, the sorrows. We think that it is a small sign that reveals a whole worldview and opens the understanding of the power of the highest forces.

Let us examine further examples to confirm this usage, starting from requests for good things:

> **Tazalykde s'otysa kyl'l'y val (S-T 70)**
> *Would you lie giving us **your** health*
>
> **S'iyny-yuyny shydde-n'an'de s'ot (S-T 159)**
> *Give (us) **your** happiness and bread to eat and drink*
>
> **Kapch'ilykde s'otysa ulysaled ke val (S-T 90)**
> *Would you live giving (us) **your** lightness*
>
> **Chechyen-muen ulyny shudde-burde s'otysalyd ke (S-T 98)**
> *To live with honey and mead **your** happiness and joy would you give (us)*
>
> **Tazalyk no shudde-burde s'ot (S-T 165)**
> *Health and your **your** happiness and joy give(us).*

But god is also the source of other phenomena, unpleasant for mankind. The Udmurt ask their god for protection against those bad things of which he is the origin. This allows us to understand that man is not at the centre of god's intentions, he is much wider and man is not his main concern. Therefore, man has to ask god's help against god's own creation.

> **Cherde-churde vu ullan' pottysa lez'ysaled ke (S-T 82)**
> *Would you send **your** illnesses and diseases downriver*
>
> **"S'iyo" shuis'edles' "bas'to" shuis'edles' sakla (S-T 158)**
> *Protect (us) from **your** one who says 'I'll eat (you)', 'I'll take (you)'*
>
> **S'ekyt zor"yosydles' ke saklasale (S-T 82)**
> *From **your** heavy rains would you protect (us)*
>
> **Töledles'-periedles' sakla val (S-T 97)**
> *Please protect (us) from **your** wind, **your** whirlwind*

Nymyredles'-kibiedles' sakla val (S-T 97)
*Please protect (us) from **your** worms and insects*

Tyledles'-puedles' sakla val (S-T 97)
*Please protect (us) from **your** fires and conflagrations*

CONCLUSION

Although the older layer of archaisms is gradually disappearing from the texts and new requests are introduced by sacrificial priests who care about the new needs of the villagers, Udmurt prayers have maintained a rich level of linguistic expression. The aim of this article was to start a reflection on this particular language, which is strongly codified, so that even today's productions follow its pattern. We have identified different levels of peculiarity: first the lexical level, concentrating on verbs, which reveals what is the main aim of the contemporary Udmurt addresses to their deities. There are certainly other peculiarities on which we could have insisted, for example metaphors and comparisons, which we shall explore in future. We have also concentrated on the richness of the syntactical expression of the Udmurt requests, which use very diverse structures that exist in the language. Finally, we have developed the beginning of a reflection on the use of the possessive suffixes in an unusual way, which explains that it has been ignored within the Russian translations that have been made to date.

This is only the beginning of a linguistic and content analysis that will be pursued.

SOURCES

Sadikov, Toulouze 2023 = S-T

NOTES

[1] Moksha and Erzya for the Mordvinians, Zyryan and Permyak for the Komi, fot the Mari Meadow Mari and Hill Mari.

[2] From the author's fieldwork in 2006.

[3] Asavka prayers promising a sacrifice and offering a sacrifice, 2016. Authors' fieldwork

[4] This form is generally used in the standardised literary language, but it does not appear in these dialectal texts.

[5] Asavka prayers promising a sacrifice and offering a sacrifice, 2016. Authors' fieldwork.

[6] Similar sentences are found also with different verbal constructions: the simple conditional (*Uapum vuon dyr"ya dzh'ech malpan"yosty dzh'ech kalykedly s'otysa ulysaled ke*) or the softened imperative (*Uapum vuon dyr"ya dzh'ech malpan"yosty dzh'ech kalykedly s'ot val*).

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VERBAL CHARMS IN A NINETEENTH CENTURY SWEDISH BOOK OF MAGIC[1]

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Abstract: This article deals with the analysis of a Swedish magic book dating back to the second half of the nineteenth century which I came across during a fieldwork in northern Sweden. The book consists of magical remedies and verbal charms for healing physical distress in humans and livestock, averting evil influences, and protecting against bewitchment. It represents a practical manual containing non-canonical words of power, whose purpose was the provision of verbal magical instruments for coping with everyday human problems, especially health-related issues. The article gives an overview of its content, introducing a healer and his healing methods, and publishes six charms from the book, together with translations into English. In terms of content, my attention is focused on the verbal charms, their formal features and narrative motives. Following earlier studies on the charm genre, I will characterise the charms from a structural and semantic standpoint. Concerning their textual and oral tradition, I aim to examine whether they can be located in the Swedish charm tradition and whether they present variation with other similar texts. As we shall see, they are texts which cross many borders: canonical / non-canonical, folk beliefs / Christian worldview, supernatural / natural.

Key words: book of magic, healing, magic, Swedish verbal charms, words of power.

INTRODUCTION

Some years ago, while collecting material on the Swedish magical tradition in northern Sweden, I came across an unpublished manuscript containing material for the performance of magic, which had recently been discovered in a farmstead in a rural village of northern Sweden. With great enthusiasm, I realized that the samples in the book were verbal charms and apocryphal healing narratives known to Swedish scholars as *trollformler* (literally, 'magic formulas'). The book has belonged to a man known in his village for his abilities in healing who, according to my informants, had himself received it from a Sami folk healer. It represents a practical manual containing non-canonical words of power, whose purpose was the provision of verbal magical instruments for coping with everyday human problems, especially health-related issues.

In 19th century rural Sweden, the lack of medical care and the harsh living conditions led to a widespread use of folk medicine and home remedies (Tillhagen 1983: 20; 1977: 342). Magical charms and rituals were performed for various purposes, such as healing, ensuring good luck, and protection. Some people were considered to be particularly skilled in magic, either having been born with the gift or having acquired magical abilities from older *kloka* (literally, 'wise'). In pre-industrial society, Swedish specialists in magic served a semi-professional function whose most important task was related to healing.[2] They often recorded their magical repertoire in handwritten books, known in the Scandinavian traditions as "books of the black art" (*svartkonstböcker*), which are rich sources for a variety of topics such as verbal magic, folk medicine and witchcraft beliefs, providing texts of both learned and popular magic such as recipes and charms for healing humans and livestock, detecting stolen treasure, procedures of love magic, ways to secure good luck and to protect from witchcraft (Tillhagen 1977: 75 ; af Klintberg 2010: 289).[3]

In this article I will give an overview of the book's content, introducing the healer and his healing methods. What features can be said to characterise the book and the verbal charms recorded in it? How are the charms structured and which kind of elements construct them? In terms of content, my attention is focused on the verbal charms, their formal and semantic features. Following earlier studies on the charm genre (Ohrt 1917–1921; af Klintberg 1965), I will characterise the charms from a structural and semantic standpoint. Concerning their oral and textual tradition, I also aim to examine their position within the Swedish charm tradition, and whether they present variation with earlier texts. Finally, I will ask what the book tell us about the relationship between verbal magic and the context of everyday life in which it was performed. As we shall see, they are texts which cross many borders: canonical / non-canonical, folk beliefs / Christian worldview, supernatural / natural.

SCANDINAVIAN BOOKS OF MAGIC AND THE VÄGERSJÖN BOOK

The book was discovered in the late 1900's among family papers in the cellar of the house of Karl-Otto R. in Vägersjön, Edsele parish, in northern Sweden. According to my informants, Karl-Otto received it from a Sami folk healer, who was also a charmer, who had spent some time in the farmstead and written down the charms as thanks for hospitality. However, information concerning who wrote it and when is lacking, but still from the palaeographic and linguistic data, together with points in the manuscript's contents, I may conclude that it was compiled in the second half of the nineteenth century, somewhere in the north of Sweden. The vocabulary and spelling idiosyncrasies indicate a northern origin, the language exhibiting typical Norrlandic dialects tendencies. This is an area of intensive contact and cultural confluence between Swedish and non-Scandinavian Sami people that could suggest a lot about the migration of beliefs, narratives and practices. The Swedish magical tradition had

some connections with the magical traditions of neighbouring Sami people and Finns (Johnsson 2010: 6).

Scandinavian books of magic have their roots in ancient and medieval medical books, as well as in medieval occult writings and learned magic (af Klintberg 1965: 22). For the most part, they were written down in ecclesiastical circles in the late 15th and early 16th centuries.[4] Both their language and content show that they initially were used by priests and clergymen, and later also by educated layers of society, such as noblemen and soldiers (af Klintberg 1965: 23; Davies 2009: 126). Among these, the most ancient books use both Latin and Swedish, and they often include Latin and Greek letters and words, as well as kabbalah symbols and remedies indicating a learned field of magic.

In Scandinavian tradition, priests and ministers of the state church were considered to be the main owners of such magical books (af Klintberg 1965: 22; Lindow 1978: 47; Stokker 1991: 143–152). The ceasing of the use of and belief in the efficacy of these texts by educated classes meant that the cunning-folk of rural Scandinavia became their main users. From the 18th century onwards, we can find manuscripts of a more folk type that show a simplification of the Latin and a considerable decrease in the functions required of the remedies and charms, now mostly aimed at solving everyday human problems (af Klintberg 1965: 23–24).

The magic book from Vägersjön consists of a total of thirteen items. Of these, there are eleven verbal charms, one recipe for external use, and one procedure to heal goitre. Some of the charms recorded in it had originally been orally-transmitted texts, while one seems to descend from church benedictions and from priestly practices of healing and exorcism.

Each entry in the book comprises three elements: 1) a heading, presenting an indication of the function of the text, namely the symptom or problem that it is intended to relieve; 2) the text of the charm or remedy; 3) some instructions, which let the reader know how and how many times this or that charm should be uttered, and what should be done while uttering them. However, some charms

could be used in different situations and for different purposes, so in many cases the indication of their function is rather arbitrary.

Late modern Swedish verbal magic is predominantly apotropaic, mostly focused on healing and prevention of both human and animal illnesses, protection against witchcraft, and provision of good fortune (af Klintberg 1965; Tillhagen 1977). Although the use of charms was prevalent in all spheres of private life, most of the surviving charms are healing charms (af Klintberg 1965: 20–21). The content of the book is also clearly apotropaic. The texts recorded in it are remarkable for their assumptions about the spiritual world and the way in which healing worked in the mind of the performer.

As shown by Johnson, the Swedish magical books (a total of thirty-three books) analysed in his study were mostly comprised of ritual notations (Johnson 2010: 207). The largest formal category in the Vägersjön book are rather verbal charms, while ritual accompanied by oral recitation comprise the second largest category. The predominance of spoken charms, as well as the small representation of medical recipes, seems to suggest that, at least for the initial writer of the book, efficacy of healing was primarily located in ability to charming and only secondarily in the performative component.

According to Honko, "on the evidence of texts of charms and prayers, little can be deducted about a healer's personal beliefs and code of behaviour. It is, however, possible to identify in the texts the basic symbols of a healer's worldview. Many of these symbols will be much older than the environment in which the healer was active" (Honko 1993: 526). If we wanted to identify a feature of the writer's worldview, this is clearly the need for verbal magical instruments for coping with everyday human problems and for protection against the supernatural's threats, as well as the tendency to transmit the words of power, regarded to be useful in coping with critical situations.

VERBAL CHARMS IN THE VÄGERSJÖN BOOK

In nineteenth-century rural Sweden, the most important purpose for which magical charms were used was healing. Functionally,

the charms in the book fall into two categories: 1) *healing charms* (ten entries); 2) *protective charms* (one entry). The problems that they seek to address are: 1) *healing physical distress in humans*; 2) *healing illness in animals*; 3) *averting evil influences*. The medical problems that they are intended to relieve or prevent are mainly limited to those ailments which usually improve or disappear with time, such as inflammation, bleeding and wounds, sores, styes, ulcers, pain, skin diseases. Other charms are addressed to healing ailments such as rickets in children, ailments that afflicted domestic animals and livestock (e.g. the so called "theft of fortitude", *modstulenhet* in Swedish) as well as ailments supposed to be caused by evil supernatural beings such as the *vittra* in Northern Swedish folk tradition.[5] However, several charms in the book are addressed to healing skin affections such as pustules and blisters, which are visible, "active" ailments that have attracted attention in popular medicine (Tillhagen 1977: 239).

Illness is understood as a threatening and erroneous state of human's life, and the healing practice represents a method to restore balance. In order to understand the nature of the magical charms recorded in the book and their associated healing methods, it may be useful to trace out the folk methods of illness underlying them. In his analysis of folk models of illness in Scandinavian tradition, the Swedish ethnologist Tillhagen identified six types of illness agents: 1) supernatural beings, which could seek revenge and cause harm by "biting", "blowing" or "pinching" the illness into the body; 2) the souls of the dead, especially those of murderers and murdered people; 3) certain animals or plants; 4) witches and sorcerers; 5) evil eye and evil tongue caused by malevolent persons; 6) some cases of sympathetic magic, especially emotional reactions such as fear (Tillhagen 1977: 22). In the texts recorded in the book, the same line of thought is encountered, the illness being perceived either as the personification of the disease or as the result of witchcraft and sorcery. Some remedies tell us of how evil supernatural beings of the Swedish folklore were assumed to cause illness. In one charm for healing rickets in children, the term *vårdbundet*, which means

"bound by the *vård*", and which is used about the disease, clearly marks the link to evil supernatural forces being able to cause illness. In northern Sweden, it was believed that the underground folk or the dead were responsible if a child was afflicted by rickets (Westum 1999: 128–135, 201–203). A successful charming-away ritual against rickets required the preparation of an ointment to apply on the child while reciting an incantation (Tillhagen 1977: 124).

Although "infection" from air, forest and lakes was a common mode of explanation for illness, not all supernatural ailment was blamed upon the natural surroundings. Malevolent human agents were also believed to be able to harm through sorcery. Behaviours related to magic were in fact also used to protect the individual from the harmful desires of malevolent people, which could materialise in charms against health. Among magical illnesses, the traditional ideology of "theft of fortitude" occupies a prominent place in the Swedish tradition. According to this ideology, one could steal the fortitude of a person or an animal by sorcery. One charm recorded in the manuscript, dealing with the health of cattle, explicitly refers to this magical harm caused by malevolent human agency as *modstjäla* (also meaning the "stealing of fortitude").

The main tendency in the charms is to call upon the assistance of Christian benevolent powers for help. The general idea is that God's power is invoked and directed towards the illness as a means to heal. The charms rely on a number of Christian benevolent agents appearing in their typical roles of protectors and healers, expelling the evil demons and restoring lost balance. However, the presence of Christian elements does not seem to undermine the magical intent behind the charms themselves. On the contrary, they act as a strengthening, being employed with the typical purposes of magic. The absence of the closing amen also works in this sense: according to popular belief, the charmer should not pronounce the amen after reciting an incantation, worth the loss of its efficacy.[6]

The charms recorded in the manuscript were supposed to be uttered three times and followed by the recitation of Christian prayers or other charms. Some of them are accompanied by descriptions of various ritual actions – for example, spitting three times after

reciting an incantation or stroking upon the injury with a knife. Objects and substances with strong symbolic value also appear,
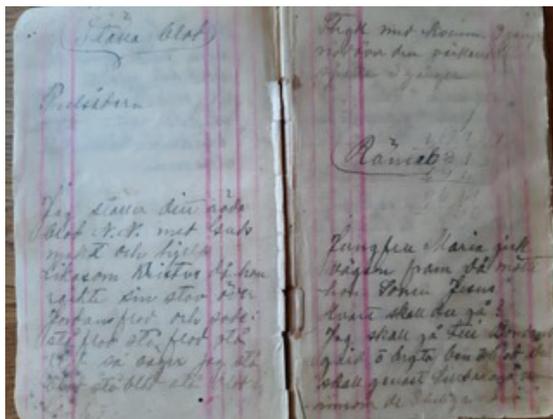
Vägersjön Book

such as knifes, sugar, milk, carob, fenugreek, bear bile, dragon's blood and more.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE VERBAL CHARMS IN THE VÄGERSJÖN BOOK

Bengt af Klintberg (1965), following Ohrt (1917–1921), classifies Swedish charms into five groups taking into consideration their formal and structural features:

> a) Exhortation formulae (*manande former*);
>
> b) Narrative charms (Sw. *episka formler*);
>
> c) Ritual charms (Sw. *rituella formler*);
>
> d) Comparison charms (Sw. *liknelseformler*);

e) Written formulae employing secret words, magical diagrams and alphabetic sequences or 'Ephesia grammata (*lönnformler* in Swedish, though sometimes known in popular tradition as *"Wittenbergska bokstäfver"*, literally, 'Wittenberg Letters').

These categories correspond to the classification of Central Europe and Scandinavian incantations (Klintberg 1965: 39–56). Except for the latter group (e), however, it is rare to find these categories in isolation. In Swedish verbal charms, a number of different structures have been combined and incorporated into highly complex forms (Klintberg 1965: 39–40).

For the present study the same taxonomy has been adopted, which includes the following charm-types:

A) EXHORTATION FORMULAE

Gud bevare mig från ditt onda anhang N.N. fast du är stark och jag är stark så har jag makt att bortvisa allt ont ifrån mig i den namn. Gud bevare mig från ditt onda anhang N.N. fast jag är svag så är Gud stark och därför har jag makt att bortvisa allt ont ifrån mig i den treeniga namn. Jag befaller dig Lucifers djävul att du viker ifrån mig i den treenige namn.

God preserve me from your evil forces N. N., although you are mighty, and I am strong, I have the power to banish all evil from me in the Trinity's name. God preserve me from your evil forces N. N., although I am weak, God is mighty and therefore I have the power to banish all evil from me in the name of the Triune God. I order you, Lucifer's Devil, that you turn away from me in the name of the Triune God.

(Vägersjön book, ff. 5r-5v)

This category of exhortation formaulae includes formulas to chasing out the demon, as well as formulae of wishes and invocations in which the charmer turns to higher powers for help. The above charm for protection against witchcraft is the only protective charm in the book not intended to cure a physical ailment. In terms of form and content, the text appears much more like a Christian benediction than a popular charm, consisting as it does of requests addressed to God and a direct command to the devil.

B) NARRATIVE CHARMS

> Jesus och Sankteper gick vägen fram där möter mig en riande rännkväsa som varit i min gård som skulle till min gård borra hål och sträcka ben. I Guds Faders och Guds Sons och i den Helige andas namn sätter jag dig av vägen över berg och dalar skall du fara till ett berg der ingen bor, till en sjö där skall du ha din ro du förbannad ätterhjärta du skall ri båd katta och klo och alla hunnar i helvete bo.

> *Jesus and Saint Peter walked along the road. They met a riding running swelling heading to my yard, going to my yard to bore holes and stretch bones. In the name of God the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, I will take you out, up over mountains and valleys you shall go, to a mountain where no one dwells, to a lake, there shall you have your peace, you damned heart of poison, you shall ride both cat and claw and all the dogs in Hell's dwelling.*

(Vägersjön book, f. 7v).

> Jungfru Maria gick vägen fram Då mötte hon Sonen Jesus Hvart skall du gå? Jag skall gå till Bondens gård och bryta ben och blod. Du skall genast tillbaka gå Inom de 3 heliga namn.

(Vägersjön book, f. 3r).

> *The Virgin Mary walked along the road, then she met Son Jesus. Where are you going? I am going to the farmer's yard to break bones and blood. You shall immediately withdraw through the three holy names.*

> N.N. Jesus gick vägen fram då mötte han ett barn gråtande. Hvad gråter du för? Jag har ris! Huvudris, halsris, bröstris, ryggris, magris, korsris, benris, valbundetsris. Jag botar dig i mitt namn i den treenige Fader S[on och den Helige ande].

> *Rakt för Modstöld Ränsel* Fader vår och välsignelsen."

> *N.N. Jesus walked along the road, then he met a crying child. -Why are you crying? -I have rickets! Head rickets, neck rickets, chest rickets, back rickets, stomach rickets, cross rickets, care-bound rickets. -I heal you in my name in the name of the Trinity, the Father, the Son [and the Holy Ghost].*

> [Say] *Rakt för*, *Modstöld*, *Ränsel*, the Paternoster and the Blessing.

> Vägersjön book, Folio 8r).

The richest group of entries in the manuscript is that of narrative charms. This category involves stories of miracles of healing situated in a sacred time which are expected to repeat themselves during the performance event. The subject matter of the historiolas is based on Christian and mythical narratives, which mostly are linked to the life of Christ. Out of the six narrative charms recorded in the book, four charms are encounter charms (*mötesformler*, to use the Swedish term), perhaps better known to scholars by the German term *Begegnungssegen*. The meeting scene and the confrontation between Jesus and the evil power are in fact the most common motifs in the charms recorded in the manuscript. These motifs appear in several Swedish encounter charms, especially in those aimed at healing 'evil

bites' (*onda bettet*), an inflammation of the fingertips believed to be caused by worms in the water (Klintberg 1965: 45-46). A variant of these charms recorded in the manuscript is first of the three narrative charms quoted above for healing pain and infected pustules (poisonous pustules), in which Jesus and Saint Peter meet the *kvesa* ("pustule", "abscess"). Unlike the other two narrative charms, which consist of only a historiola, this charm is composite, consisting of a historiola followed by an adjuration.

C) RITUAL CHARMS

> N.N. Jag meter blemma som över ögat rann
>
> i G[uds] F[aders och Guds Sons och i den Helige andas namn]
>
> Jag meter blemma som under brisken rann
>
> De 3 Guds mödrar som såto vid Kristi bord och mätte
>
> De mätte sann,
>
> De ställde rann,
>
> De ställde värk
>
> I det heliga Namn.

> *N.N., I measure blemish, as ran over the eye in the name of God the Father [, the Son and the Holy Spirit]. I measure blemish, as ran under the sour milk. The three mothers of God who sat at Christ's table and measured, they measured truly, they stopped rann, they stopped pain in the holy name.*

> (Vägersjön book, ff. 1v–2r).

In ritual charms, the words express the content or intention of a simultaneous ritual act (Klintberg 1965: 44). Thus, these charms are never used separated from the ritual action. An example in the manuscript is Charm No. 5 for curing styes, which was supposed to

be uttered during the healing ritual of "measurement". This ritual consisted in the measurement of some parts of the body of the patient by a wool yarn or a knife (Tillhagen 1977: 211). Information concerning the procedure of usage of the charm is missing in the manuscript, and we have only the text.

D) COMPARISON CHARMS

> Jag ställer ditt röda blod N.N. med Guds makt och hjälp Likasom Kristus då han räckte sin stav över Jordans flod och sade: Stå flod, Stå flod, Stå flod, så säger jag: Stå blod, Stå blod, Stå blod. Guds F[aders och Guds Sons och i den Helige andas namn].

> Stryk med kniven tre gånger nödöver den värkande och spotta tre gånger.

> *I stop your red blood N.N. through the power and the help of God. As Jesus raised his staff over the river Jordan and said: stop river, stop river, stop river; so I say: stop blood, stop blood, stop blood! [In the name of] God the Father [and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost].*

> *Stroke the injury with a knife three times, then spit three times.*

> (Vägersjön book, ff. 2v-3r)

Charms of this type consist of an exhortation and a simile, containing a reference to a sacred event to which the currently desired end is compared. The connection is made in the style *similia similibus* ("just as… so too…"), and it contributes to increase their historicity and textual authority. The above charm for staunching blood, the widespread motif of the stopping of the river Jordan acts in this way.

E) CHARMS DEALING WITH LISTS OF MAGIC WORDS OR LETTERS.

This category contains the formulae and words that should be mentioned to overcome the disease. They differ from the other charms in that they rarely lived in oral tradition but almost exclusively existed in written form as amulets and formulae (af Klintberg 1965: 52). No charms of this kind have been found in the book.

STRUCTURES OF THE VERBAL CHARMS IN THE VÄGERSJÖN BOOK

The charms recorded in the Vägersjön book demonstrate a variety of charm-types, showing a richness of forms and structures. Their structures can be summarized as follows:

1. *Historiola*. Some charms contain a short narrative functioning as a narrative model, relating certain events in Christian history in which Christ and other divine persons act as guarantor of restoring balance. As stated by Frankfurter, these narratives "place charms between a human dimension, where actions are open-ended, and a mythic dimension, where actions are completed and tensions have been resolved" (Frankfurter 1995: 464). In these narratives, the illness or the illness perpetrator is often depicted as an evil entity moving through the road and looking for victims. In some of the Vägersjön book's charms it is possible to identify the confluence of different charming traditions known from charms all over Europe such as the meeting scene and the confrontation (Roper 2004; 2009).

2. *Direct comparison* or *simile*. Several charms contain a simile comparing the desired end to a sacred event of the past. According to Frankfurter, the structure of *similia similibus* subjugates the narrative part of the spell to the directive statement, the part that says, "May it be as it was then" (Frankfurter 1995: 468).

3. *Exhortation*. Exhortations are presented as those in which the charmer calls upon the powers of God to drive out the evil eye caused by evil agents.

4. *Adjuration*. The illness demon is often addressed by the charmer and the formulaic request is made that the agent restore the patient's health.

5. *Dialogue charms*. Some charms in the manuscript are built upon dialogues, which can be divided into several groups according to the protagonists. There are examples of dialogue between Jesus and the disease, Jesus and the sick person, and between the charmer himself and the sick person.

6. *Banishing and expulsion formulas*. The illness is often banished and expelled by giving directions as to where it is being sent. Typically, in Swedish verbal charms, as well as in other Indo-European traditions, the illness is sent to some distant and inhabited places in nature – under a stone, into a lake, on a mountain. For example, in the first narrative charm quoted from the manuscript above, both a lake and a mountain are mentioned as places of banishment. Such expulsion formulas are widely attested in the Swedish charms recorded from the 17th century to the 20th century (af Klintberg 1965: 15).

7. *Enumeration*. Enumerations and repetitions are used in charms as magical structures. They can appear in different contexts, such as lists of the names and attributes of demons. In the charm quoted above aimed at curing rickets in children, Jesus asks the sick child the reason of his suffering, who replies with a list of all the different forms of rickets affecting him, associated with different parts of the body – head, neck, chest, etc.

8. *Ratification*. A Christian closing formula of the sort "In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" is often met with. As Jonathan Roper has pointed out, this is intended to clinch everything that has preceded it (Roper 2003: 26). In contrast, a closing "Amen" is never found.

THE SWEDISH TRADITION AND THE CHARMS IN THE VÄGERJÖN BOOK

The majority of the charms recorded in the manuscript are well attested in the Swedish charm tradition. Even though they show some variations in terms of semantic motif and narrative plots, their essence mostly remains untouched. All of the narrative charms that have been recorded in the manuscript are encounter charms, containing the meeting motif and the confrontation. The narrative charm aimed at curing poisonous pustules quoted above, contains an expulsion formula widely attested in Swedish healing charms, especially in those aimed at curing *onda bettet*. As af Klintberg states, this formula can be traced back to a Swedish monastery, where it was created from an earlier Latin text (af Klintberg 1965: 16).[7]

The second narrative charm quoted above is for curing pain and consists of a very nuclear historiola which narrates the encounter of Jesus with the demon of the disease. At first sight, the narrative could appear quite ambiguous. Such ambiguity is that we are faced with two divine figures, namely Jesus and the Virgin Mary, who usually appear as benevolent agents. If we only consider the structure of the charm, we could deduce that the performer of the healing act is the Virgin Mary, being mentioned first in the text. However, a comparison with other similar texts seem to lead us towards a different interpretation. The same charm is found in a collection of magical remedies and charms recorded in northern Sweden among Sami people. In this charm, the question "Where are you going?" is clearly asked by Jesus, since it is followed by the words "Jesus asked", missing in our charm.[8] We could therefore assume that this is a case of loose transmission of the text, or failing memory.[9]

Cases referring to Biblical persons as to illness agents, as it appears in this charm, are quite rare in Swedish incantations. The only instance that I have found in the Swedish material is a charm for healing hysteria recorded in Linderholm.[10] Jesus meeting a suffering infant crying for being ill, as depicted in the final of the three narrative charms quoted above, is not a common motif in Swedish

magical charms. However, the reference to the encounter with a sick person draws this text closer to a group of charms aimed at curing *modstulenhet* ("theft of fortitude", "depression") in livestock, which have been widely attested in northern Sweden. These charms present a quasi-identical historiola, in which Jesus meets the suffering animal (usually a cow) who is suffering from depression. Jesus asks him about his affliction, and heals him by means of a conjuration. In Swedish verbal charms, this motif seems to have replaced an earlier version, widespread during the 17th century, which tells us of how Jesus meets a woman complaining about her sick cow (af Klintberg 1965: 121). In my opinion, it could be possible that the charm against rickets recorded in the manuscript has been emerged on the model of this group of charms attested in northern Sweden.[11]

One of the most widespread formulas for staunching blood is found in the book, and it can be related to the long and rich tradition of texts that are intended to cure the same problem and more generally to the international *Flum Jordan* charm. In Sweden, this charm-type has been one of the most used to staunch bleeding and against blood loss (af Klintberg 1965: 103). Based upon an apocryphal medieval story of how the Jordan waters stopped their flowing when Jesus entered them, the historiolas organised around this motif encountered in Swedish incantations are quite short and simple, and only few cases explicitly associate the stopping of the water of the river Jordan with the original motif of Christ's baptism. This once again exemplifies what has been stated by Ferdinand Ohrt: "It is the stopping of the water that is semantically important for the cessation of bleeding" (Ohrt 1938: 31).

We can also attest the popularity of the motif of the *Three Maries* or *Three Virgins* While measuring the disease, they enumerate their actions, the last of which is generally the positive act of restoration. The motif is attested in several variants and it is particularly prominent in charms aimed at curing eye disease recorded in the north of Sweden (Tillhagen 1977: 211). It is also found in other groups of charms, as in charms against stomach and intestine diseases recorded in central and southern Sweden (af Klintberg 1965: 112). The organising principle of this charm is the principle of triplic-

ity – three persons and three actions – which is a common magical device in several charms.This charm also shows an interesting analogy with a charm recorded by Marcellus Empiricus in the 4th century (*Tres virgines in medio mari mensam marmoream positam habebant*)[12] – just as the three Roman virgins are at a table so are the three Swedish women "at the table of Christ".[13]

CONCLUSION

The book of magic found in Vägersjön testifies to the use of charming in connection with magical healing practices in nineteenth century rural Sweden. It also provides an insight into the importance and into a magical attribution to writing, which was regarded as a means of preserving and transmitting secret knowledge.

This study has identified a corpus of eleven verbal charms belonging to this book. Oral recitation seems to be the favoured form of magic, while healing represents the largest motivational category. The compiler of the book seems to be preoccupied with the struggle of everyday living: charms were produced in order to healing humans and livestock and for protecting them from witchcraft. When dealing with it, he calls upon higher Christian powers in order to receive help. This is done both directly, in the form of requests addressed to God, and indirectly, by recalling narratives of sacred events with powerful healing potential taking place in the past.

The most common problems that the charms seek to address are healing physical distress in humans (such as pain or bleeding), healing illness in animals, and averting evil influences. Out of the thirteen recorded charms, the formal category that appears most often is that of *Narrative charms*, of which six instances are attested, among which four are encounter charms. The corpus also records three *Comparison charms*, two *Exhortation formulae* and one *Ritual charm*. On the contrary, no instances are found of af Klintberg's final category, namely: (e) *Charms dealing with lists of magic words or letters*.

The manuscript shows a preponderance of oral charms. This might be indicative of an imputation of greater power to the spoken over the written word. The oral features of the charms, as well as the reciting of several charms and Christian prayers, bear witness to the intended *oral* performance of healing. For the compiler of the book, verbal charms function as a useful form of healing therapy. Like the incantations recorded in most later Swedish magical books, the charms in the manuscript show traces of the orally-transmitted Swedish charm tradition. Their mythemes and narrative motifs reveal the liberal handling of material and a compositional history handed down over time by collective memory. In them we can identify the essential element of a narrative aimed at recovering lost harmony. This is based on the connection between a critical situation in the past and an actual critical one, which, thanks to the intervention of heavenly powers, becomes positive.

As far as the textual and oral tradition is concerned, some types, such as the *Flum Jordan* or the *Tres Mariae* charm, were widely attested in the Swedish tradition. Most of them belong to a broader European Christian tradition, which was embedded among Swedes through migration of cultures and language. On the other hand, variations in terms of narrative and semantic motives may be result from the contamination of folk beliefs and local traditions. Further international comparison could be instructive, since it could help our understanding of certain motifs and reveal their transmission and distribution.

NOTES

[2] For further information on *kloka* in Swedish rural society see Tillhagen 1977 ; af Klintberg 1965.

[3] Concerning the history of such books, see Davies 2009: 6–43. For overviews of the genre in Scandinavia see Edsman 1946, 1963; Hødnebø 1982; Stokker 2007; Johnson 2010; Mitchell 2011; Ohrvik 2012.

[4] The oldest preserved black book in Scandinavia is the Norwegian *Vinjeboka* from the Late Middle Ages, found in Vinje stave church in 1796. See Garstein 1993.

[5] In Swedish folklore, the *vittra* and other supernatural beings were believed to be able to harm people and livestock by sending illness. See Dahlstedt 1983.

[6] In a compilation of magical remedies and charms recorded in northern Sweden it is written that: «Amen shall never be said, for then signatures and incantations have no effect» (Lindskoug 1917: 60–61).

[7] This formula is missing in Danish charms, as well as in German charms. See af Klintberg 1965: 16.

[8] Lindskoug 1917: 12. The charm runs: "Jungfru Maria gick vägen fram, då mötte hon sonen Jesus. Vart ämnar du? frågade Jesus. Jag skall gå till bondens gård och bryta ben och blod. Du skall genast tillbaka gå inom de tre heliga namn: Gud Fader, Son och Den Helige Ande.» [*The Virgin Mary walked along the road, then she met Son Jesus. -Where are you going? asked Jesus. -I am going to the farmer's yard for break bones and blood. -You shall immediately withdraw through the three holy names.*]

[9] Concerning the models of transmission of charms, see Roper 1997 ; Vlasova 1972.

[10] Linderholm 1917–1940: 422. In translation, the charm reads: "The Virgin Mary went forward to the altar, she met Jesus Christ and said: Where are you going? I am going to bind the *moran* on this person, she trembles and dreads and makes her anguish, takes away her breath. No, Jesus answered. I will bind her with ten of my fingers and twelve of God's angels, and she shall walk in the law, as she hath walked before. For this illness she shall be healed, before the sun of grace rises. In three names."

[11] The prototype of this charm goes back to the tenth century (*Super petram*). See af Klintberg 1965: 47.

[12] The example of the *Three virgines* charm is quoted by af Klintberg in *Svenska trollformler*, p. 113.

[13] See the comment in af Klintberg 1965: 112–113.

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BIO

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TABOO VIOLATION AND CHARMING INITIATION, AS EXPRESSED BY SOME ROMANIAN LEGENDS AND INCANTATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE FAIRIES

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Abstract. Within the context of charmings, as it has been recorded among Romanians, the article aims to disclose the meaning of the theme of fairies' taboo violation as a precondition necesary to gain sacred knowledge. In this regard, various certain incantations addressed to the fairies are examined, along with legends and third person accounts that underline the role played by these supernatural entities as numinous agents for initiation to the `secret` register of knowledge through a special form of communication, which in modern neuroscience terminology might be referred to as an ,altered state of consciouness', but which, in the emic terms of magic medicine is described as a disease, namely beeing *taken by the fairies*. In concordance with the idea of mutual exchanges between humans and the numinous, the one who accept the fairies' authority and pay the price of being tormented by them, gain the gift of therapeutic and divinatory abilities.

INTRODUCTION

A belief widely attested ethnographically in many cultures is that the oral transmission of charms (the words and the manner of how to perform them) takes place simultaneously with the transfer of numinous power from the transmitter to the receiver. While the receiver is always a human, the transmitter can be either human or a supernatural entity. Since my interest here is on the second situation, the goal of the article is to articulate a corpus of incantations and ritual practices addressed to the fairies, along with etiological legends and narratives that recount the experiences of a specific category of therapeutic and divinatory charmers that, at one moment in their life, entered into contact with these entities who caused his or her bodily and mental disorders as a means of initiation on the other hand.

A brief review of the fairies' legendary dossier, as developed within Romanian folk culture, might be useful for a better understanding the background of the beliefs found in the incantations and the charming situation that the article deals with.

PORTRAYING THE FAIRIES IN THE ROMANIAN FOLK LEGENDS AND INCANTATIONS

The long series of names under which the fairies are known[1] amongst Romanians indicate human attitudes towards them. We find terms that express linguistic taboos: *Ielele*[2] [iotation of the personal pronoun, 3rd person feminine plural], *Dânsele* [the polite third person

feminine plural pronoun]; words that reverently aim to obtains fair-
ies' benevolence], *Doamnele* [the Ladies], *Milostivele* [the Merci-
ful Ones]. We also find terms that point to their sacredness - *Ale
Sfinte* [the Holy Ones] or to their appearance - *Albele* [the White
Ones]. Additionally, we find terms that express beliefs and legends
about them: *Zânele* [the Fairies], *Măiestrele[3]* [the Masterly], *Vân-
toasele* [the Windy Ones], *Fetele lui Șandr*u [the ȘandruAlexander's
Maiden], *Șoimanele* [the term comes from the Romanian word *șoim*
meaning 'falcon', and is related with the fairies ability to fly or,
maybe, to take the shape of a falcon[4]]. A further subcategory is rep-
resented by *Rusaliili[5]*, *Sânzienele*[6] and *Drăgaicele*[7], whose names
are coincident with the name of important feasts in the religious
calendar: the Pentecost (*Rusaliile*) and St. John's Day (*Sânzienele*,
Drăgaica on the 24th of June). This underlines the fact that neither
Pentecost nor St. John Feast are dedicated to fairies, but according
to widespread folk beliefs, the power of the *Rusalii*, respectively of
the *SânzieneDrăgaice*, are at their maximum during these days.[8]

The legendary files of the *Iele* is rich and complex; yet, their im-
aginary portrait[9] remains homogenous due to a constant skeleton
with the following features: they appear only in groups[10] and only
during the summer season; they sing or play bagpipes, trumpets,
percussion instruments (especialy the *toaca*, a wooden or metal board
used within the Orthodox and Greco-Catholic liturgical rituals to call
people to pray), bells; their music is uncommon for humans, who even
evaluate them as 'the most beautiful sounds' or as noise; they rarely
enter the domestic space; instead, they prefer the forest, where they
dance in the air, under or in the crown of branchy trees (especially
the beech, the walnut); they bathe and drink water from isolated
fountains outside villages, in the forest. The water they touch and
the ground under their airy dance remains impregnated with their
presence. Called *Hora Ielelor* [the Circle Dance of Fairies] or *Masa
Ielelor* [the Table of Fairies], the spot is marked by burnt grass or by
a semi-poisonous (hallucinogenic?) and semi-therapeutic mushroom
named „the fairies' spoon" (*Ganoderma lucidum*); the Fairies can
move long distances flying without wings or by a vehicle (a wooden

log, a chariot); they abduct humans, lads and maiden, take them up in the air and force them to enter their dance; they also can abduct skilful young male musicians, who iare then compelled to play the violin or pipe for their dance until they are totally weakened (it seems that the *Iele* never grow tired of circular dancing).

Human contacts with the *Iele* are ritually mediated through verbal formulas (e.g. "Let your dance increase") and by diverse taboos: to step on their spot, to sleep under their trees, to drink water from isolated fountains,[11] to answer when they call you by name, to divulge their songs. The violation of at least one of the taboos is punished by bodily harms (paralysis, arthritis) or mental injuries (hallucination, epilepsy, dementia). And, conversely, appropriate behavior maybe rewarded. The benevolent or maleficent profile of these entities is equivocal. They might be assigned with a justicial role placed under divine authority: „they are sent by God to punish evil humans"– or they might be „subordinated to the devil" (Muşlea and Bîrlea 2010: 202). They can repair what they themselves damaged and they can both receive proffer gifts.

Attested among Serbians, Bulgarians, Greeks (Pócs 1989:49) and the Romanians, too, is the following ritual method to recover a human who has been punished by the *Iele*, namely to come back after one year to the very place – fountain, tree – where the patient previously violated at least one of the the above mentioned taboos (Muşlea and Bîrlea 2010: 208). The curative ritual is performed by specialized charmers. "When they see a bushy and scorched branch of a tree, people say that the Beautiful Ones dance there and nobody steps under that tree, because their table is there and they harm anyone who steps there. Those who are crippled ask a charmer to place a table at that tree and they sleep there". To this table the *Iele* are invited. If they accept the gift and "the glasses on the table turn empty and the honey breads are eaten, the *Iele* give himher vitality" (Bîrlea 1981: 57–58) and cure himher through this incubation-like ritual. The ritual involves the voicing of certain incantations that describe the symptoms of the disease, the earlier event when the taboo was violated, and the offering ritual.

Here is an example recorded at the beginning of the 20th century from Iconia Crâsta, Caraş Severin county (South West Romania):

> Is is entitled *The Holy Ones*. It is used for strong headaches caused by the fact that someone, in an evil hour, stepped on the Windy Ones' [spot] and disturbed their Dance [the spot they dance]. The charmer [a woman] keeps in her right hand a burning candle and in the other hand a bunch made from nine sorts of flowers placed in a pot filled with water.

A plecat N.	*There went N*
Pe cale	*On the road*
Pe cărare,	*On the path*
Pe drumul cel mare.	*On the big road.*
La mijloc de cale	*In the middle of the path*
S-a-ntâlnit că ăle sfinte,	*He met the Holy Ones,*
Cu ăle milostive,	*The Mild Ones,*
Cu ăle curate:	*The Poor Ones:*
Cu vânturi albe,	*White winds,*
Cu vânturi galbene,	*Yellows winds,*
Cu vânturi vinete,	*Purple winds,*
Cu vânturi viorinte [sic!	*Violet winds*
Cu vânturi pestriţe,	*Mottled winds,*
Cu vânturi frumoase,	*Beautiful winds,*
Cu vânturi necăjite,	*Downcast winds,*
Cu vânturi flămânde,	*Hungry winds,*
Cu vânturi setoase.	*Thirsty winds.*
N peste ele călcă,	*N stepped*
Masa li-o răsturnă;	*And overturned their table;*
Dar ele sărâră,	*But they came,*
De pământ îl trântiră,	*Knocked him to the ground,*
Picioarele i le frânseră,	*Broken his legs*
Mâinile i le rupseră.	*Broken his arms.*

Dar N. Se cânta,	*And N was whimpering,*
N se văiera,	*N was crying.*
Maica Sfântă Maria	*Holy Mother Mary,*
Din cer îl auzea	*heard him*
Și pe scară	*And went down*
De ceară	*A ladder*
Se scobora,	*Of wax*
La N. Sosea,	*And came to N,*
În poală-l sprijonea,	*Took him in her lap,*În
sus mi-l ridica,	*Lifted him,*
De ălea sfinte-l scutura,	*And shaked the Holy Ones off him,*
D-ăle milostive,	*Off the Mild Ones,*
D-ăle curate,	*Off the Pure Ones,*
De vânturi albe,	*Off the white winds,*
De vânturi galbene,	*Off the yellow winds,*
De vânturi vinete,	*Off the purple winds,*
De vânturi viorinte [sic!]	*Of the violet winds,*
De vânturi pestrițe,	*Off the mottled winds,*
De vânturi frumoase,	*Off the beautiful winds,*
De vânturi necăjite,	*Off the downcast winds,*
De vânturi flămânde,	*Off the hungry winds,*
De vânturi setoase	*Off the thirsty winds,*
Mi-l scutura	*I shake it off*
Și-n glas mare striga:	*And she shouted*
Nu te cânta	*"Don't cry",*
Nu te văiera	*Don't whimper,*
Că-i aici Iconia!	*Because Iconia*
Iconia descântătoarea	*[the name of the charmer] is here,*
Cu oală nouă venea	*She came with a new pot,*
Și cu apă din râul Iordan;	*And from the River Jordan,*
Cu apă te spăla,	*She washed you withater,*

Cu florile te stropea,	*Sprinkled you with flowers*
Și genunchii Domnului pleca,	*And she knelt in front of the Lord,*
Pentru N. se ruga,	*She prayed for N.*
De Sfânta Maică Maria,	*She prayed to the Holy Mother Mary,*
D-ăle sfinte,	*To the Holy Ones,*
D-ăle milostive,	*To the Mild Ones,*
D-ăle curate	*To the Pure Ones,*
Și de ăla frumoase:	*And to the Beautiful Ones:*
De Doamna Ogrişteana,	*To the Lady Ogrişteana [the name of the flowers in the branch],*
De Doamna Bugiana,	*To the Lady Bugiana,*
De Doamna Golopăra,	*To the Lady Golopăra,*
De Doamna Trandafira,	*To the Lady Trandafira,*
De Doamna Ocheşoaua,	*Lady Ocheşeaua,*
De Doamna Vioreaua,	*Lady Vioreaua,*
De Doamna Semenica,	*Lady Semenica,*
De Doamna Jalea,	*Lady Jalea,*
De Doamna Plăcinţaua;	*Lady Plăcinţica;*
Câte flori pe munte,	*As many flowers as they are in the mountain,*
Dvoastră vis (sic!) şi mai multe,	*There are more for you".*
Ne-am ruga aplecat pentru N.,	*We would like to pray for N.*
Să faceți bine și ascultați,	*And please listen to me,*
Și-l iertați;	*Please forgive him,*
Că iel v-o fi ieşit,	*Because he probably did something wrong to you,*
În cale v-o-ntâlnit,	*He met you on his way,*
Cu picioarele v-o fi călcat,	*He trampled you,*
Masa v-o fi răsturnat.	*He overturned your table.*
Și voi i-ați luat smaga,	*You took away his power,*

I-ați luat puterea,	*His vigour,*
Picioarele i-ați frânt,	*You broke his legs,*
Mâinile iați rupt.	*You broke his arms.*
Acum faceți bine și ascultați,	*Now, be good and listen to me*
Mi-l iertați,	*And forgive him.*
Cu Sfânta Maică Maria să veniți,	*Together with the Holy Mother Mary*
Leac să-i aduceți, să mi-l chitiți:	*You should bring his remedy, and fix him*
Cu capu la cap,	*Head to head*
Cu gură la gură,	*Mouth to mouth,*
Cu mâni la mâni,	*Hands to hands*
Cu vâni la vâni,	*Veins to veins,*
Cu inimă la inimă,	*Heart to heart,*
Cu sânge la sânge,	*Blood to blood*
Cu smagă la smagă,	*And legs to legs.*
Cu picioaele la picioare,	*With feet to feet.*
Să-l chitiți mai frumos de cum a fost,	*Fix him better than he was*
Cum chitește albina	*Fix him as the bee fixes*
Fagurul și samarul,	*The honeycomb and the load.*
N să rămână curat,	*Let N remain clean,*
Luminat,	*And shiny*
Ca aurul străcurat!"	*Like pure gold.*"

And the charmer ends with the *prayer of the diseased*, a consecrated prayer worded on behalf of a sick person:

Cruce-n cer, cruce-n pământ	*Cross in the sky, cross on the earth,*
De la Dumnezeu cel sfânt.	*Cross from the Holy God;*
Cruce-n casă,	*Cross in the house,*
Cruce-n masă,	*Cross in the table,*

Cruce lui N în aşternut	*Cross in the bed clothes of N,*
De greu somn păzeşte-l,	*Guard him from bad sleep,*
De duh rău fereşte-l,	*Guard him from evil spirit,*
Sfântă Maică Mărie ajută-i,	*Holy Mother Mary help him*
Şi-l scoate din boli grele,	*And take him out from serious diseases,*
Din beteşuguri rele,	*From evil afflictions,*
Din postul păcatelor,	*From the fasting sins,*
Tuturor,	*All,*
Amin!	*Amen!*

(from Hodoş, 1912: 66–68).

The entire charming performance, which includes the incantation and the prayer, is charged with the positive sacredness placed under divine auspices of God, of the Mother of God and of the holy cross. In this regard, it is not meaningless to notice the double role assigned to Virgin Mary as both intercessor between the charmer and the Fairies and as the figure with authority over the windy Fairies.

Another variant, recorded in the same region and in the same period as the previous one, is more focused on the gifts offered to these Fairies:

Iar a plecat N	*There went N. on the path*
Pe cale	*On the large road,*
Pe un drum mare	*On a big road*
Şi s-a întâlnit	And he met
Cu vânturile-n cale.	*The winds on his way.*
Vânturile l-au învăluit	*The winds surrounded him*
La cap l-au ameţit,	*And dizzied him,*
Puterea i-au lua.	*They took away his vigour.*

Iar descântîtoarea pentru	*And the charmer*
N s-a rugat	*[feminine] prayed for him*
Şi vânturile le-a cinstit:	*And honoured the winds:*
Cu 9 lumini,	*With 9 candles,*
Cu 9 pâni	*With 9 breads,*
Cu 9 creţari,	*With 9 coins,*
Cu 9 ulcuţe,	*With 9 loaves,*
Cu apă din 9 vaduri.	*With water from 9 fords.*
Voi, vânturi mânioase,	*You, wrathful winds,*
Pe N să-l lăsaţi curat,	*Leave N clean,*
Că N s-a sculat şi v-a cinstit;	*That N arose and honoured you;*
Voi, vânturi mânioase,	*You, wrathful winds,*
La cap să-l desmeticiţi,	*Clear his head,*
Că el v-o cinstit:	*Cause he honoured you with:*
Cu 9 lumini,	*With 9 candles,*
Cu 9 pâni	*With 9 breads,*
Cu 9 creţari,	*With 9 coins,*
Cu 9 ulcuţe,	*With 9 loaves*
Cu apă din 9 vaduri.	*With water from 9 fords.*
Că el o fi greşit	*Because he would have done something wrong*
O fi smintit,	*He would have disturbed something*
Jocurile v-o fi spart,	*He would have broken your dances*
Blidul vi l-o fi vărsat.	*He would have spilt your dish;*
Vânturi frumoase,	*Beautiful winds,*
Vânturi curate,	*Clean winds,*
Vânturi mâniate,	*Wrathful winds,*
Să faceţi bine	*Be good,*
Să-l lăsaţi curat,	*Leave N. clean,*

Că el v-o cinstit dela	*Because he*
Dumnezeu!	*honored you from God!*

(Hodoş, 1912: 69).

To the same ritual of setting offerings on the Table of the Fairies, and to the beliefs enclosed in it, points an incantation included in a Codex written at the end of the 18th century and kept by the Romanian Academy, MS 1517 (f.44); the text was published and commented upon by Emanuela Timotin, who considered it probably "le plus ancienne incantation roumaine contre des (…) fée" (Timotin, 2007: 433).

Pentru dânsăle. Adecă eu (cutare), bine-m pare pentru venirea dumneavoastră și iată că postescu 3 zile de vineri dumneavoastră, i iată că vă fac masă mare, adecă pentru vinirea dumneavostră. Și mă rog, orice voiu fi grești, să mă iertați. Că de acu pre mă voiu păzi, ca să nu vă răspunzu. Și când voiu mai greși, să mă iertați, că sânt robul lui Dumnezeu și pe urmă al dumneavoastră, eu (cutare).

For the Shes. Namely me (this one) I am glad for your coming and, behold that I am fasting three days of Friday [for] you, and behold that I prepare a great table, meaning for your coming. And I (this one) beg you to forgive me for whatever I might have been wrong. Cause for now one I will guard myself in order to avoid answering to you. And when I would be wrong again, forgive me, because I am the servant of God and, secondly, of yours, I (this one)

 (Timotin 2007:443).

This version is much more simple than the other examples recorded from the oral milieu around one hundred years later. Secondly, the use of the first person can be noticed, as if the very victim speaks and acts in hisher own behalf, while in the later oral charms use of

the first person indicate the mediator charmer, who, in turn becomes a character integrated in the story narrated by the incantation.

All these charms share a reverent attitude towards the Fairies, explicitly expressed by closing formulas that state the charmer's (and the patient's) subordination to them. Consequently, the *Iele* are not expelled, as in the case of other charms against fairies or evil spirits, but implored to forgive and to cure, as *Merciful* as they might be.

In the frame of a folk religion system, characterized, in Laura Stark's terms, by an „emphasis on reciprocity and exchange between humans and divine or sacred agents" (Stark 2002: 30), Romanian fairies (as is probably true of all fairies in the world) are numinous entities who negotiate their authority with humans. The question is: what might be the very trade between the *Iele* and humans?

VIOLATION OF TABOOS AND CHARMING INITIATION

In the classification of Romanian legends, those assigned to types 13244 and 13245 assert the human origin of the flying Fairies (Brill 2005, I). They were:

> the servants of Alexander the Macedonian, who (...) drunk his living water that king Ivantie had given to him [water] taken from the River Jordan. Drinking the living water, the servants flew in the air and turned into *Iele* (Muşlea and Bîrlea 2010: 209)[13];

> They bathed in the living water from the well of Ivantie. They remained young for ever. When they dance, then we have whirlwinds [Ro. *Vântoasele,* the Windy Ones].

> (Brill 2005, I)

These legends are related to the episode in the *Alexander Romance* of the visit by the Macedonian emperor to the island of Makaron in the very vicinity of the Paradise. According to Byzantine versions,

and also to the Romanian ones,[13] he met King Evante there who „was sitting naked on a golden throne with a golden crown on his head. And there was a fountain under his feet"[14] (Cartojan 1922: 87), a miraculous fountain connected with the rivers of the celestial paradise. Alexander learned that „the one who bathes this water will rejuvenate to the age of 30" (idem). Evant offered to Alexander a flagon filled with water from the well of eternal youth, but, since the Romance ends with his death, the Macedonian never used it. Why? An insertion in a Romanian manuscript written around 1800 continues the story and restores narrative causality: „some say that Alexander's servants drank this water, and they are still alive, and will never die until the Doomsday" (Gaster 1883: 28–29).

The mortal nature of Alexander's servants has been transgressed through the fraudulent acquirement of sacred knowledge: the well with the miraculous liquid impregnated with heavenly substance was not intended for them. Following this, they suffered a corporal reconfiguration and gained the ability to fly, to have divinatory abilities and to enter a realm of a perpetual present continuous. According to another legend, that involves the same pattern of a taboo violation in order to earn oracular faculties, they consumed a liturgically consecrated food in a forbidden context: „The Holy Ones were maidens who [...] have stolen the Eucharistic bread and God cursed them not to be heard by anybody except the one who will stay awake late at night in the places where they might pass" (recorded in South Carpathian region) (Gusti, Herseni and Stahl 1999: 222). Here the taboo that was violated was the interdiction to listen to their words or to their charming sounds, which might reveal knowledge with sacred provenance; consequently, to stay awake against the common bodily and mental limits representing an initiatory test that verifies the receiver as a future charmer.

The certain knowledge with sacred provenance that consists in oracular awareness, recognition of therapeutic herbal remedies, erotic and musical initiation, and, not least, the ability ot enchant, is occasionally and only under specific circumstances disclosed to humans. But the price is that the human must get sick first. „Old

women are convinced that their healing gift was given either by the Mother of God or by the *Iele*, after a serious illness in the cours of which their soul is carried by the *Iele* through the air, and they [the *Iele*] teach them [the old women] how to cure" (Candrea 1999: 334).[15]

Which kind of diseases? In the first Romanian medical manuscript treatise composed in 1760 (in Sibiu), an adaptation of a Greek original, „numbness and tremors" are considered to be symptoms for a malady that the translator (a medical physician) explained for his Romanian readers (probably familiar with the local folk terminology) as similar to the disease called „to be taken by the *iele*, as the uneducated people use it" (Chisacof 2017: 183, 253, 258). In fact, Romanian emic terms that point to certain disorders caused by the fairies are contradictory:

The first terms under consideration, 'abducted by the *Iele*' (*furat din Iele*), and 'taken up by the *Iele*' (*luat pe sus din Iele*), mean that the body and soul of the victim are moved through the air againts his or her own will, to a distant space. To 'be abducted' is partially synonym with to 'be transported', lifted amidst a whirlwind (here caused by the circle dance of the fairies) with the corollary of having access, through vertigo, to those levels of reality whose perception implies exceeding normal psychic and cognitive limits. Supernatural abductions are common both to prestigious religious figures (to St.Elijah, St Paul, etc., in the canonical Christian canonic context; to the Mother of God, etc., in apocryphal contexts) and to ordinary people, as well.

Within the transfigured reality of the charm, the abduction, namely the exhausting dance with the *Iele,* the continuoust twisting, precedes the proper condition of the ‚disease' and paralysis. Here is an example:

Când o văzură,	*When they saw her*
Die mână o luară	*They took her hand*
Şi în gioc o băgară,	*And pulled her in their dance,*
În sus o ridicară,	*They lifted her up,*

Ca un fuior die cânepă	*They swingled her*
o meliţară,	*as a hemp tow,*
Ca un snop de grâu o îmblătiră,	*They flailed her as a*
	sheaf of wheat,
Moartă în pământ o trântiră.	*They knocked her head*
	to the ground.
Creierii din cap i-o turburat,	*They disturbed her*
	brains from the head,
Moară în cap i-o aşezat.	*They put a mill in*
	her head

(Şăineanu 2012:75).

Such manifestations point to the symptomatology of divine possession (whether good or evil), like a body moving out of control and hallucination (the "mill in her head" suggests acoustic hallucination). In Bogdan Neagotă's words, „the torment is the price for gaining the ecstatic state" (Neagotă 2015:80). It seems that Alexander's Maidens (*Fetele lui Şandru),* as the *Iele* are sometimes named strictly in incantations, are initiating agents that mediate communication with the sacredness through the altered states of consciousness that they induce by music and dance.

Another term that denominates the disease caused by the fairies is the „fall of the *Iele* of the Holy Ones" (c*ăzut(ă) din Ieledin Ale Sfinte*), which, by contrast to the previous situation, is associated from the very beginning with a downward movement, body immobility, catalepsy (when only the soul is transported), and oneiric initiation:

The good enchantresses are fallen *Holy Ones*. They slept motionlessly for several days and several nights and [while sleeping] were tortured by the Holy Ones; after this torment they gained the charms. Old Stanca from the river, for example; she doesn't know any evil things. She was disfigured when she was 18 years old, while she was sleeping by a beech tree. Her father took her home and

> she only woke up after eleven weeks. She was tortured by
> the Holy Ones with green eyes [...]. When they fall down
> by the Holy Ones*,* when they squirm and speak with the
> *Iele*, the appropriate remedies are revealed to them. It is
> revealed to them the nature of the charming afflictions,
> the identity of those who have stolen a certain thing, the
> manner to keep enemies away.
>
> (see Neagota 2015: 88).[16]

Humans are not automatically passive victims of the fairies, but they can chose their position. „It is said that ‚The Holy Ones' revealed to her, provoke headaches, dizziness and threat her with death **if** [*my emphasis*] she refuses to obey them; in turn, they teach her to enchant" (Candrea 1999: 334). In other words, the deal is to accept the fairies' authority, a situation that is consistent with the status asumed by the charmers specialized in performing the incantation and the ritual of setting the Fairies' Table, as illustrated above. On the contrary, she/he can refuse them:

> there was a man who said that at the age of 10 years, sit-
> ting in the shelter, a group of beautiful women pounced
> on him. They lifted him in the air and took him on a hill,
> where they left him in a willow. Then they took him dancing
> and, when his brother appeared, they abandoned him and
> withdrew themselves. The boy couldn't move any longer
> and was been carried home in a chariot. Three months
> later, an old woman told him that he would become a
> wizard, but he was afraid of that. In the week of *Rusalii*
> [the week of Pentecost], he had bouts of insanity and tried
> to whistle words [or sounds] of fairies; after the week of
> *Rusalii* he recovered.
>
> (Marienescu 1873; see Brill 2005, I, type 13256).

Here, a failed incantation can be identified, interrupted by the presence of the boy's brother. Declining, out of fear, the quality of initi-

ated, a quality that he almost had acquired, the boy violates the prohibition to disclose the fairies' song that has been confided to him during the ecstatic state induced by the airy dance: he „whistles" their „word" in everyones hearing and... recovers.

In the frames of transmitting both the incantation and the gift to be enchanted and, from this position, the skill to magically enchant, heal, hear, and see what the others do not see, permanent vigilance and availability to accept the fairies' authority are demanded from those chosen by the *Iele* to become their future agents of the numinousness. Wide-awakeness – beyond the ordinary registers of time and space – is a precondition r for being initiated into charming knowledge, even if this means the violation of the fairies' taboo (as those people who lie in wait late in the night in order to hear them). „The ritual practice recommend that the charm must be learned by stealth, by lurking near the one who pronounces it in a certain moment" (Bîrlea 1983, II: 12–13). In other words, clandestine learning through the *stealing* the charm, together with its numinous power, represents a challenge and a task the neophyte must pass in order to qualify as a charmer.

In their turn, Alexander the Great's servants had fraudulently acquired the reservoir of sacred knowledge, therefore becoming both initiated and agents for humans' initiations induced through music and dance. Flying, the maiden themselves had been *carried away,* abducted in the air!

INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

Firstly, the famous ritual of *Căluş*[17] performed by esoteric group of men who gathered strictly in the Pentecost week is directly associated with the *Iele*: through choric trance they cure the people whose malady is diagnosed as *being taken by the Iele/the Rusalii.* There are similitudes between the charmers who receive their gifts directly from the fairies after an episode of affliction and mental disorder, on the one hand, and the *căluşari,* one the other hand (e.g. during their ritual performance, one of the dancers sudenly trembles and

falls down to the ground as if himself is tormented by the fairies; in turn, he heals the patient). Yet they do not cover the entire repertoire of practices, means and agents involved in this arena: they only act as a group (not an individual charmer), they do not settle any Table with offerings for the Fairies on behalf of a sick person, they do not utter incantations (as other charmers do), etc. Consequently, the ritual of *Căluş* was not discussed in this article, which dealt instead with specific practices and incantations that do not enter within the attributions of these choric charmers.

Secondly, based on the consequences the encounter with the fairies has upon humans, three categories of actors may be identified: 1) those who, for lack of vigilance, indirectly and unvoluntary violate the taboos, enter into contact with the *Iele*, pollute their territory. They are simple punished victims, whose illness is mostly physical; 2) those who are chosen by the *Iele* to become their agent. In such cases we do not speak about theviolation of taboos. The fairies invade them, causing physical and mental disorders. Still subordinated to the *Iele,* they might become charmers at the first level of initiation; 3) the fairy-seers, people who actively seek to enter in contact with the fairies and, in this respect, deliberately violate the taboos – e.g. they willfully stay on watch late at night to vigilantly hear their voice; they drink water from forbidden fountains; they bury their musical instruments at a crossroads, etc.- in order to acquire numinous knowledge. They are initiated in a register of perception that transgresses ordinary reality and gain their own enchanting power.

Thirdly, deeply marked by a specific religious view over universe, traditional knowledge about human *un-normal* behaviour might refer to mystic communication with different hypostases of the sacred (here the fairies) as ‚to be carried’, ‚to be abducted’, while modern neuroscience diagnoses it as an altered state of consciousness. The situation of being in an altered state of consciousness was defined as

> to deviate from the natural [world-consciousness] relation in such a way that the world andor self tend to be misrepresented (...). The resulting misrepresentational state is not the functional, original or permanent state of the

> organism's consciousness, but caused by some external or
> internal change to the organism's biological makeup that
> alters the representational [world-consciousness] relations.

> (Revonsuo, Kallio, Sikka, 2009).

It can be noticed that ethnology and neurosciences share a certain
interest on humans' interactions with reality, interactions that in-
cludes negotiation between cultural patterns and conventions on
the one hand, and individual evaluation and interpretation of the
natural and supernatural on the other hand: "it is not the contents
of consciousness *per se* that define whether a state is 'normal' or
'altered' but its relation to the world. Thus, in an altered state,
consciousness relates itself differently to the world, in a way that
involves wide spread misrepresentations of the world andor the self"
(Revonsuo, Kallio, Sikka, 2009).

The question is not to evaluate what is supernatural and what
is natural (biological) in these experiences, but to undertake the
inevitable differences between the views upon one and the same
reality and the manners to interfere with it (the sacred action over
the human's body and mind vs. the scientific explanations of the
body and mind *altered* activities) as part of the epistemological labor
of ethnology. In the absence of interdisciplinary case studies which
explore closely the symptomatology and the interior personal feel-
ings and sensorial experiences of those who assert they have been
taken away by the fairies, the hypothesis I suggested here remain
incomplete.

NOTES

[1] A cartographic distribution of the terms in the Romania territory was
made by Maria Purdela Staru (Purdela Sitaru 1999:156).

[2] Among ethnographers, the almost generic term is *Ielele*, which occurs in
popular usage all over Romania. Its etymology is controversial. One pro-
posal is that it comes from the feminine personal plural pronoun *ele* used
in an euphemistic manner in order to avoid fairies' real, dangerous, name.

Another proposal is that it originates in the Turan root *iel*, meaning 'wind', 'air', 'rheumatism'. The second hypothesis was supported by Lazăr Şăineanu: "The air or the wind has been personified as an aerial fairy". Another name for the same entities, 'The Windy Ones' [Romanian Vânoasele], who are "the mistresses of the wind, flying through the air and entering human bodies", is apparently sustained this hypothesis (Şăineanu 2012: 105–106). At present, the only widely-accepted etymology is *Iele* < *ele*.

[3] "Especially in charms, the word 'masterly' generally means any creature who possesses a magic power, whether it be a fairy, a woman, or a bird" (Şăineanu 2012:98).

[4] Maria Vivod noticed the term *šojmanke* [Romanian spelling is *şoimance*] among Romanian speakers from Serbia. She wrote that "the word *šojmanka* is unknown in Vlach. Eastern Serbian Vlach communities know and use the term *šojmanosa* [the appropriate Romanian spelling is *şoimănoasă*]. According to Es Durlić, the Vlach term *manosa* means "abundant," but *šoj* is entirely unknown" (Vivod 2018:59). However, she informally learned about this term, as she explained in footnote no 9 (Vivod 2018: 59), and related it to the Hungarian word *sólyom*, a term with a probable Turkish root. In reality, the term is well known in the Romanian language and has nothing to do with *mănos* [fertile], but with the word *şoim* [falcon], whose augmentative is *şoiman*, which also means 'brave, daring', or 'to fly as fast as the falcon'. "Thus, *Şoimanele* means fairies which move very fast" (Şăineanu 2012:94–95). On the other hand, "*Şoiman* is an epithet that is given only to pure and somewhat holy things, such as the sun, the bee, the bread" (Marian 1883, I: 118).

[5] This fairies' name is coincident with the name of the Pentecost feast, *Rusalii* (a defective of singular noun). Rooted in Latin *Rosalia*, the Feast of Roses. It is recognizable in the Gr. *Ρουσάλια* and the Slavic *rusalija* (Ciorănescu 1958–1966). At least according to my knowledge, its use as the name of the Pentecost feast is specific to Romanians, while *Rusalka* (pl. *Rusalki*) in the Slavic languages points to feminine entities from the other world, more or less connected with water.

[6] The etymological hypothesis proposed by Ioan Aurel Candrea (and agreed by the Dictionary of the Romanian Academy) is *Sânziene* (pl.) < Lat. *sanctus dies Johannis*. Based on the possible origin of Romanian *zână* (fairy) from the Latin *Diana*, another hypothesis (accepted by the Romanian Language Dictionary) relates the term *sânziana* to the Lat. *Sancta Diana*.

[7] From Bulgarian *dragaika*. It also points to the same flower as *sânziana*. Both terms are used in the plural form.

[8] There is to distinguish the *Rusalii* fairies from the *Sânziene Drăgaice* fairies: the first ones are most punitive against those who do not observe the Pentecost celebration, a celebration with a funerary component, while the *Sânziene Drăgaice* are deeply connected with agriculture and with the medicinal flowers whose name they bear (it is believed that the curative properties of these plants and, of all herbs, are at their greatest on Midsummer's day).

[9] By and large, many of the fairies' attributes are similar in various European cultures.

[10] All the terms which denominate them are plural nouns.

[11] In the real Romanian landscape, there are concrete fountains identified by local people as the Fairies 'the Mild Ones' the *Ielele's* Fountain.

[12] Similar beliefs are known among modern Greeks: called The Good Ladies, Those with Kind Heart, The Happy Ones and other euphemistical names. They are led by the sister or by the daughter of Alexander the Great, who drank the water of immortality (Şăineanu 2012: 124).

[13] The first attested copy written in Romanian language was dated 1621.

[14] In Romanian: "şedé suptu un copaciu naltu şi frumos. Şi ave de tote pomele într-însulu. Şi era neşte pasări cu penele galbine ca aurul şi cânta neşte cântece menunate. Şi elu şede în jilţul de aur şi cu cununa de auru în cap şi gol. Şi era fântână suptu piciorele lui" (Cartojan 1922: 87).

[15] The belief that there are certain healers "who lie in delirium and meanwhile get knowledge of different other worldly medicine" is also attested in Greece, Bulgaria, and Dalmatia (Pócs 1989: 48).

[16] The grandmother's memory of one of my informants indirectly actualizes the oneiric state as a mean of communication with the fairies: "She told me that once, when she was young and unmarried, she was returning home from a sewing bee. She was alone on the road and it was already night. Suddenly she heard a fluttering and she knew that there were the Beautiful Ones. She had to run home quickly. She was alone in the house. She got into bed and plugged her ears, so she wouldn't hear their song. She was afraid they would paralyze her if she heard them. She fell asleep and dreamt that she was picking flowers together with a group of beautiful women. When she woke up in the morning, everything was alright. That was all" (personal

field archive: recorder from A.T., man, 27 years old, born in Bălceşti, Vâlcea county; recorded in Bucharest, October 2022).

[17] The Romanian ritual of Căluş and its complex choric repertoire is included in the UNESCO's list of intangible heritage of the humankind.

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IDENTIFICATION OF UNNAMED NON-HUMAN AGENTS IN KALEVALA-METRIC INCANTATIONS

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Abstract: Kalevala-metric poetry is an oral-poetic system of various genres, shared by multiple Finnic groups. In addition to epic and lyric, one of the prominent main genres of the oral tradition is formed by incantations. The Kalevala-metric incantations regularly invoke non-human agents, which are aligned with the performer in various ways. While these agents are often explicitly named and addressed, in some cases their identity remains unclear. By conducting a case study, the paper proposes that in many occurrences the unnamed agents are identifiable by examining textual cues and the emergent text-structure of the incantations. The results show that the identification of unnamed agents can be achieved by biographic-metrical and contextual analysis of the incantation texts.

Keywords: Incantations, Kalevala-meter, Viena Karelia, textual cues

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IDENTIFICATION OF UNNAMED NON-HUMAN AGENTS IN KALEVALA-METRIC INCANTATIONS

Kalevala-metric incantations are a genre operating within the oral-poetic system of Kalevala-meter (see, e.g., Frog 2019a; Siikala 2002). These incantations regularly invoke various, differently aligned, unseen agents (Siikala 2002). In some of my earlier work, I have analyzed the way Finno-Karelian ritual specialists address these agents by using different discursive registers and align themselves by metapragmatic evaluations present in the incantation texts: ways of explicitly or implicitly evaluate the status of the given actor in relation to the performer of an incantation (Karlsson 2021b; 2022). Not all of the agents addressed in incantations are directly named, however. It is therefore of interest whether identification of these unnamed actors is methodologically possible. In this article, I will examine the subject of unnamed actors in Kalevala-metric incantations. I will approach this question by conducting a case study. The analysis will explore if identification of an unnamed agent in an incantation is achievable; and if so, what would be the methodological means of establishing the identification. The first part of the paper will briefly introduce the main features of Kalevala-metric incantations and Kalevala-meter more generally. After that, I will move to discuss the dataset and methodology. These will be followed by the analysis and conclusion.

KALEVALA-METRIC POETRY

The term 'Kalevala-metric poetry' embraces an oral-poetic system practiced by various linguistically related Finnic groups. The poetic form was shared by Finns, Estonians, Ingrians, Karelians, Setos, Votes, and Ingrian-Finns. Likely established during the first centuries of the Common Era, it survived in everyday use in some areas,

such as Viena Karelia, until the advent of modernization after the First World War (Frog 2019b; Kallio 2011: 391; Kallio et al. 2017: 140–143; Kuusi et al. 1977: 62; see also Virtanen 1968). The name derives anachronistically from Elias Lönnrot's epic *The Kalevala* (1835, expanded edition in 1849; see Lönnrot 1999; 2005) and has become established in both popular and scientific discourse. Technically, Kalevala-meter is a trochaic tetrameter that has flexibility in the first foot. Verses are normally eight syllables long and placement of long and short syllables is rule governed. Other main characteristics include parallelism, alliteration, and tendency to place longer words toward the end of a line (Kuusi et al. 1977: 62–68; Leino 1986: 129–146; Frog & Stepanova 2011; Saarinen 2018).

KALEVALA-METRIC INCANTATIONS

In folklore studies, Kalevala-metric incantations have for quite some time been categorized as communicative or non-communicative (Piela 1983, 2010; Siikala 1980; 1986a; 1986b; 1992; 2002; for earlier scholarship, see, e.g., Krohn J. 1894; Krohn K. 1901; 1915, 10–40; 1917; Hästesko 1910;1918). These definitions include additional attributes, such as whether the incnations work mechanically/non-mechanically. Non-communicative incantations have come to be viewed as a form that was known and used in pre-modern Finnish and Karelian communities by the more general populace. The category is usually viewed as correlating with incantations that work 'mechanically'. These kinds of incantations are, in other words, seen as functioning mechanically when recited correctly and without special knowledge of the otherworld or ritual competence. Following example (1) demonstrates an assumed mechanical incantation:[1]

> (1)
> Kivutar kipujen eukko
> Kipuvaaran kukkulalla
> Helmojansa heiluttavi*s*

> Vaatettansa vaaputtav
> 5 Toivoessansa kipuja
> Kivut pani kinttahasen
>
> *Kivutar old lady of pains*
> *On the top of hill of pains*
> *Whirled her skirts*
> *Swayed her clothes*
> *As she hoped far pains*
> *She put pains in her mitten*
>
> (SKVR I$_4$: 515)[2]

As this incantation's verses show, it does not include any directives, verbs which, e.g., command or request (Karlsson 2021a), which would make it, in principle, communicative. The assumption is therefore that the incantation has been effective as such, when the correct formulae have been used.

Communicative incantations, on the other hand, have been approached as instruments of ritual specialists called the *tietäjät* (Siikala 2002a: ch.3; Frog 2019a: 236–238). *Tietäjä* (lit. he/she who knows; a knower, *pl.* tietäjät) is a Finno-Karelian ritual specialist of premodern rural societies (Haavio [1967] 2019: 314; Jauhiainen 1998: 134, type D1; Siikala 2002: 79–80). The main tasks of tietäjä were related with healing and sources of sustenance. While the areas of tietäjä's expertise regularly included protection from magical harm, performance of liminal rites, and causing magical harm, the most prominent task of a tietäjä was usually healing. The tietäjät when operating in different geographical locations and different times shared ritual techniques, mastery of incantations, and ability to enter a light motoric-trance, that did not involve the loss of consciousness. Additionally, the social role of a tietäjä entailed expectations and responsibilities of competence and conduct, which has led researchers to adopt the concept of the tietäjä institution as a social framework (Stark 2006: 163–223; 2009; Siikala 2002: 80–81; Tarkka 2013: 103–127; Frog 2019a: 233). The tietäjä institu-

tion began to break down after the advent of modernization around the First World War, although individual specialists continued to survive afterwards (Tarkka 2005: chapter 12).

A tietäjä is distinguished in their ability to engage in real-time connection with unseen agents and forces in a ritual context. The instruments used by a tietäjä are discursive tools, or knowledge objects, known as incantations (Frog 2019). In addition, a tietäjä was required to possess a hard *luonto*, or kind of dynamic spirit present in humans (Stark 2006: 262–66; Tarkka 2013: 111). In a ritual context, the specialist usually used additionally equipment assumed to have another kind of dynamic force in them. The equipment used often had parallels in incantations: for example, using a tool made of iron paralleled with the building of a magical fence made of iron during the incantation (Siikala 2002: 105). Communicative incantations include the direct address of unseen-agents and often describe the denizens and places of the otherworld. Below, a communicative incantation used in closing wounds caused by iron is presented. I have divided the incantation into three parts in order to make it more easily interpretable:

(2)
[Part I: Diagnosis]

Rauta raukka koite kuona
Kuin rauta ravon tekee
Terä hieno hilpasou
Miksi vestit veljeäsi
Hakkasit emosi lasta
Ois ollut puuta purraksesi
Kiven siäntä syyväkses
Hakata vesihakoja

Poor iron wretched slag
When iron makes a slit
Fine blade cuts
Why did you carve your brother
Why did you beat your mother's child
There would have been wood for you to bite

There would have been heart of iron for you to eat
There would have been water logs for you to beat

[Part II: Account of the mythic origin of the phenomenon]

Et sie silloin suuri ollut
Etkä ni kovin korea
Kuin silma suosta sotkettih
Vetelästä vellottih
Muan muasta muokattih
Kuin seisoit sepän pajassa
Olit hiili hinkalossa
Koprin mussassa muassa

You were not large then
Nor were you so beautiful
When you were kneaded from bog
When you were mixed from soggy [bog]
When you were molded from earth's mud
When you stood in the smith's forge
You were a coal in the furnace's mouth
Curled in black earth

[Part III: Request for aid]

Muarie emosi lapsi
Tule tänne tarvitessa
Suoreissa sukkasissa
Kepeissä kenkäsissä
Juo viinana vihasi
Oluona omat pahasi
Jott ei riuskais rinnallani
Jott ei päälläni pärise

Muarie child of your mother
Come here when needed
In smooth socks
In light shoes

Drink your wraths as spirit [alcohol]
Drink your wraths as beer
So that my chest would not blaze [in pains]
So that my head would not rattle

(SKVR I$_4$: 151)

As the example shows, the so-called communicative incantation differs from the non-communicative in various respects. The communicative text includes an etiological part, where the origin of iron is recounted. While similar accounts of mythic origins of phenomena are not a necessary part of a communicative incantation, they are closely connected with ritual specialist usage. Another feature separating the communicative incantation from non-communicative is the afore mentioned usage of directives.

The performer of the incantation issues directives in lines 18 and 21. The former of these is a request addressed to Virgin Mary, a positively aligned agent. The latter, on the other hand, aims to command the wound maker to withdraw its harms. Despite the scholarly division of Kalevala-metric incantations into above mentioned categories, the emic practices have likely been less easily placed into clearly delineated classes. For example, it is probable that the so-called communicative incantations have been used not only by ritual specialists. Hunting incantations, to name just one text-type, often include directives with non-human agents as their recipients, while they have been used also by non-specialists (see e.g., Siikala 2002: 82). Correspondingly, as I have discussed elsewhere, incantations used by the tietäjät and not including directives cannot automatically be assumed being mechanical. (Karlsson 2022: 37–47.)

SOURCES AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The material for this case study draws from the corpus of published Kalevala-metric poetry, *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot* (Ancient

Poems of the Finnish People; 1908–1948; 1997). SKVR comprises of 34 volumes, which include over 89, 000 texts of Kalevala-metric poetry, and has been completely digitized. In addition to SKVR, approximately 60, 000 texts remain unpublished in the archives of the Finnish Literature Society, Helsinki, Finland. The SKVR is a diplomatic edition, meaning its editorial principles are consistent and follow spellings and diacritic markings of the collectors. Abbreviations, notes, and other markings made by the collectors are also marked. (See e.g., Karlsson 2022: 26.) Additionally, the texts contain metadata about, e.g., the collector and informant, when available. The texts in SKVR are products of fieldwork, and have been amended and edited by the collectors. This means they do not necessarily reflect actual performance contexts (Saarinen 2018: 17–20). However, the focus here is on the textual features and their text-level effects on the uptake of the incantations. The data comprises of actual types, from which text-level indices are analyzable. The methodological view I employ here is that the material allows for different styles of reading and is suitable for answering the questions I pose (Anttonen 2014; Kalela 2000: 92; Wolf-Knuts 2020).

The incantations I analyze here are taken from a corpus originally compiled for earlier studies, where different research questions have been addressed (Karlsson 2021b; 2022). The total corpus comprises of 515 communicative incantations of varying length, and includes all of the communicative incantations recorded and published from Viena Karelia (excluding the parish of Vuokkiniemi[3]) 1820–1919. For the present case study, I have examined a set of 288 incantation texts. This number derives from my earlier work (Karlsson 2021b; 2022), where I inspected what actors appear in the incantations exhibiting so-called discursive justification: performer's means of stating a reason for request or command issued to a non-human agent. The question of unnamed agents in incantations not utilizing justification remains to be investigated in possible further studies, as time did not permit the analysis of additional data at this time. The dataset used here comprises of incantations of which I have sorted out the non-human agents present. From 288 total texts, I

will here analyze 39 incantations, in which I have discovered un-named agents (it should be noted that an incantation could possess both named and unnamed agents).

Map A: Viena Karelia

The methodology I have used applies meticulous close reading, sup-ported by accumulated knowledge of Kalevala-metric incantations and their characteristics (see also Karlsson 2022: 25; Piela 2010: 38). I have read the data and first identified text-segments where unnamed agents occur. Following this, I have evaluated the means of identifying the mentioned or addressed agent. Especially with category I have later in this paper dub 'contextual', I have checked my assumptions in the light of wider corpus and literature, and thus corrected my views when needed (see also Karlsson 2022b: 526–527, 532).

CATEGORIZATION OF THE DATA

The unnamed agents in the data occur in different segments of the incantations: the unidentified agent can appear in the very first directive of the incantation, or it can be addressed only in later verses. In addition, some texts, usually the shorter ones, can include only one addressed agent, while in some lengthier incantations unnamed agents occur with named actors.

I have identified three categories of means to recognize unnamed agents in the data. The categories are following (cf. Agha 2005: 44):

> Category A: Biographic-metrical identification
> Category B: Contextual identification
> Category C: Unidentifiable addressee

The category A, biographic-metrical recognition, describes cases where the identification of the actor bases occurrence of the agent's name, and furthermore on the surrounding text-structure. This kind of identification can occur various degrees of explicitness: as a part of metapragmatic evaluation by the informant or as a part of the verse structure of the incantation text itself. The total number of biographic-metrical identification tokens in the data is 59.

Category B is reserved for the contextual identification. This means that the identification of an actor relies on material extraneous to the current dataset. For example, if an unnamed agent occurs in a hunting incantation and no other cues for identification are present, it is in some cases possible to rely on larger number of texts to investigate if a named non-human agent appears in similar verse contexts. The total number of contextual tokens in the data is 19.

Category C includes in it the tokens where I was not able to make identification with adequate certainty. These kinds of cases are mainly situations where the unnamed agent is issued a directive in the very first line and no assisting cues are present. The incantations of this type in the data are mostly of the variable type, consisting of general healing verses. They are possibly fragments

of longer incantations, but that is difficult to assert with certainty. The total number of unidentifiable tokens is 6.

ANALYSIS OF THE CATEGORIES

I will start the examination of the categories with Category A, and the type where identification of the actor bases on the performer's explicit metapragmatic evaluation: a text-segment, where the performer evaluates and describes the performance of the incantation. Following example demonstrates the matter with an incantation where the informant's metapragmatic evaluation (here underlined) reveals the identity of else unnamed object of address:

(3)

Jos lapsessa$_A$ on joutava itkettäjä$_B$, niin otetaan kolme pintapärettä ja niistä tehään kolmella kynnyksellä viisikanta, yksi viisikanta aina kynnyksellä, toinen toisella kynnyksellä, kolmas kolmannella ja sittä ne viisikannat pannaan lapsen$_A$ kätkyveen vuoteitten alle ja siihen pannaan lapsi$_A$ nukkumaan, ja sanotaan että:

[If there is something$_B$ unjustifiable that makes the child$_A$ cry, you take three splinters made of pine and make from them a pentagram on three thresholds, one pentagram on the first threshold, second on the second threshold, third on the third threshold, and then you put the pentagrams into the child's$_A$ cradle under the linen, and you put the child$_A$ in there to sleep, and say thus:]

Makaa$_A$ kuin maatinsa
Veny$_A$ kuin vesihako
Elä$_A$ kuuntele kulkijoita$_B$
Elä$_A$ tutki tulijoita$_B$
<u>Niin sillä pääsee$_B$</u>

> Lie$_A$ like a ridgepole
> Stretch$_A$ like a water log
> Do not$_A$ listen to passers by$_B$
> Do not$_A$ study the new comers$_B$
> <u>With that you get rid of it$_B$</u>

(SKVR I4: 659)

Here, the subscripts $_A$ and $_B$ mark the child that the performer wants to release from the entity that makes them cry, and the entity itself, respectively. The notable issue is that the directives in the incantation's verses do not reveal *who* is addressed, should the performer's comments be removed. However, when the verses are examined in relation with the metapragmatic evaluation, the recipient becomes idenfiable via the text-structure: In the last sentence of the informant's commentary, the child$_A$ is placed to sleep. This is followed by the verses, where the recipient is told with metaphoric language to sleep peacefully (lie like a ridgepole, stretch like a water log). The biographical identification of the recipient is then formed by the combination of the text-segments.

The biographic identification functions also without performer's metapragmatic evaluation being present, however. I give example 4 below to demonstrate. The excerpt is from an origin of fire incantation: a text-type that often includes third person narrative describing the mythic origins of fire:

(4)

Löülüńi$_A$ kivoisten lämmin
Hiki$_B$ oñ vanhañ Väinämöiśen
Moarieñ makie maito$_B$
Hiki$_B$ on nuoren Joukahaisen
Mesi-leipä$_B$ Lemminkäisen
Mäne$_A$ šanon läpi lattien lioista
Läpi$_A$ šaunañ šammalista
Läpi$_A$ kiukaen kivistä
Miss oñ tulta$_C$ tuuvitettu

Vakavaista$_C$ vaivutettu
Peäll oñ taivośen ühekšäñ
Peällä kuuven kirja-kanneñ
Šisäššä šinervän uuheñ
Vaški-lampahañ vatšašša
Šieläpä tulta$_C$ tuuvitettih
Vakavaista$_C$ vaivutettih
Kultaśešša kätküöššä
Hopiaisissa hiihnoissa
Kirposi tuli-kipunat$_C$
Sitte poltti$_C$ moam porolla
Küpeńillä küüvätteli$_C$
Püörrütä pühät kipuśi$_C$
Pühät šakšet šammuttele$_C$
Puhät lainnehet lakase$_C$
Tunnen tuškanki lumoa
Vakavaiseñ$_C$ vaivutella

Warm steam$_A$ of the rocks
Sweat$_B$ is old Väinämöinen's
Sweet milk$_B$ is Virgin Mary's
Sweat$_B$ is young Joukahainen's
Nectary bread$_B$ is Lemminkäinen's
Go$_A$, I say, through the mud of the floor
Go$_A$ through the moss of the sauna
Go$_A$ through the stones of the sauna stove
Where has fire$_C$ been lulled
The quiet one$_C$ cradled
On top of nine heavens
On top of six many-colored lids
Inside of a blue ewe
In the stomach of a copper sheep
There was fire$_C$ lulled
The quiet one$_C$ cradled
In golden cradle
With silvery straps
Fire embers$_C$ loosened

> They$_C$ burnt the land with ash
> With sparks$_C$ ran through the land
> Turn back your$_C$ sacred pains
> Suppress your$_C$ sacred dregs
> Quit your$_C$ sacred waves
> I know also pain's spell
> To cradle the quiet one$_C$

(SKVR I$_4$: 323.1–26.)

The lack of metapragmatic evaluation by the performer necessitates identification of the object of the directives issued in lines six (*Go, I say through the mud of the floor*) and 22 (*Turn back your sacred pains*) by text-internal cues of the incantation. In both cases, the biographic identification relies on the preceding verses. Lines 1–5 describe the steam of the sauna with metaphoric language (e.g., sweat of Väinämöinen, demigod and hero often associated with water). The first five lines then establish the interpretative frame for the directive issued in line six. Similarly, the lines 9–21 talk about the origin of fire and havoc it caused when falling from sky to earth, and thus prepare the ground for the directive in line 22. The connecting factor is the way biographic (naming of the addressee) and metrical (text-structure) cues both participate in building the interpretative frame for the directives.

ANALYSIS OF CATEGORY B

In category B, the addressees requiring identification are interpretable only by referring to larger sets of material. Such cases are typically incantations of which the collector has omitted parts while writing them down, or texts which otherwise do not include cues for interpretation of the directives. In example (5), segments of the incantations have not been written down. The dashed line after the

first five verses of the excerpt is an editorial addition and marks the segment that has been omitted:

(5)
Sammu tuli$_A$ hiilihisi
Kätkete$_A$ kipunohisi
Porohisi peittelete$_A$
Jos et tuostana totelle$_A$
Vääjänne$_A$ väheäkänä

- - -

Hyistä kelkkoa vetävi$_B$
Jäistä talloa taluvi$_B$
Jäärekiä reutoavi$_B$
Hyyssä ilmat jäässä järvet
Ilman rinnat riittehessä
Hallassa hamehen helmat
Paian kaglus kalkkaroissa
Iho kaikki iljenessä
Käyös$_B$ hyytä Pohjolasta
Jäätä kylmästä kylästä
Hyytä hymmön ikkunasta
Jäätä kammon karsinasta
Alta kylmän kynnyshirren

Fire$_A$ die down to your coals
Hide$_A$ to your sparks
Cover$_A$ yourself with ashes
If you$_A$ do not obey that
If you$_A$ will not retreat even a little

- - -

Icy sled [unnamed$_B$] draws
Tramps$_B$ with an icy one
Hauls$_B$ an ice sled
Air is icy lakes are frozen
Air's breasts are in crusts of ice

Skirt's hems are in night frost
Shirt's collar is covered in beads of ice
All of skin is covered with ice
Go$_B$ fetch ice from Pohjola
Go$_B$ fetch ice from the cold village
Go$_B$ fetch ice from dusky window
Ice from the pen of fear
Ice from under the saddle beam sill

(SKVR I$_4$: 270.36–53.)

The text in question is falls into the same text-type examined in discussion of Category A, and is therefore an origin of fire incantation. This fact, along with the attributes assigned to the unnamed addressee, assists in determining the likely, if approximate, identity of the non-human agent. A short excerpt from another incantation of the same text-type looks like following:

(6)
Hyinen tytti$_A$ jäinen neiti
Hyistä kelkkoa vetäävi$_A$
Jäistä talloa taluuvi$_A$
Jäärekeä reutuoovi$_A$
Tulen$_B$ suuta sulkiessa$_A$
Panun$_B$ päätä painaessa$_A$
Tuos$_A$ hyytä Pohjolasta
Jäätä ilman ikkunalta

Frozen girl$_A$ icy maiden
Draws$_A$ an icy sled
Tramps$_A$ with an icy one
Hauls$_A$ an ice sled
When the mouth of fire$_B$ shall be closed
When the head of blaze$_B$ shall be pushed down
Bring$_A$ frost from Pohjola
Ice from the air's window.

(SKVR I$_4$: 250.100–107.)

A contextual comparison can then help to assign the identity of an unnamed agent, in this case likely an icy maiden. However, the slots for actors are most labile in terms of stability of the verse. This means that it may not be possible to assert with full certainty if the unnamed addressee identified by contextual cues is exactly the same. While the identity of actors of this kind can vary between e.g., icy maiden and mistress of Pohjola (see, e.g., SKVR I$_{4:}$ 323.27–29), the social status as a helper of the performer is arguably the same.

ANALYSIS OF CATEGORY C

The last of the categories I have formed based on the data is C, consisting of unidentifiable tokens. Following excerpt is recorded from a known *tietäjä* called Karhuńi Stepańie (see Niemi 1921: 31, 95) in 1911:

(7)

(Viijäh kipiehini aitojen perillä ta sielä mättähällä pessäh).

[*You take the patient behind fences and there you wash them on a tussock*].

Pese$_A$ puola$_B$ puhtahaksi
Ihalaksi ilman tuoma$_B$
Vaimon tuoma$_B$ valkieksi
Enämpi on emolla työtä
Liika vaiva vanhemmalla
Ennen kuin emolla sanon
Tahi virkan vanhemmalla
Mäne$_C$ tuska tuulen tiellä
Tauti$_C$ taivosen navalla
Tuulen tuuviteltavaksi
Ahavan ajeltaviksi

Wash$_A$ clean the lingonberry$_B$
[Wash] beautiful the one brought by air$_B$

>   *[Wash] white the one brought by wife*$_B$
>   *There is more work for the mother*
>   *Much hardship for the parent*
>   *Before I tell the mother*
>   *Or I tell the parent*
>   *Pain go*$_C$ *on wind's way*
>   *Illness go*$_C$ *to the top of heaven*
>   *[Where you will be] lulled by the wind*
>   *[Where you will be] driven by the breeze*
>
>   Akka sanoi: "Viime kesänä pieässin Trohkiman pojan, sillä
>   oli ilmasta tullut tulelmus."
>
>   [*The old woman said: "Last summer I healed son of Trohki-
>   ma, he had an illness caused by air."*]
>
>   (SKVR I$_4$: 596.)

The example (7) is a typical representative of the case of unidentifiable addressees in the data for a number of reasons. Firstly, the directive occurs in the first verse, thus offering no cues of identification based on the preceding lines. In addition, the metapragmatic evaluation of the performer offers no deictics or biographical individuation (Agha 2005: 42–45) on the recipient. This kind of cases differ from the contextually identifiable type in the way of including labile healing cliches (Siikala 2002: 105), for which direct counterparts are hard to determine. Even when the illness agent is identifiable in the text, the positively aligned unseen agent may remain unidentifiable (see e.g., SKVR I$_4$: 596). Examining the entire corpus of a performer can often help at least to form a hypothesis of the identity of an unnamed agent (Siikala 2002: 117). In the case of Karhuńi, even the other 22 incantations recorded from him (see Niemi 1921: 31) offer no sure hints. Similar lines are present in an incantation recorded from Karhuńi a few years later, in a case where the performer addresses "master of the earth" (*moan isäntä*) (SKVR I$_4$ 1709). However, there the context relates to livelihood and horses, not to healing.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding analysis, I have examined whether textual cues in Kalevala-metric incantations are able to help in identifying unnamed non-human agents the performer of the incantation addresses. I have established three analytical categories, which represent different ways of identifying the unnamed addressees present in the data. Based on the data at hand, the results show that close inspection of textual cues together with familiarization of the larger sets of texts can indeed help to establish identifications of varying strength. On the other hand, also the limitations of the method have been brought out, as some of the cases inspected remain unidentifiable.

On the grounds of this analysis, the biographic-metrical identification forms the most prominent category in the data. In this category, the identification of the unnamed agent(s) rise from the emergent meaning of the textual whole and its stylistic features, such as parallelism. In other words, the emergent metrical structure of the incantation guides and simultaneously limits the possible interpretations on the identification (see Agha 2005; 2007: 96; Tarkka 2017).

The category B, on the other hand, where the identification depends on what I call contextual factors, relies in great deal on the intertextual nature of the poetic system (Tarkka 2005; 2013). As a researcher, one must develop a kind of artificial competence in the tradition (Frog 2018: 27), where familiarization with the materials provides over time ability to identify lines indexing particular poems (Tarkka 2013: 90; Virtanen 1968: 55). At the same time, the contextual identification is in its part tied to the metrical structure of the texts.

Reasons for the difficulties of identifying some of the addressees (category C) vary. These cases in the data derive in great deal from the issues addressed above, such as occurrence of the directive segment in the very first line of the incantation, without preceding or following cues that would support interpretations. As with all of the data, source critical matters should also be considered. The ritual specialists are known often to have refused to be interviewed, and

could leave parts of their incantations undictated when talking to collectors (Frog 2019: 227–228; Siikala 2002: 76). It is then difficult to establish with certainty, how many of the texts in category C are incomplete. However, the aim here is not to reconstruct 'authentic' incantation texts, and investigation of the features that are present is sufficient in answering the questions posited.

The results of this case study are valid within a relatively small dataset. Nevertheless, I argue that the methodology based on the inspection of textual cues and emergent text-structures of incantations can be applied with larger data also from different geographical areas. Also to be solved is the methodology's applicability with other traditions, such as that of European charms.

NOTES

[1] All translations are my own. Punctuation and notes on spelling etc. made by the collector has been removed.

[2] SKVR stands for anthology Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot. Number I represents the first volume of the anthology, while the subscript numeral 4 stands for the fourth part of volume I. Following these markings, 515 marks the number given to the text. In some subsequent occurrences, numerals after the text's number mark the line numbers.

[3] Vuokkiniemi has not only undergone extensive research in recent years by Tarkka 2005 and 2013, but also boasts more incantations than rest of the parishes of Viena combined. On the principles of forming the research material see (Karlsson 2022a: 23–25).

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BIO

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OBITUARY

WILL RYAN (1937–2023)

On November 2nd, 2023, after a serious illness, William Francis Ryan, an outstanding researcher of Russian magical culture and written tradition, member of the British Academy, Doctor Honoris causa of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and the author of a number of monographs and of dozens of scientific articles, died at the age of 87. W. F. Ryan was involved with the ISNFR Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming since before it was formally founded, and he participated in international conferences organized by the Commitee, served on the editorial board of the journal *Incantatio* since the journal's first issue, and published his wonderful articles in *Incantatio*, as well as reviews of books written by his colleagues.

W. F. Ryan was born in London on April 13th, 1937, into a Catholic family of Irish descent. He began studying Russian in secondary school, and then continued with this while serving in the Royal Navy between 1956 and 1958, qualifying as a military translator. From 1958 to 1961, Ryan studied Ancient and Modern Russian language and literature at the University of Oxford (Oriel College). Among his teachers in Oxford were the outstanding linguist Boris Genrikhovich Unbegaun (1898–1973) and the great expert in Russian bibliography, John Simmons (1915–2001).

After graduating from university, Ryan was sent by the British Council for a year-long internship at Leningrad University. The

works of the young foreigner attracted favourable attention from Academician Dmitry Likhachev. During his stay in Leningrad, Ryan worked in archives and libraries and made numerous trips to explore manuscript collections in other cities.

Between 1963 and 1965, Ryan worked at Oxford University Press, where he took part in the preparation of a Russian-English dictionary. Following this, he joined the Museum of the History of Science at Oxford University, combining his museum work with teaching modern and medieval Russian literature and language. Between 1967 and 1976, Ryan taught Russian language and literature in the School of East European and Slavonic Studies at the University of London. From 1976 until his retirement in 2002, he was academic librarian at the Warburg Institute, University of London. From 2000, he was also a professor of Russian studies at the same institution.

In 1970, W. F. Ryan was awarded a doctorate for his dissertation 'Astronomical and Astrological Terminology in Old Russian Literature'. In 1977 he was elected a Member of the Society of Antiquaries. In 2000, William Francis Ryan was made a member of the British Academy. He served as president of The [British] Folklore Society between 2005 and 2008. For many years, Ryan was the editor-in-chief of two of the Warburg Institute series (the Warburg Colloquia and the Warburg Surveys and Texts), as well as editor-in-chief of the *Slavonic and East European Review*, a journal founded in 1922. Will also served as president of the Hakluyt Society, an organisation founded in 1846 to publish scientific materials on travel and geographical discovery, between 2008 and 2011.

Works by W.F. Ryan are noted for their rare combination of broad-mindedness and large-scale generalizations based on an excellent knowledge of sources with a penchant for careful, detailed analysis. Of his early works, particularly noteworthy are his study of an early Russian translation of the biography of Aristotle Diogenes Laertius (1968) and, especially, his 1971 work on the oriental twelve-year animal cycle in Old Russian manuscripts. The latter article clearly demonstrated the author's exceptional ability for scholarly research.

W. F. Ryan's main book (his *magnum opus*) is *The Bathhouse at Midnight. An Historical Survey of Magic and Divination in Russia*

(1999). In 2006, a Russian translation was issued by the *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* (New Literary Review) publishing house. The English original of the book and its Russian translation attracted many positive reviews in English, Russian, and other languages. In 2005, W. F. Ryan gave, with great success, a series of three lectures at the British Library, later published as a separate book, *Russian Magic at the British Library* (2006). The book consists of three chapters: 'William Ralston: Russian magic and folklore in England', 'Ivan the Terrible, Stoglav and Russian Magic', 'Travellers' Stories and Russian Magic'.

While still a young man, W. F. Ryan came across an ancient Russian manuscript in the Bodleian which contained a translation of *The Secret of Secrets*, a body of knowledge in the fields of politics, science, magic and fortune-telling. Beginning in 1965, he published a series of works devoted to this extremely complex text, the language of which is difficult even for those scholars who are skilled in Old Church Slavonic.

In addition to publishing individual articles, W. F. Ryan served as publisher and co-principal author of two collections of multilingual versions of *The Secret of Secrets* in a series published by the Warburg Institute. Together with Professor Moshe Taube of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, he prepared a critical edition of *The Secret of Secrets* with a historical introduction and a translation into English. This was published in 2019. In this edition, we find not only the exemplary publication of a Slavic text of a most complex kind, but also sections relating to Hebraic studies, prepared by a highly qualified specialist, that are of exceptional value.

The range of interests of W. F. Ryan was extremely wide, and covered not only the Russian magical tradition in the entire spectrum of its manifestations, ancient Russian literature, notes from travellers about Russia, relations between Russia and England in different historical periods, but also the history of science, instrument making, and maritime affairs.

The phenomena of Russian culture were considered by W. F. Ryan against a broad comparative background, fully aware of their sources in the culture of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages,

as well as parallels in the countries of central and western Europe. Of particular importance is his conceptual article on whether Russia was an exception to the witch craze of early modern times (1998).

The death of W. F. Ryan is an irreparable loss; we will not be able to fully appreciate it immediately. We express our sincere condolences to the family and friends of the deceased, his colleagues and students, and to all admirers of his research works. His works are destined to have a long life.

To the bright memory of this great scholar!

A. L. Toporkov, A. V. Chernetsov

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THE NATURE OF THE SOURCES: AN INTERVIEW WITH ANDREY TOPORKOV

Abstract: In the second of our continuing series of interviews with charms researchers about their scholarly life and work, we present an interview with Andrey Toporkov conducted remotely (by e-mail) early in 2022 (subsequently updated in late 2023) by Jonathan Roper, who also made the translation from Russian. Andrey Toporkov is one of the earliest members of the Committee for Charms, Charmers and Charming, having first attended our meetings in London in 2005. Since then, he has been a familiar figure at our conferences. He is a Doctor in Philology, a lead researcher at the Department of Folklore at the A.M. Gorky Institute of World Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences. He is also a professor and a corresponding-member of Russian Academy of Sciences.

When do you first become aware of verbal charms? And when did you first consider them as a possible object of study?

My first acquaintance with charms took place in my student years, when in 1979–1984 I was a member of the Polesian ethno-linguistic expedition led by academician N. I. Tolstoy. The main body of the expedition was formed from the researchers from the Institute of Slavic and Balkan Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (now the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences) and students at the University of Moscow. I myself was

living in Leningrad at the time and joined the company quite by chance. The object of our research was Polesia, the border regions of Ukraine and Belarus, where many archaic rites and beliefs were still current at that time. We made descriptions of family, calendar and household ceremonies, beliefs connected with cattle breeding, house building, weaving, cooking, folk demonology, representations about nature. Attention was also paid to folklore, in particular to magic formulas uttered before going to bed, before going on a long journey, traditional swearwords, etc. The expedition was interdisciplinary in nature, and the adjective 'ethnolinguistic' implied that special attention was given to dialect words and phrases. Among the materials we collected were a large number of charms.

Later I returned repeatedly to verbal charms I had first recorded during the expedition and studied them from a historical-literary and comparative perspective, using data from various ethnic traditions. In 2003, Tatyana Agapkina, Elena Levkievskaya and I co-published a book *Polesia Charms (in the records from 1970–1990s)*[1].

The fact that for the first time I encountered charms in their real life, rather than in scholarly publications, turned out to be important for me in many ways. When we record charms in a natural setting, we perceive them as an organic part of the ritual process. We are dealing with a living performer who recites a charm to solve some real problem of their own, related to health and illness, personal relationships with others, attempts to protect themselves from evil forces or to do evil to another person, etc. In the situation of ritual process, not only the text of the charm is important, but also the time and circumstances of its utterance, and additional material attributes, gestures, facial expressions. All this is practically inaccessible or not available at all to researchers who deal with charms preserved in manuscripts or published in academic works.

In some scholarly traditions. charms are studied primarily by anthropologists and folklorists using material from living traditions gained by empirical observation, while in others scholarly traditions, charms are generally studied by medievalists, who deal with ancient manuscripts. It is clear that this situation is a result of the nature of the sources: in some countries charms were recorded in writing

relatively late, but a living tradition of verbal magic survived up till the twentieth century; in others, charms and non-canonical prayers were present in medieval manuscripts, but they had fallen out of circulation by the twentieth century. Besides, this difference is not only present in the nature of the available source material, but also in the understanding of the object being study: the anthropologist looks at the human being and his needs, so the text is considered in terms of the functions it performs; the historian-medievalist works with manuscripts, so it is the text recorded there that becomes the main subject of his attention.

In Russia, the situation is of an intermediate nature. On the one hand, a rich oral tradition of charms was preserved until the beginning of the twentieth century, but on the other hand, large-scale recording of them began relatively late – only from the second quarter of the seventeenth century. In an earlier period, there were magic texts written on birch bark and apocryphal prayers similar to charms were to be found in prayer books and miscellanies of varied composition. When I later started to work with manuscript charms, I saw them not only as written texts, but also as a part of integral ritual situation.

A story I heard in the Ukrainian Polesia in 1981 made a strong impression upon me. An elderly woman in the village of Vystupovichi, in the Ovruch district of Zhytomyr region, told me how she had been bewitched in her youth. It was done by a neighbour, who wanted to cast a spell on his daughter and her husband, and decided to 'practice' it first on my informant. He was much older than her and did not arouse any particular affection in our heroine, nevertheless, she fell passionately in love with him.

The climax of the story was as follows. The narrator was mowing grass and her neighbour was also mowing nearby. "And I can't live without him!", she tells me. So she calls out to him and when he comes up, she shouts: "Why did you make me love you?!", and punches him in the face. The neighbour intercepts her hands and laughs into her eyes. "And I love him!", the woman explains again. And so they roll, hugging across the field. She kisses him passionately, but all the while he is holding her hands, because otherwise

she would kill him. Then the woman was long repelled by her abuser. And I particularly remember her concluding words, in which she formulated a kind of love philosophy: "And that's the way it's always been. And you spit on him, and he is the only sun in the world for you". Subsequently, I read a lot about the love magic of different peoples and wrote several articles about love charms myself, but I still remember my impression from this story, which I heard from a simple village woman and which had a strange decadent flavour.

What were your earliest publications in the field of charms studies? Were charms generally a popular topic in those days or were they seen as a trivial topic?

The first article, devoted to incantations, was written by me and Tatiana Agapkina was called 'On the reconstruction of pre-Slavonic incantations'[2]. The article deals with a specific charm for insomnia in children, known to various Slavic peoples and the Romanians, and documented in the Medieval Latin *Summa de confessionis discretione*. We conducted a structural-semiotic analysis of different versions of this charms and established its invariant, which may go back to the Proto-Slavic era. Thirty years later, we wrote another article on this same type of charm, making use of new material that had been published in various countries over the intervening decades[3].

It should be said that for about 70 years, from 1918 to 1988, charms and magical practices in our country went almost unstudied, and the relevant handwritten and field materials were not published. Through this entire period not a single work was published on charms, and no more than a total of ten articles on the subject were published. Everything that had to do with folk religiosity and magical practices was practically taboo in the Soviet Union. The situation began to change only at the end of 1980's, when Perestroika began. In the field of studies of magical folklore, the scientific conference 'Ethnolinguistics of text: Semiotics of small forms of folklore' held at the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1988 played an important role. Extended versions of the reports made at the conference, and other articles subsequently formed the

contents of the collection *Studies in the field of Baltic-Slavic spiritual culture: Charms*[4].

Over the past three decades, the situation in the field of publishing and studying charms in the Russian Federation has changed beyond recognition. By the 'pendulum principle' or 'swing principle', topics that could not be dealt with in the Soviet Union have become particularly popular in the post-Soviet period, not only among researchers, but also with the general public. Dozens of single-author monographs and edited collections devoted to charms have appeared, many philologists have written their doctoral and post-doctoral work on the topic, and the number of articles on the subject is now in the hundreds. There are dozens of editions which have published texts of charms recorded during Soviet and post-Soviet expeditions, as well as manuscript charms extracted from various archives. All in all, the number of Russian charms available to the researcher today is many times greater than the number of charms that were known before 1991.

But is it right that your [equivalent of a] doctoral work was not on charms? What factors led to your change of interests?

Although I was recording charms on expeditions since the late 1970's and devoted several articles and reports to them, I only began to study this topic thoroughly in the late 1990's, after I defended my doctoral dissertation on another topic. In 1997, I published the monograph *The Theory of Myth in Russian Philological Science of the 19th Century*[5]; in 1998 I defended this monograph as a doctoral dissertation. It was after that, that I decided to take on a new topic, because the previous topic I had previously dealt with was basically exhausted by my PhD thesis. I opted for charms and decided to write a study on charms in the Russian manuscript tradition.

It should be said that in the last decades of the twentieth century, historians were mainly engaged with Russian charms in manuscripts. Together with them, we prepared the collection *Forsaken Reading in Russia in the 17th–18th Centuries*[6]. Later, I wrote the monograph *Spells in the Russian Handwritten Tradition of the*

15th—19th Centuries: History, Symbolism, Poetics[7] and prepared a collection of handwritten texts for publication, extracted mainly from various archives in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kyiv: *Russian Spells from Manuscript Sources of the 17th to the first half of the 19th century*[8].

Has charms typology been an interest in your work?

One of the areas of our research is the experience of identifying and describing the main structural and semantic types of the Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian and some other Slavic and non-Slavic covenants. In the early 2010s, Tatyana Agapkina and I formulated a programme to create an index of eastern Slavic charms and an international charms index.[9]

In 2014, we published a structural and functional index in which we gave a systematic description of ten types of oral and four types of handwritten charms of Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians: *East Slavic Charms: Materials for the functional index of plots and motifs. Annotated Bibliography*[10]. A few years before that I wrote a monograph in which I studied Russian charms, mainly love and social ones, from a historical-typological angle[11], and Tatiana Agapkina has dedicated a special monograph to the typology of healing incantations[12]. We have studied at a pan-European level the Second Merseburg charm[13]. In a collective monograph on the so-called Sisinius Legend, we have examined the history of this story type over a period of about one and a half thousand years (from the 4th century to the 20th century) on a vast territory of Asia, Africa and Europe [14], and see also[15]].

Note that the project we have developed to create an international charms index requires the co-operation of scholars from different countries studying different traditions of verbal magic. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, such a project is unlikely to be realized in our time. Obviously, an international charms index can only be created after the indexes for separate traditions have been completed, on the basis of shared methodological guidelines, so that the indexes of the repertoire of different traditions are compatible with one other. In this respect, the fact that our theoretical developments

and programmes are somewhat ahead of our practical possibilities seems to us somewhat inevitable. I would like to emphasise that the idea of creating such an index does not in any way contradict other approaches in charms studies, such as the creation of databases and digital libraries, the assembling of archival collections and field materials on the internet, the preparation of bilingual editions, etc. By the way, in parallel with our work on the index of East Slavic charms, I participated in the creation of a database of charms from the Russian North, which is available online[16].

What are your own future plans in your charms research?

Several years ago, I wrote a large book devoted to the interaction of oral and book traditions in Russian culture. The book covers a wide period from Ancient Russia to the twentieth century. There are dedicated chapters on the poetics of Russian charms preserved in manuscripts of the seventeenth century, on the use of charms by some Russian writers of the twentieth century, etc. The book also contains theoretical chapters devoted to the questions of studying early records of folklore. The problem is that in compiling the book I used my articles written at different times. When I put them together, it turned out that each of these articles needed to be refined in the light of the new relevant literature that had appeared in the meantime. So I decided not to publish the book straightaway, but to keep working on it. However, because of new projects I have not yet found the time to finalize and publish it. I hope to do so in the future.

Between 2003 and 2011, I led expeditions to the Russian North, during which we managed to collect a large amount of folklore materials, including charms. Some of these records have already been published, but in the future I would like to publish those materials, which are still held in the archive. At present I am working on a short book with the working title *Alexander Blok's Poetry of Charms: Folklore Sources and Literary Environment*. The book is dedicated to the great Russian poet Alexander Blok (1880–1921) and his original article *The Poetry of Charms and Spells* (1906), which he wrote for the *History of Russian Literature* (1908). This book publishes the

manuscript edition of Blok's article, together with an extensive commentary and a study devoted to the article's folkloric sources and the question the understanding and use of charms in the literature of Russian modernism. The main idea of the book is that 'The Poetry of Charms and Spells' is an esoteric text that contains a secret meaning which has not yet been noticed by the Blok's readers and those who research his work

Another project that I have been working on for many years is connected to the study of the folklore publications of Ivan Sakharov (1807–1863). Sakharov's folklore collections were extremely popular in Russia in the 1830's and 1840's, but it later emerged that Sakharov was a forger, who reworked folklore texts and composed peculiar literary production with a basis in folklore. I consider Sakharov's forgeries in the broader context of eighteenth and nineteenth century folklore forgeries, as a kind of semi-literary/semi-folklore creation. I also give much attention to charms, because Sakharov was the first to publish Russian charms and the texts he composed have subsequently been republished many times, and even interpreted by scholars as a legacy of deep pagan antiquity. Probably, my book will be called *I. P. Sakharov in the History of Russian Folkloristics*, but maybe I will think of some more attractive title.

At present, Tatyana Agapkina and Alexandra Ippolitova and I are also preparing another edition of Russian charms from the archives in Moscow, St Petersburg, and several other cities. While my 2010 edition included mostly texts from the seventeenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the new book will be dedicated to the later tradition of the middle and second half of the nineteenth century. It will be published in two volumes. The first, prepared by Tatyana Agapkina, had already been published[17]. The second volume, which we are prepared with Alexandra Ippolitova, should appear at the start of 2024.

I am fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in several projects in parallel, as I work at the Institute for World Literature at the Russian Academy of Sciences, I can choose my own research topics, and am not obliged to do anything else but my projects. Until 2019, I was also teaching at the Russian State University for

the Humanities, but then I decided that I would only work in my academic institute and try to see my projects through to completion. During the pandemic, I have been forced to keep my participation in various conferences and seminars to a minimum and, to be honest, I enjoy reading and writing books more than lecturing and delivering papers. I can also add that I am not only a folklorist, but also a literary critic, and it is psychologically difficult for me to deal only with charms for a long period. Moreover, I cannot imagine myself studying only charms for decades. Therefore I try to alternate these topics with the study of some historical-literary themes. As I have loved the poetry of Alexander Blok since my youth, I feel great interest in writing a book about him.

Please could you tell us more about Tatyana Agapkina and her work?

My wife, Tatyana Agapkina, works at the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences and also at the Indrik publishing house. We met in 1980 at the Polesia expedition and got married in 1985, and in 1986 we had a son, Cyril. Tatiana is a doctor of philological sciences, author of the monographs *The Ethnographic links of calendar songs. Spring Meetings in the rites and folklore of the East Slavs*[18]; *The Mytho-poetic basis of the Slavic folk calendar. The Spring and Summer Cycle* [19]; *East Slavic Healing Charms in a Comparative Light*[20]; *Trees in Slavic folk tradition*[21], *Charms from Archival Sources (vol.1: c18th–the first third of the c20th)*[17]. We wrote dozens of articles together, prepared several books and co-authored one book.

How do you assess the activities and the meetings of the Committee and how they might be improved?

Our Committee brings together excellent researchers from a variety countries. Every conference the Committee holds is a real scholarly event. In 2011 we held such a conference in Moscow and on this ocassion we published a collection of proceedings[22]. Aside from the members of the Committee, many Russian colleagues also took part

in this conference. Similar conferences, held at different times in England, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, and elsewhere, allowing us to gain an idea of different scholarly schools and research traditions, and to expand the range of our professional contacts.

I think that in the time between conferences we might hold online seminars (e.g. once a month or once every two months). At these seminars, we could share information about new books and projects, hear and discuss research papers, and discuss articles for *Incantatio*. A bibliography of charms research is available on the Commitee's website.[23] It would be desirable to update this bibliography, say, every two years. It would be useful to post information on conferences close to us thematically, and on new publications in our field. As far as I understand, the website of the Committee is not currently being updated, which, of course, is very disappointing. We could, for instance, create an electronic library of scholarly publications on charms and charms studies, and place it on our website. It would also be a good idea to broaden the membership of the Committee to include young researchers.

PUBLICATIONS MENTIONED IN THE INTERVIEW

[1] Agapkina, T. A., E. E. Levkievskaya, and A. L. Toporkov 2003 (comp., eds., commentaries). *Polesskie zagovory (v zapisjah 1970–1990-h gg.)* [Polesia Charms (in the records from 1970-1990s).] Moscow: Indrik.

[2] Agapkina, T. A. and A. L. Toporkov 1990. K rekonstrukcii praslavjanskih zagovorov [On the reconstruction of pre-Slavonic incantations]. In: Putilov, B. N. (ed.), *Fol'klor i etnografiya: Problemy rekonstrukciy faktov tradicionnoy kul'tury* [Folklore and ethnography: Problems of reconstruction of facts of traditional culture.] Leningrad: Nauka, pp. 68-75.

[3] Agapkina, T. and Andrey Toporkov 2020. The Structure and Genesis of One Type of Magic Spell against Children's Insomnia among Slavic Peoples. In: *The Electronic Journal of Folklore* 79: 35-46.

[4] Ivanov. V. V. and Sveshnikova, T. N. (eds.) 1993. Issledovanija v oblasti balto-slavjanskoj duhovnoj kul'tury: Zagovor [Studies in the field of Baltic-Slavic spiritual culture: Charms.] Moscow: Nauka.

[5] Toporkov A.L. 1997. *Teorija mifa v russkoj filologičeskoj nauke XIX veka* [*The Theory of Myth in Russian Philological Science of the 19th Century.*] Moscow: Indrik.

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[8] Toporkov, A. L. 2010. *Russkie zagovory iz rukopisnyh istochnikov XVII — pervoj poloviny XIX v.* [Russian Spells from Manuscript Sources of the 17th to the first half of the 19th century.] Moscow: Indrik.

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[10] Agapkina, T. A. and A. L. Toporkov. 2014. V*ostochnoslavjanskie zagovory: Materialy k funkcional'nomu ukazatelju sjuzhetov i motivov. Annotirovannaja bibliografija* [East Slavic Charms: Materials for the functional index of plots and motifs. Annotated Bibliography.] Moscow: Indrik.

[11] Toporkov, A. L. 2005. *Zagovory v russkoy rukopisnoy tradiciy XV—XIX vv.: Istoriya, simvolika, poetika* [Spells in the Russian handwritten tradition of the 15th–19th centuries: History, symbolism, poetics.] Moscow: Indrik.

[12] Agapkina, T. A. 2010. *Vostochnoslavyanskie lechebnye zagovory v sravnitel'nom osvescheniy. Syuzhetika i obraz mira* [East Slavic healing spells in a comparative light. The plot and image of the world.] Moscow: Indrik.

[13] Agapkina T., Karpov, V., and Toporkov, A. 2013. The Slavic and German Versions of the Second Merseburg Charm. In: *Incantatio* 3: 43-59.

[14] Toporkov, A. L. (ed.) 2017. *Sisinieva legenda v fol'klornyh i rukopisnyh tradiciyah Blizhnego Vostoka, Balkan i Vostochnoj Evropy* [The legend of Sisinnius in the folklore and manuscript traditions of the Middle East, the Balkans and Eastern Europe.] Moscow: Indrik.

[15] Toporkov, A. 2019. St Sisinnius' Legend in Folklore and Handwritten Traditions of Eurasia and Africa (Results and Perspectives of the Research). In: *Studia Litterarum,* 4 (2): 312–341.

[16] *Zagovory Oloneckoj i Arhangel'skoj guberniy* [Spells of the Olonets and Arkhangelsk provinces.] < http://ethnomap.karelia.ru/charm_source.shtml>

[17] Agapkina, T. A. 2023. *Zagovory iz arhivnyh istochnikov XVIII – pervoj treti XIX v.* [Charms from Archival Sources (vol.1: c18th–the first third of the c20th) v 2 t. T. 1. Moscow: Indrik.

[18] Agapkina, T. A. 2000. *Etnograficheskie svjazi kalendarnyh pesen. Vstrecha vesny v obrjadah i fol'klore vostochnyh slavjan* [The Ethnographic links of calendar songs. Spring Meetings in the rites and folklore of the East Slavs.] Moscow: Indrik.

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[20] Agapkina, T. A. 2010. *Vostochnoslavjanskie lechebnye zagovory v sravnitel'nom osveschenii: Sjužetika i obraz mira* [East Slavic Healing Charms in a Comparative Ligh]. Moscow: Indrik.

[21] Agapkina T. A. 2019. *Derev'ja v slavyanskoj narodnoy tradiciy: Ocherk*i [Trees in Slavic folk tradition]. Moscow: Indrik.

[22] Mikhailova, Tatyana, Jonathan Roper, Andrey Toporkov, and Dmitry Nikolayev 2011. Oral Charms in Structural and Comparative Light. In: Proceedings of the Conference of the International Society for Folk *Narrative Research's* (ISFNR) Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming. 27-29th October 2011. Moscow: PROBEL-2000.

[23] *ISFNR Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming* < http://isfnr.org/committee-on-charms-charmers-and-charming.php>

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BIO

Jonathan Roper works as a folklorist at the University of Tartu. His publications in the field of charms studies include the authorship of *English Verbal Charm*s (Folklore Fellows' Communications no.288) and the editorship of *Charms and Charming in Europe* (2004) and *Charms, Charmers and Charming* (2008). He was the guest editor of the inaugural issue of Incantatio, and managing editor of the eighth number.

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BOOK REVIEW

Tuukka Karlsson, 2022. *Come Here You Are Needed: Registers in Viena Karelian Communicative Incantations.* PhD Dissertation. Helsinki: University of Helsinki. ISBN 978-951-51-7800-8 (pbk.), ISBN 978-951-51-7801-5 (PDF)

Something rather magical seems to be happening at the University of Helsinki, for new doctoral dissertations concerning charms and charming practices have been popping up like mushrooms lately – and others are on their way.[1] One such dissertation is that by Dr. Tuukka Karlsson, who successfully defended his thesis on Viena Karelian incantations earlier this year. Needless to say, how very delighted I am to share some of my thoughts concerning Tuukka's work.

It is a somewhat rare treat to read a study on charms which uses methodology both qualitative and quantitative. Karlsson's thesis, *Come Here You Are Needed: Registers in Viena Karelian Communicative Incantations*, does exactly this. The work consists of three peer reviewed articles, published in three different journals.[2] While traditionally monographs have been the usual form for a PhD thesis within arts and humanities, recently we have started to see the rise of the article-based thesis. Regardless of the form chosen, a thesis should always include new academic research. With their thesis, the researcher will be able to demonstrate their critical thinking skills, knowledge of their academic field and their use of methodology. It goes without saying that the results of the investigation should be

well argued and academically convincing, as the doctoral thesis serves as a calling card when entering the world of scholarship.

Karlsson's thesis is a splendid example of an article-based thesis which benefits from a well narrowed focus. As is usual, in addition to the published articles, Karlsson has included a summary of his research as an introduction to his thesis. The summary presents the background for the study, the methods used, the data analyzed, the results of the study as well as further ideas how to apply the results in the future.

In his summary, Karlsson briefly describes why he has chosen to use the term *incantation* instead of the household term *charm*. Karlsson mentions that incantations "may be considered a sub-type of charms" (37). According to Karlsson, use of term "incantation is deeply rooted in Finnish research, where it corresponds to the term *loitsu*" (33). He further notes that although "incantations are often referred to as verbal charms in much international scholarship today, verbal charm describes a much broader category that including texts that are written and read". Ultimately, Karlsson explains, his "use of the term is ultimately rooted in its position in Finnish scholarship", but he also considers "it better suited to the material than the more general terms charm and verbal charm" (33).

Talking of terminology is like opening the famous Pandora's box but it is also crucially important, especially in a thesis. *Loitsu* is indeed the term which Finnish researchers use when talking about charms. It derives from the verb *loitsia* which means to charm, to pray, to curse, to insult etc. The verb was already known to Mikael Agricola, who is thought to be the father of the Finnish language. The term *loitsu* was often used by researchers in the titles of various charms, although ordinary people used terms like *sanat* (lit. 'words') or *luku* (the word can be translated as 'a reading', 'a number' or 'a chapter'; the Finnish verb for 'reading' is *lukea*). Charms describing the origin of a phenomenon were called *synty* (lit. 'birth').

Karlsson is correct in stating that in international scholarship the term *charm* is used more than *incantation*. To my knowledge, both terms have been variously used by Finnish scholars while writing about Finnish charms in English.[3] Both words have their

origins in Latin, charm derives from *carmen* ('song', 'incantation'), incantation from the word *incantare*, 'enchant'. Both words include the idea of a speech act, although *charm* can of course also indicate a physical object. It would have been interesting to learn more of the (possible) differences between *charm* and *incantation*, as well as to read further reasoning behind Karlsson's decision to use the term *incantation*.

The first of Karlsson's articles, 'Register features in Kalevala-metric incantations', presents a case study the aim of which is to "reach for a more nuanced view of registers operating within a ritual genre" (2021a: 40). Karlsson begins his investigation with the hypothesis that differently evaluated non-human agents are addressed in different registers, that is, that the supporting agents of a ritual specialist would be addressed differently than hostile actors. While this may sound like a given, Karlsson pays special attention to directive verbs, particle use, the optative mood and justification (verses directed at an agent, which give a reason for the speaker's request) present in the texts. The data analysed is taken from the published edition of roughly 87 000 Kalevala-metric texts, *Suomen Kansan Vanhat Runot*, or 'Ancient Poems of the Finnish People'. Karlsson narrows his study by a particular text-type category. Thus, he sets out to investigate a text known as the Origin of Fire. The resulting data constitutes of 46 texts, the earliest of which was documented in 1829 and the latest in 1915. The texts range in length from 22 to 216 lines, totaling up to 3449 lines in the analysis. Incantations which deal with origins "include a presentation of the mythic origins of fire or other phenomena, thus presenting a vernacular incantation ideology that knowledge of the origins of a phenomenon yields control over it" (2021a: 43). These incantations were mostly used for healing purposes.

Karlsson states that he handles "genre and register as complementary concepts" (2021a: 42). He treats genre as "a set of prototypical features, which guide both the production and reception of texts of a socially recognizeable type in situated performances" (2021a, 42). The concept of register has here been adapted from linguistic anthropology. According to Karlsson, a "linguistic register is similar

to a genre in that it is constituted of a variety of usable linguistic signs and grammatical forms that index social identities … or situations of interaction" (2021a: 45). Karlsson reviews all the verbs and the use of particles quantitively. His purpose is to consider possible differences in their usage between requests and commands. He then performs an analysis of characterization of addressees which aims at defining agents as either sympathetic or hostile to the speaker. According to Karlsson, his "analysis provides a point of departure for further discussion about oral poetry's registers within an incantation genre" (2021a: 51). After careful scrutiny, Karlsson concludes that the "results show that, in this data, the performers seem to conceive different register usages as social situations in ritual action. These situations are related to agents, which are addressed in incantations, and the evaluations of these agents as either positive or negative" (2021a: 52).

The second article, 'Discursive Registers in Finno-Karelian Communicative Incantations', continues from where the first article ended. In his first article, Karlsson considered the use of moderative suffixes in incantations and their possible role as indexes of moderation in directive discourse segments. He found that "suffixes were unlikely to play a significant role in indexing moderation towards positively evaluated non-human actors, and suffixal variation could be more feasibly accounted for as motivated by poetic meter" (2021b: 325) – an outcome which I personally found very interesting indeed and which gives food for thought when thinking of other traditions as well! However, according to Karlsson, "discursive justification was observed to be connected in some cases with positively but not negatively evaluated agents, which led to the hypothesis of justification as a moderative device" (2021b: 325).

Thus, the second study explores the question of how discursive justification functions as a moderative instrument by examining the usage of justification in addressing different types of actors. The data are again taken from the *Ancient Poems of the Finnish People*. In addition, Karlsson has delimited his analysis to incantations in which directive utterances are present. Thus, the analysis consists of 515 incantation texts. The regional focus is on the parishes of Viena

Karelia. Karlsson has decided to exclude the parish of Vuokkiniemi from his analysis for two reasons: the parish of Vuokkiniemi boasts more incantation texts than all the other parishes combined and it has been subject to comprehensive evaluation rather recently.[4] While the justification seems reasonable, it is nevertheless a shame, since the exclusion may have an adverse effect on the results, and also because the previous work done in the area does not include similar considerations which Karlsson presents.

For his analysis, Karlsson coded the data on the basis of the categories contained within the discursive units. In short, the analysis revealed that "discursive justification occurs in different forms in relation to differently aligned agents" (2022: 64). What is (perhaps) surprising is the fact that justification also occurred with directives used with negatively evaluated agents. In these cases, however, "the justifications focused on the benefit to the negative actor, not to the performer or patient" (2022: 64).

Karlsson's third article, 'Connection of Viena Karelian ritual specialists to communicative and origin incantations' shifts the focus from the registers associated with the Finno-Karelian ritual specialists (*tietäjät*) to the testing of the established view that certain discursive practices index the persona of a *tietäjä*. According to Karlsson, in Finnish Folklore Studies, communicative incantations have regularly been assumed to be tools of the *tietäjä*, an assumption which Karlsson sets out to probe, again with the aid of the *Ancient Poems of the Finnish People*.[5] As before, Karlsson makes a difference between communicative and non-communicate incantations. Communicative incantations aim to be in direct contact with the otherworld (and were considered to be tools of a *tietäjä*), whereas non-communicative incantations were considered to be common knowledge and could be used by anyone. These mechanical incantations were not intended to establish a connection with the otherworld but instead relied on the correct recitation of the charm. In addition, Karlsson stresses that communicative incantations include a directive utterance that requests or commands the assumed addressee.

In addition to communicative incantations, Karlsson has decided to include another type of incantations in his study, namely the

origin incantations (*syntyloitsut*). These were charms that were likewise considered to be a part of a *tietäjä*'s tool kit. They include an etiological narrative in which an illness or a harm first appears in the world. This was thought to be the most fundamental type of knowledge. Both incantation types that Karlsson has decided to include in his analysis have long been connected with the *tietäjä* institution within Folklore Studies. According to Karlsson, while there is nothing inherently wrong with this view, it has never been tested empirically.

Karlsson thus reviewed incantations identified with named informants and assessed whether they qualified as communicative or origin incantations and then whether the named informant was identified as a *tietäjä*. Karlsson has a very approachable way of describing the steps of his analysis and explaining the possible problems therein. For example, some informants were considered to be *tietäjä*, but they did not give any incantations to the collectors at all. According to Karlsson, examining the original manuscripts and collectors' notes could have possibly help to shed light on why this was the case but this was not possible due to the tight schedule of his research. This is a shame, and something that Karlsson will hopefully study more in the future.

After a detailed analysis, Karlsson comes to the conclusion that the connection between the *tietäjät* and communicative incantations is not quantitively very strong compared to non-specialists. On the other hand, with origin incantations, the correlation is surprisingly strong. While Karlsson freely admits the challenges in his method, and the fact that the case is both historically and culturally specific, he nonetheless hopes that the method could be used more widely for instance in research on European verbal magic and users of magic. While it is impossible to know whether his method is readily applicable in such studies, it is nevertheless always a commendable endeavour to question the received wisdom and critically examine views that have been taken for granted.

Karlsson has made the conscious decision to leave out the international scholarship on charms, and decided to concentrate instead on the Finnish research tradition. This is a pity, for new avenues

of thought are always opened up with comparative research. It would have been interesting to see, for instance, whether Karlsson sees any parallels between his division of certain charm units (p. 57) and those made by scholars such as Lea Olsan and Francisco Alonso-Almeida.[6] Likewise, other traditions also include ritual specialists and it would have been interesting to see whether the social expectations of competence, as well as responsibility and conditions of practice, are mirrored in the international comparanda. In his discussion, Karlsson suggests that instances of incantation use in epic texts would be an intriguing direction for future inquiry. Such studies, however, have been conducted (concerning different charming traditions) - as an example one could mention John Carey's work on charms in medieval Irish tales, as well as Maria Eliferova's article on charms within non-charm texts.[7]

With this kind of a thesis format, a certain amount of repetition is unavoidable. After reading Karlsson articles, the reader will surely know the exact location of Viena Karelia as well as the common features of Kalevala-metric poetry. This is of course understandable, as the each of the articles stands as an individual study. Karlsson's summary would have benefited from extra editorial care. For some reason, many of the charms he uses as examples are missing lines, either in the original Finnish (as is the case with charms on pages 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 51, 58, 59, 60) or in translation (page 19). This does not appear to be due to a technical fault, however, for some charms are printed *in toto*. In addition, there are some typos, such as on page 20, where "a lake of ice" has turned into "a like of ice" and the translation "bring hoarfrost, bring ice" has diminished into "bring frost, bring ice". For a nitpicky reader, the way in which full stops and parentheses are sequenced rather sporadically when referring to authorities used, can be somewhat infuriating. These are of course minor matters, and make no difference in the big picture. It should be mentioned as well that none of Karlsson's published articles suffer from such nuisances, and with a little bit of additional proofreading the summary would have reached the level and fluency of the three pieces.

Overall, Karlsson must be applauded for his technical analysis throughout his work. I am in awe of Karlsson's skills in coding and applying this method to the Viena Karelian charms and Folklore Studies. The analysis is meticulous, but also explained in a way that a person with more limited ICT-skills can follow Karlsson's argumentation with ease. The sheer amount of data included in the analysis is extremely impressive. It is also a delight to see how Karlsson's research has developed in each article based on the results that he has reached. It is with great excitement that I wait to see how the results of Karlsson's analysis can be used more extensively in the future.

As all of Karlsson's articles have been peer-reviewed, they can be found in the aforementioned journals (the third article in Folklore will be out in December 2022). For the summary of the thesis, the interested reader should visit the following site: https://helda. helsinki.fi/handle/10138/338206. Unfortunately, this way the reader will miss the haunting images of the front and back cover of the hardcopy of the thesis. Luckily, such a hardcopy can be found in the library of the Finnish Literature Society.

As previously stated, a PhD dissertation is one's calling card into the field of academia. It can be said with certainty that the academic community will be utterly charmed and calling Karlsson in unison: Come here, you are needed. And I, for one, am very much looking forward to Karlsson's future academic endeavors.

NOTES

[1] See the work of Siria Korhonen, Karolina Kouvola and Aleksi Moine.

[2] Karlsson, Tuukka 2021a. Register features in Kalevala-metric incantations, In: *Language & Communication* 78: 40-53; Karlsson, Tuukka 2021b. Discursive registers in Finno-Karelian communicative incantations. In: *Signs and Society* 9 (3): 324-342; and Karlsson, Tuukka 2022. Connection of Viena Karelian ritual specialists to communicative and origin incantations. In: *Folklore* 133 (4), in press.

[3] See, for example, the works of Henni Ilomäki, Laura Stark, Lotte Tarkka, Maarit Viljakainen and Frog.

[4] Tarkka, Lotte 2005. *Rajarahvaan laulu. Tutkimus Vuokkiniemen kale-valamittaisesta runokulttuurista 1821-1921.* Helsinki: SKS, and Tarkka, Lotte 2013. *Songs of the Border People: Genre, Reflexivity, and Performance in Karelian Oral Poetry.* FF Communications 305. Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica.

[5] *Tietäjä*'s main areas of expertise included liminal rites, the magical protection of cattle and people, and causing magical harm. The most prominent task of a *tietäjä* was usually that of healing.

[6] Olsan, Lea 1992. Latin Charms of Medieval England: Verbal Healing in a Christian Oral Tradition. In: *Oral Tradition* 7/1: 116-142; Alonso-Almeida, Francisco 2008. The Middle English Metrical Charm: Register, Genre and Text Type Variables. In: *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 109(1): 9-38.

[7] Carey, John 2019. Charms in Medieval Irish Tales: Tradition, Adaptation, Invention. In: Tuomi, Ilona, John Carey, Barbara Hillers and Ciarán Ó Gealbháin (eds.), *Charms, Charmers and Charming in Ireland: From the Medieval to the Modern.* Cardiff: University of Wales Press, pp. 17-38, and Eliferova, Maria 2019. Charms within Non-Charms Texts: Shifts in Pragmatics. In: Pócs, Éva (ed.), *Charms and Charming: Studies on Magic in Everyday Life.* Ljubljana: Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, pp. 251-258.

Ilona Tuomi

BIO

Ilona Tuomi is a graduate of the University of Helsinki, where she studied theology and folklore, specialising in comparative religion. She later moved to the Department of Early and Medieval Irish at the University College Cork, where she conducted research on the manuscript contexts and ritual performance of Old Irish charms. In 2019 Tuomi co-edited the volume *Charms, Charmers and Charming in Ireland: From the Medieval to the Modern* (edited by Ilona Tuomi, John Carey, Barbara Hillers ja Ciarán Ó Gealbháin; Cardiff: University of Wales Press). Currently she is working as a researcher for the Wilderness Heritage Museum Foundation of Finland in a project centring on the intangible cultural heritage of Southern Karelia.

CONFERENCE REPORT

CANONICAL AND NON-CANONICAL IN CHARMING TEXTS AND PRACTICES

Following a two-year pause due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the eleventh international interdisciplinary conference organized by the International Society for Folk Narrative Research's Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming took place 6th to 9th September 2022, both in-person at the National Library of Latvia in Riga and online via Zoom. Although numbers were lower than the previous Charms conference, which took place in May 2019 in Pescara, Italy, the 2022 conference featured twenty-one papers, presented by twenty-six participants, roughly forty percent of them physically in Riga and the remainder online virtually.

The conference theme, 'Canonical and Non-Canonical in Charming Texts and Practices', allowed for a fascinating variety of presentations—especially in cases where officially sanctioned texts and customs (typically based on the canons of science and religion) coexisted and interacted with charms and charming practices that were widely practiced but decidedly non-canonical. The theme also allowed for an abundance of geographic diversity with papers focusing on texts and practices from (in alphabetical order) Belarus, Croatia, England, Estonia, Finland, India, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Russia, Sweden, Tuva, Ukraine, and the United States.

Looking thematically at the presentations, the topics of magic and/or healing figured prominently in ten papers—including Alessandra Mastrangelo's 'Verbal Charms in the Context of Healing

Practices in Nineteenth-Century Sweden: The Case of a Healing Book', Ilona Tuomi's 'License to Kill: An Investigation of Frog Coffins and the Social Logic of Magic', Nidhi Mathur's 'Sadhguru, Great Mystic from India, on Healing Sadhguru', Inna Veselova's 'Men and Magic in a Soviet Village', Danila Rygovskiy's 'Illness as Blessing, Illness as Penance: Discourse and Practices in Old Believer Monasteries', Mare Kõiva and Tatziana Valodzina's 'Transmission of Knowledge: A Comparison of Belarusian and Estonian Traditions', Lubov Golubeva and Sofia Kupriyanova's 'The Transmission of Magic Knowledge in the Healing of Baby Diseases', Julia Marinicheva and Angelina Potasheva's 'Magic Knowledge Transfer: A Knower and a Successor', Kira Sadoja's 'Healers' Codes of Behaviour in Rural Areas of the Carpathian Mountains in Ukraine', and James Deutsch's 'The Scientific, Religious, and Charming Practices of Hyomei During the Influenza Pandemic'.

Prayers, incantations, and vernacular religion/worship figured prominently in another eight of the presentations—including Andrey Toporkov's 'Russian Versions of "The Dream of the Virgin": Problems of the Social Functioning of a Non-canonical Text', Daiva Vaitkevičienė's 'Prayers and Verbal Charms in Lithuanian Oral Literature: One or Two Genres', Laura Jiga Iliescu's '"This Mother of God Prayer Comes like a Charm": Considerations on a Terminological Issue in the Frames of the Charm Genre', Tuukka Karlsson's 'Kalevala-metric Communicative Incantations: Discussing Canonical Terminology of Finno-Karelian Knowledge Objects', Frog's 'Para-Incantations and Para-Charms More Generally', Kira Kyrgys's 'Tuvan Charms and Their Relationship with the Worship of Nature', Aleksi Moine's 'Finno-Karelian Incantations and Networks of Non-human Agents: How to Talk About Vernacular Christianity', and Aigars Lielbārdis's 'The Formation of the Vernacular Religion in Latvia: Traces of the Jesuit Legacy'

A final thematic category—admittedly with some overlap from the first two categories—are three papers that focused on various collections of charms and their textual qualities—including Jonathan Roper's 'Chugg's Charms: Authenticity, Typicality and Sources', Davor Nikolić, Evelina Rudan, and Josipa Tomašić's 'The Status of

Charmers, Charming and Charms in the Ethnographic Discourse of Ethnographic Monographs at the Turn of the Twentieth Century', and Katherine Hindley's 'Vernacular Charms and the Vernacular Bible in Medieval England'.

Following two very full but enlightening days of scholarly activities, conference participants in Riga got to relax more socially with dinner in the Kolonāde restaurant serving Latvian specialties and an outdoor excursion the next day to the Latvian Open-Air Ethnographic Museum.

Special thanks go to the conference organisers, Archives of Latvian Folklore (Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia) and ISFNR Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming, and especially to the staff of the Archives of Latvian Folklore, led by Aigars Lielbārdis.

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