Discussion draft of East Slavic and international indexes of charms

Our article 'Charms Indexes: Problems and Prospects' has been published in <u>The Journal of Traditional Culture</u> (2007), 2: 59-73, and was also posted on the website: http://www.ruthenia.ru/folklore. The English version is also available elsewhere on this webiste. The article proposed projects to create an index of East-Slavic charms and an international index of charms and justified the theoretical approaches of the problem. There were also given the schemes of articles on the various types of charms and two test articles.

Offering both projects of regional (East-Slavic) and international (European) indexes of charms, we naturally did not believe that those projects can be implemented immediately. It was about a specific research program, which provided two main directions.

1. To organize the public discussion of the project of a new index of East-Slavic charms, whose creation is quite realistic in the coming years. The result of such discussions would be the following: the most optimal scheme descriptions, suitable for the corpus of charms of Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian traditions can be developed. The results of the first debate of this kind and offered to the reader of this collection.

2. To organize international cooperation for the studying of charming traditions across Europe, or at least of some its regions. Such cooperation is carried out effectively within the Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming of the ISFNR. In particular, in May 2008 in Tartu, a conference was devoted to the so-called «encounter-charms» ("charms of the meeting") was held, and at the ISFNR Congress in Athens in June 2009, there was a discussion of charms like the so-called 2nd Merseburg charm.

To help organize the discussion of our project, we turned to experts with the three following questions:

1. On what grounds grouping and ordering of housing charms of various European traditions can be made?

2. How much magic texts of medieval Europe can be considered as a continuation of the traditions of the ancient Near East, and late antiquity?

3. What are the main differences between the magical traditions of Eastern and Western Europe? What explains these differences (the influence of Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Protestantism, especially the assimilation of the cultural heritage of the ancient world, especially folk and literary traditions, etc.)?

Note that only the first question relates to the problem of charms systematics, while the second and third relate to the general problem of studying the history of European traditions of magic words.

Below there are the answers provided to us by Russian and foreign researchers.
I would like to emphasize that we consider useful and expedient to discuss the issues that we think are essential to folklore, regardless of how the panelists evaluate our proposals. These important issues are clearly part of the problem of systematic, structural-functional, historical-geographical and comparative study of folklore.

We thank all the authors for expressed criticism, suggestions and ideas. Undoubtedly, we will take them into account in our work.

Tatiana Agapkina, Andrei Toporkov

The Responses:

Ljubinko Radenkovich (Institute for Balkan Studies Sana, Serbia)

1. Index of subjects and motifs can be formed for each genre of folklore, which has a narrative structure, that is when the text describes some event: there are actors (or one person), the action itself, its place and time. Many charms are organized in this way.

There are charms, especially at the Balkan Slavs, which have the structure of folk lyric song, based on parallelism. Example:

Прну шарено тиче,	The colorful bird flew
па стаде на сув пањ,	down of the dry stump,
пањ се упали,	The stump caught fire

киша удари,	It began raining
пањ угаси,	And the rain put out the stump
оне дугачке очи затвори.	Andclosed those long eyes

(From a snake bite, Radenkovich NBB, № 34)

How can we identify such a theme in the index? Perhaps only as "ignition / extinction". It is not indicated how the bird could light a tree stump in the charm. The charm just gives a poetic picture: " the stump suddenly caught fire, when the bird came down to it, and then went out and the human condition after being bitten by a snake (a burning sensation of poison) will return to its former state as a burning tree stump after the rain."

Or a charm:

Извела квачка девет пилета,	The broody brought nine chickens
на сви' девет крила црвена,	All nine have red wings,
на сви' девет ноге црвене,	All nine have red legs
на сви' девет глава црвена.	All nine have red heads
Залете се црн орал,	The black eagle flew in
те однесе квачку с пилићи.	And took away the broody and the chickens

(From the rubella Radenkovich NBB, № 90)

This charm can be designated "Eagle carries a red hen with red chickens. Some charms operate on the basis of the subtext, which is not quite obvious in specific texts. These are Serb charms from the bite of snakes, where there are "a good man and a wicked wife, type:

Рогобора[1] вечера,	The prickly supper,
рогобојена постеља;	The prickly bed,
не по ради зле жене,	Not for evil woman,
но по ради добра човека.	But for a kind man.
Земља земљу пољубила,	the earth kissed earth,
крач, крач, ржен колач покрива.	kratch, kratch rye kalatch covers..

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[1] серб. *рогобор* растение Ruscus aculeatus L.

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(From a snake bite, Radenkovich NBB, № 10)

The subtext of this conspiracy - a legendary tale about a good man who lets the poor sleep in his house, not knowing that they are saints, although his wicked wife doesn't not want it. At dinner, she gives them only bread and makes his bed of straw, barbed, and puts a stone instead of a pillow. The next morning, when the saints are gone, the woman raises the straw from the floor and snake crawls from the straw and bites her child. His father runs after the saints, and asks them to help. They answer that those straw and stone on which they had slept can help the child.

The text contains elements of other charms. It is the formula of "land of the earth kiss / kisses and unintelligible words" krach, krach "from the other formula.

2. Medieval European charms must be considered in the context of ancient, Byzantine and early medieval incantation tradition, functioning in Greek and Latin. And even now it is believed that a magical text effective if its antiquity is beyond doubt. The more ancient text, so it effective, because such a conspiracy as it related to the time of the creation of the world. In this operation magical texts does not imply that they should be clear to those who use them.

It is known that in the Middle Ages, there were two parallel incantation traditions: one based on the written heritage, the other - on the oral, folk. On the oral tradition of the Middle Ages knows quite a bit since the beginning of fixation of oral tradition had to be at a time when it has already experienced a significant impact in writing. This effect was different and varied in the range of direct borrowing of entire scenes, magic formulas and formula expressions to create your own stories with Christian themes, similar to the written tradition.

Due to the medieval written sources it is possible to determine the extent of some archaic charms written in the 19th and 20th centuries. Thus, a widespread charm, based on dialogue, which is when we meet a saint or God (Jesus) and the personification of the disease, the Slavic material can be traced throughout the last millennium. And given the Greek and Latin sources, the story can be followed further more. In the meantime, if you take into account the Akkadian sources (Novo-time Babylonian kingdom), it becomes possible to relate the story in the second half of the first millennium B.C. in an Akkadian incantation against toothache demonic worm asks God to say to what he should eat. God shows him to "the ripe figs and apricot juice. The worm also says: "Among the teeth permit me to live, / Make my jaw housing, / The blood of the tooth will suck. / I'll gnaw the roots of teeth, "to which God forbids the worm to do this (Lyric Poetry of the Ancient East, Moscow, 1984. p.71). A similar dialogue is demonic worm "cadavre"

with Jesus or the saints in medieval Slavic spells of toothache (see: *Раденковић Љ.* Зао дух нежит у словенским писаним споменицима и народној култури // Зборник Матице српске за филологију и лингвистику. Нови Сад, 2007, с. 697-714), which are translations of the Byzantine spells.

3. Besides, the differences in the influence that written medieval magical practices had on the oral tradition of European nations are obvious. In the countries of Slavia Latina, where some women were condemned for being witches (ie, they performed some magical practices in order to survive), the practice of voodoo is full of Christian attributes, and truly folkloric forms of charms were hardly pressed by folk Christian prayer.

Influence of written magical traditions in the Orthodox lands also varied. In Russia during the late Middle Ages and later, the manuscript tradition had been extended considerably wider than in Serbia and Bulgaria, who had been under Turkish rule for a long time. In 18th to 19th centuries, charms were passed through the sacred "notebooks". This led to the consolidation of some stereotypical formulas and to neglect of others in the tradition. Serbian and Bulgarian traditions has been and remains almost exclusively oral till the present time. Their conservatism is supported by faith in high integrity, immutability of magical voice and by the conviction that only a very narrow circle of people can learn from the knowledge of sorcery. At last, the Russian charms were influenced by Baltic traditions, and the Serbian and Bulgarian – by Balkan (for example, the expulsion of the disease "to empty mountain").

Jonathan Roper (University of Tartu)

1. Narrative charms would be, I believe, best classified by a system that groups them by the plot of their historiolas (i.e. the very short narratives they contain), in a way similar to the Aarne-Thompson-Uther system for classifying narratives. Other charms, without such a narrative element, could better be classified according to a structural analysis such as those found in the work of Levi-Strauss or Sebeok (e.g. the latter's treatment of Cheremis charms in his work 'Structure and Texture', The Hague: 1974).

2. This question can only be answered on a case by case basis. Charms of the **Tres Virgines** type can be considered in this way, as we find an analogue in the fourth-century writings of

Marcellus of Bordeaux: 'Tres virgines in medio mari mensam...,' etc. However, many other charm-types are probably much more recent. A related question is that of the actions that accompany a charm. Here the problem is even more difficult, in that the particular actions performed with a recent charm in a magical context may well be considerably older. However constructing a line of descent for such actions (charming) is so very much more problematic than constructing a line of descent for texts (charms) - although the latter is not always easy either.

3. I lack the knowledge to give a full answer to this question, but if we make a little comparison of English and Russian charms corpora, it is clear that there are some distinct differences. To mention just a few of these differences, the established corpus of Russian charms is much larger, the charms themselves are generally longer, they possess a far greater range of personages, the tradition is still practiced today, and so on. However, a view of Russian and English material from outside of Europe (e.g from India or Africa) might focus on the similarities, the existence of some shared types, e.g. **Flum Jordan** (the charm featuring the apocryphal incident of the Jordan ceasing to flow at Christ's baptism, which is generally used for blood-staunching), the pervasive influence of vernacular Christianity, the role of odd-numbered threshold numbers (3, 5, 9, etc.), etc. No doubt all of the factors mentioned in the question are at play here, and there may also be broad economic, social-historical and even health-care factors involved as well.

Ülo Valk (University of Tartu, Estonia)

1. I think that charms form so diverse and fluid material that it would be a hopeless task to subject them all to a rigid and comprehensive system of international classification. Complete typology of charms can be accomplished as a theoretical model, as an ideal system, but the reality of texts probably breaks any classifications. However, there is no doubt that some charm-types can easily be recognised in ethnical traditions either on the broad international scale (such as some encounter charms) or in a certain region (such as Baltic-Finnic snake-charms). Some charm types have a long history, which can be philologically documented. For example, the Merseburg horse cure "**Bone to Bone**" has already been canonised in "Atharvaveda" (IV: 12) and there seems no doubt that the two recordings are genetically linked

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as an ancient Indo-European magical tradition. The "Atharvaveda" offers us a very useful, functional classification of charms, consisting of loose groups, such as bhaishajyāni ('healing charms'), strīkarmāni ('women's charms'), rājakarmāni ('royal charms'), angirasah ('charms of black magic'), and many others. Such a classification system is flexible and takes into consideration the practical uses of charms; the weakness of the system is that some charms or magical formulae are so polyfunctional that they do not have a proper, fixed place in the classification, but appear under many sub-categories.

I doubt that a normative typology of charms can ever be established, although an index of types or motifs, comparable to the Aarne-Thompson-Uther index of folk-tales would certainly be a huge and positive step further in international scholarship. Also, structural research on charms from comparative perspective could give insightful results. Hopefully, it would be possible to discover several underlying patterns of charms, not only "lack – lack liquidated" which is probably one of the fundamental grounds of white magic. Different classification systems, both analytical and vernacular – developed by the tradition bearers themselves – help us to map the charms, see their links with other genres and understand their social uses.

2. There is no doubt that the continuation exists between Hellenic magic and European incantations of recent centuries. A handy example is the SATOR-AREPO palindrome, whose first recording was preserved in the ashes of Mount Vesuvius (79 AD), but which was later documented in learned and vernacular traditions in many countries (SATOR-palindrome is a magical formula, which has so diverse uses, that it serves as a good example to prove the limits of functional classification of charms). There are examples of folk narratives about magical transformations, first recorded in Hellenic sources but later widely spread in international folklore, such as the love story of "Cupid and Psyche" (ATU 425B), which was first recorded in "The Golden Ass" (IV:28-VI:24) by Apuleius around 100 AD. Also, the migratory legend about the transformation of a witch into a bird while somebody is watching the scene secretly, was recorded by Apuleius in the same novel (III:21). If complex narratives are transmitted throughout millennia in folklore, it is no wonder that simple forms, such as incantations, have very long histories.

However, a question might be asked, whether the knowledge that we gain through proving the historical continuation of charms is worth the huge efforts of meticulous philological work. The link between ancient and contemporary belief traditions is a fact that can

be taken for granted. Challenging this statement by showing time gaps, discontinuation and revival of charm traditions in a thorough diachronic study might have much more to offer than illustrating the old truths. Also, wouldn't it be more illuminating to study charms and other forms of folklore in their contemporary surroundings, in their social, religious, generic and cultural contexts - either now, in the Middle Ages or even in the Ancient Mediterranean lands?

3. It seems to me that all good answers are given in the brackets. Religious context has a strong impact on all issues of vernacular belief and magic, so does the spread of literacy. However, the question refers to much broader issues than the textual corpus of charms of certain regions. Traditions of magic are connected with other forms of cultural practices; they cannot be detached from their social context. For example, the political system, dominating ideology and issue of censorship have their role to play. As a folklore student at the University of Tartu in 1980-ies I had to get a special permission to be able to read the manual of magic "Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis…" in the academic library of my *alma mater*. I don't know whether there was any reasonable explanation why the book was regarded so dangerous that it was hidden away into the "special fund" of the library, consisting of forbidden literature. Nowadays, shelves of book-stores are again rich in books on various topics of occult and practical handbooks of magic. Of course, the availability of charms in printed sources has a direct connection with their uses and spread in folk religion.

Ekaterina Velmezova (University of Lausanne, Switzerland / Russia)

1. Here can be several bases: 1) First of all, languages of the recorded texts themselves (in this case a special group will get charms and spells - Abracadabra). The main problem will consist in the fact that many recorded texts, such as merging and traditions will be presented to the confusion of languages, reflecting the situation of linguistic continuum, 2), territories and regions, which were recorded by the relevant texts. This cause is partly complementary to the first, because within a particular "tradition" often occur incantation texts in foreign languages. In this case, the main problem is that the territorial boundaries in Europe were constantly changing, but sometimes the basis for such a "geographic" systematization can take the modern boundaries of a region, and 3) the pragmatic orientation of the relevant texts, 4) subjects and motifs (again Yet, with the release of a separate group of texts-gibberish), 5) the

basic concepts of the incantation, 6) individual texts and their variants (index) in different traditions, in recordings in different languages. Key issues in this case would be two. First, many of the texts of this classification would not be covered, and secondly, will inevitably raise the question of criteria for selection of the main text ("proto-text").

3. There can be a lot of such differences. So I will show only the major ones which are obvious, for example, when comparing the Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Czech and French incantation texts: 1) the structure and form of texts: poetry or prose, the length of the text (from a few phrases, lines up to a few pages of text). Very often these differences are directly related to different "treatment traditions (including, and literary), the charm of the material in the countries of Eastern and Western Europe. This, in turn, may refer to the specific refraction of any "literary" tradition, 2) cast of characters (in particular, the presence / absence of a pagan or "pseudo-pagan" pantheon), and 3) semantic-symbolic content of the basic concepts of the incantation ('space', 'man', 'colour', etc.) 4) "tolerance" to foreign-language tradition within a tradition as a whole (meaning, including, and there is a conspiracy, abracadabra, as well as their numerical relationship with "normal" text), and individual texts; 5) the ratio of verbal and actional parts of the charm, and 6) the specific limitations on the role of the artist of charm, 7) the correlation between the text of "neighboring" genres - for example, between texts that refer to 'charms' and/or 'popular prayers', etc., 8) the viability of a "tradition": whether people resort to charms today? And if yes, then how actively?

All these differences can not, in my opinion, be explained to any one factor. Both features folk and literary traditions, and religious situation in the region, and historical context and social factors play an important role.

Maria Zavjalova (Institute of Slavic Studies, RAS, Moscow)

1. As you rightly suggest, the grouping of charms should be made primarily on the functional grounds. However, there may be difficulties associated with the fact that some "disease" can not find a match in other traditions, and sometimes (as you noted) it's hard to know what kind of illness is related with this or that charm. In connection with this I offer to group texts on more general names of diseases (e.g., skin diseases, internal medicine, etc.), and than to divide these groups to more private. In this way it will be easier to correlate charms of various

traditions.

The general scheme that you propose to describe each of the charms seems very successful to me. I would advise to include the item "structural type of charm" (epic, dialogue, incantatory, etc.), while, of course, necessary to make such a typology of the incantation texts, which would be acceptable and convenient for everyone. If the electronic form of direction of incantation texts is supposed, it would be useful when searching for a certain type of charms. Besides, I can not agree that the charms of certain types are always correlated with specific functional focus. For example, the countdown is used in charms from very many diseases, and such texts are virtually identical (in many traditions). If you do not take the structural type of charm into account, a lot of important information for the researcher can overlook (here, of course, we must distinguish the type of structure and charm).

As to the kind of stories I think you can use the scheme developed in the book <u>Polesskie Zagovory</u> ("Polesskie Charms"), where universal stories are separated from the private. This, in my opinion, must be also taken into account and noted in the description of the charm.

For easier searching in electronic database (unless, of course, it will be created), you can also select keywords for each text. This will facilitate the user in finding relevant texts.

2. As I did not practice enough in Western incantation tradition, I can only say on the basis of individual subjects, that undoubtedly, there is a continuation of the tradition. This question, in my opinion, requires further scrutiny with the involvement of experts who studied the ancient traditions of invocation. Besides in my opinion, the reflexes of the Atharvaveda texts in later Indo-European traditions (in particular, in the Baltic traditions I encountered a lot of them) are of interest.

I can not judge the magical traditions of Eastern and Western Europe in general, but on the basis of those traditions with which I am acquainted, the Western European charms were influenced by medieval tradition, which was, of course, connected with Christianity. Western (as well as West Slavic) texts are usually of a brief dialogic and rhymed form, and they often reproduce the Christian themes. East Slavic charms (perhaps under the influence of the Orthodox tradition) develop more extensive epic stories in which Christian themes are often "imposed" on the earlier mythological stories. Least of all, in my opinion, the influence of Christianity is reflected in the charms of the Baltic traditions, which kept a lot of pagan elements, traces of the ancient mythological world view, invocation structure. Features of folk and literary traditions, of course, also play a role that must be taken into account.

Tatiana Agapkina (Institute of Slavic Studies, RAS, Moscow), **Andrei Toporkov** (Institute of World Literature, RAS, Moscow)

1. In our view, the optimal grouping and ordering of charms can be made as follows: across the continuum of the charms of this or that ethno-linguistic tradition at first thematic groups of charms must be distinguished, then within them - the functional groups and, finally, within the functional groups - some charm types. This approach is justified in details in our project, and we won't present it again now, but we'll give some clarification on those items that caused a lot of questions from the participants of the discussion.

In preparation for the drafting of east-slavic and international indexes of charms, we believe it is important to work out a description that would enable in future the transition from regional to international index, and from this one - to other regional indexes. This requires a general scheme ("Form"), which could work on different ethno-linguistic material. At the same time, this scheme should be pre-adapted to include enough information about each specific type of charms and each ethno-cultural traditions included into the index.

The ultimate goal, to which the indexes of charms (both regional and international) should serve, is to establish the geographical distribution and history of functioning of different types of charms and their basic versions. Let's note that the information on the first and the most recent records of charms, the geography of their distribution, the way of their functioning (in oral or manuscript traditions) is important for us not just as a collection of information about individual texts, but as a necessary condition for the subsequent recovery of the history of incantation tradition as a part of the cultural history of Eastern Slavs and other peoples of Europe. All this information will be included into the indexes in a systematic way, so it is assumed that writing of each article of the index will be preceded by a great analytical work.

At this stage of research, we consider unnecessary the articulating clearly which elements of the text are the main objects of description in the index (charm type, charm situations, the motive, formula, etc.), though we foresee that our position will cause a lot of objections. We'll risk nonetheless increasing the number of skeptics, arguing that, counting the heterogeneous nature of the charms and their diversity, we believe that in different cases, we will have to base on units of different levels in the index. For us, it is essential only the following: all relevant substantive units must be able to be inferred by the user in this index and

must not be lost in the total amount of material. Description of the individual scene types should be designed in such a way that the user could find not only the charm type, but all claims and motives that comprise the charm of this type. If we tried to apply the strict division to the charms (eg, to group them by "charm situations" and then by "main action"), the result would occur leveling of folklore, literary and cultural-historical content, which is of great interest not only for folklorists, but also for historians of religious and fiction literature.

Meanwhile, many of these substantial elements of charms (formulas, subjects, motifs) have their own history, sometimes numbering up to three and a half thousand years. They are recorded not only verbally but also in the literary tradition. We refer, for example, we a study of the formula "as wax / candle burns / melts, so let NN / heart NN burns / melts (from passion, from the disease) » (Toporkov, A.L. 'Love charms of Slavic peoples in comparasion' // Written language, literature and folklore of the Slavic peoples: XIV International Congress of Slavic. Ohrid, 10-16 September 2008. Reports of the Russian delegation. Moscow, 2008. pp 484-502). Imagine that the content of this formula will be reduced to the "main action" – *burn*. How much historical and cultural information can be gleaned from such a description?

Conspiracies by their origin are heterogeneous in nature. On the one hand, many of them date back to the non-canonical prays, on the other – charms are united with the magic formulas that accompany the ritual action and are dated back to pre-Christian beliefs. Charms are functioning in the oral traditions, drawing closer to the works of other genres of folklore, and they are included in different indexes, in contact with all sorts of apocryphal writings, fortune-telling works and medical prescriptions. Among charms, there are some texts which have a long history, numbering several thousand years, and those that occur ad hoc.

The aim of an index is not to "grind" all of these texts, reducing them to some "basic action" or bringing them into line with some other all-pervasive principle, but to give the user a tool for comprehension of the cultural history of charms as a part of the oral and manuscript heritage of the Eastern Slavs and other peoples of Europe.

2.Medieval Slavic-Balkan tradition of charms and apocryphal prayers are a direct continuation of the magical traditions of Byzantium and Late Antiquity. Similarly, many medieval magical texts of Germany, Britain and several other countries in Western and Central Europe were written down in Latin and also date back to late antiquity.

Among the European charms of late medieval and early modern times there is a stratum of texts, which have close analogues in the magical traditions of the ancient Near East, northern

Africa and the eastern Mediterranean. For example, the study of love charms of antiquity (particularly the Greek charms of the Egyptian magical papyri II-V cc. AD) shows that they are similar in content and formula composition to love charms of such peoples as Spaniards, Italians, Romanians, Hungarians, Serbs, Ukrainians, Russians. For the Greek and East-Slavic love charms the idea that passion can be afflicted on a man from the outside as a kind of hostile force, the idea of fiery nature of the emotion of love (the flames covers heart, liver and other organs of the victim) is common like the idea that the love is like the disease, like the thoughts about it's causes and "symptoms" (refusal to eat and drink, insomnia, fever, social exclusion, the gap with their parents and other relatives, grief, madness or possession by evil spirits, the defeat by an arrow or other sharp instrument into the heart).

Concerning the history and literary work the "Prayer of Tryasovitsy", which dates back to ancient Middle Eastern texts, designed to protect children and maternity cases of female demon is of great interest. Charms against fever "of the Sisiniev type" are known in Russia since the 14th century, i.e. for over 600 years. The earliest text of such a charm is in the birch-bark letter number 930 that was found in 2002 during archaeological excavations in Novgorod in a layer dating to overseas 14th and 15th centuries. Since the end of the 14th century retellings of the Sisiniev prayer has been included in some lists regarding false books, where the composing of a prayer is attributed to the Bulgarian priest Jeremiah (apparently unfounded). In the 17th century you can find several versions of the full text of prayer in the collections of northern and southern Russian origin.

East Slavic texts of Sisiniev prayer go back to South Slavic and Byzantine (Greek) prototypes. It seems that these prayers have been translated from Greek to Slavic, although currently known Slavonic texts chronologically precede the Greek. Different versions of the subject of Sisiniev prayer are widely known in the eastern Mediterranean and adjacent areas. In addition to the Greek and Slavic, Coptic, Ethiopian, Armenian, Romanian, Syrian, Arab and Jewish versions of the story were fixed. East Slavic charms of a fever with a story about a meeting of Sisiniy with the 12-tryasovitsami occupy a special place of this tradition, since Russian charms have not just learned the ancient story, but also have fundamentally developed it.

3.We have already noted that both in the east of Europe, and in its west the magical traditions went back to the heritage of late antiquity, in the world of Orthodox Christianity - through the

mediation of the Byzantine and in the world of Catholicism - through mediation of near-church literature in Latin.

However, the subsequent fate of the incantation and magical traditions evolved differently in the worlds of the eastern and western Christianity. This was determined by a number of reasons of religious, cultural, historical and literary-historical nature. For example, in the east of Europe the scientific tradition of magic was unknown, there was no "witch hunt", the Orthodox clergy in general, was much softer on the superstitious laity than the clergy of the Western world. Village sorcerers and sorceresses could treat their patients with herbs, charms and other homegrown tools, without fearing for their lives.

Early records of magical texts in the West of Europe go back to the Middle Ages. In Russia the individual records of charms in birch-bark scrolls and in a postscript to the ancient manuscripts are known, but massive fixation of magical texts started much later - only in the second quarter of the XVII century. On the other hand, a living existence of the charms in the West mainly ended several centuries ago, while the eastern Slavs tradition of magical words preserved till our time.

For the fate of charms in the different ethnic and cultural traditions the following moment became important: it was important how many non-canonical handwritten prayers came into interaction with the oral folklore texts. For example, charms of the Baltic and the Karelian-Finnish peoples appear to be little exposed by literacy and Christianity. At the southern Slavs apocryphal book prayers and folk charms existed in parallel and weakly interacted with each other. The different was fate of the incantation tradition in Russia (especially in the Russian North): folk charms came to close interaction here with handwritten charms and prayers. In Russia, as in other European countries, manuscript collections of charms were often kept and collected by urban and rural priests who were versed in liturgical literature, and at the same time close to folk culture.

In Belarus, northern Ukraine, southern and western Russia there are known charms related in origin with the Central European tradition. The greatest number of such correspondences is among charms against bleeding, which is understandable, counting what an important place these charms occupied in the European tradition of magical word. As an example we can use invocation formula "Become, blood in the wound like water (Jesus Christ) in Jordan", which occurs primarily in Belarusian, Ukrainian, and occasionally in the western and southern Russian charms. Here we can see the difference with European texts, based on the legend that the waters of the Jordan stopped when they Jesus Christ baptized. Among the

Eastern Slavs the charm consists only of a comparative incantatory formula, whereas they lack the earlier narrative part of it (that John and Christ went through the Jordan River and Christ ordered the river to stop).

Parallels between the East Slavic and West Slavic traditions are united by one thing: each of these regional East-Slavic subjects, in addition to Western Slavic, has also a wider European correspondence (mainly Germans). This leads to a more general conclusion that Western Slavic charms were like of guide-mediator, and the vector of influence was directed from West to East.

Translated by Kirill Toporkov