

INTRODUCTION

It is an honor to welcome the readers to the eighth issue of *Incantatio*! This is not simply a scholarly journal, this is a scholarly institution, in the best sense of the word. First and foremost, *Incantatio* stands for academic authenticity, productivity and communication. It encourages vibrant research and establishes stable continuity in the field. The current issue fulfils this goals completely, providing a platform for presentation of both accomplished results and future projects.

In line with the previous years' tradition, this current issue of *Incantatio* is an outcome form the regular conference on verbal charms, which took place in Budapest, Hungary in December 8th-10th, 2017. It contains six articles, three book reviews, presentation of charms database and a report from the above-said conference. Unfortunately, the planned new section *Interview with Charms Researcher* turned out to be impossible to include, due to the responsible party's sudden inability to prepare it. Hopefully, this section will find its place in some of the future issues of *Incantatio*.

The articles discuss and analyze English, Dutch, Hungarian, Latvian, Medieval Germanic and Old Norse verbal magic. As a main common feature, all the studies examine the specific verbal charms as integral parts of a broader cultural context. The analyzed verbal magic texts and practices are linked to popular beliefs, everyday necessities, learned discourses, didactic and propaganda agendas, confessional backgrounds, institutional sanctions and individual opinions. Verbal charms, charmers and charming are studied as distinct cultural phenomena – a crossing-point between spirituality and practicality, a contact zone of belief, languages and emotions, a sphere of constant, contested and contesting interpretations and re-interpretations.

The current issue's contributors stand at various stages of their academic paths – from well-established names through accelerating careers to beginning studies. Regardless of age and rank, all the authors worked diligently and devotedly, and this is visible in their texts. I would like to cordially thank them all! Their contributions are all valuable pieces on their own accord. When collected together in *Incantatio*, they form an important corpus of secondary literature on verbal magic.

I also very thankful to Jonathan Roper, who again was of big help with wise advises and suggestions, and the persons who prepared the volume 8.

As the eighth issue of *Incantatio* heads to the press, I hope it is anticipated by the entire scholarly community. I believe this anticipation will be justified, that every colleague will find here a bright and relevant picture of the thriving scholarship on verbal magic.

Svetlana Tsonkova, guest editor