

A. L. Toporkov, *Russkie zagovory iz rukopisnykh istochnikov XVII – pervoi poloviny XIX v.* (Russian Manuscript Charms from 17th to First Half of the 19th Century), Moscow: Indrik 2010, 830 pp. 14 illustrations.

This is a massive and invaluable addition by one of the foremost specialists in the field to the historical corpus of written Russian charms. As Toporkov emphasises in his introduction, charms in Russia are both a live tradition, with links to other areas of popular culture both Russian and non-Russian, and also a part of Russian manuscript culture going back at least four centuries. This wealth of material makes them a textual source of interest not only to specialists in charm studies but also to historians in many other disciplines, not least historians of language. The serious study of this kind of material is not new but it has grown substantially in recent years and is reaching a new level of maturity, of which this is a prime example in both erudition and scholarly method. We note that the author thanks his wife Tat'iana Agapkina in his preface; her comparative study of East Slav healing spells, primarily from the oral tradition, also published by Indrik in 2010, is of comparable size and importance and is reviewed separately.

Andrei Toporkov's major new work commences with an authoritative historical and theoretical introductory essay (26 pp.) which characterizes Russian oral and written charms, and in particular charm collections [*sborniki*], and summarizes the history of Russian charm study. It needs to be emphasized, as Toporkov does, that there is a distinction between oral and written charms which requires separate critical approaches.

The main section of the book contains some 500 charm texts of various types from 36 manuscripts written mainly in the contiguous former northern provinces of Olonets, Arkhangel'sk, and Vologda, with a few from Siberia, and dating from the 17th to the first half of the 19th century. Toporkov notes that the charms of this northern area are distinctive and have common characteristics which distinguish them from those of central and southern Russia, or Belarus' and Ukraine. In particular this northern area is relatively remote and historically conservative in culture and has a population which includes Finnic peoples and Old Believer fugitives from other parts of Russia, and some interaction is discernible.

The material of the main section is arranged according to source.

Part 1 (pp. 37–310) is devoted to the 'Olonets sbornik' (2nd half of the 17th c.). This has a 57-page historical and textological introduction, followed by the texts of the charms. Textual variants and corrections are noted in footnotes, and the text section is followed by no less than 135 pages of detailed comparative historical, textual and linguistic notes and commentary. This is followed

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

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

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

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

William F. Ryan
Warburg Institute, London

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

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

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