



Encounter Charms

Symposium
Tartu, May 9th, 2008

ABSTRACTS



Toimetajad / Editors: Jonathan Roper, Ülo Valk
Küljendaja / Layout: Liisa Vesik

Trükis on seotud ETF grandiga 7516 “Rahvausund, žanrid ja sotsiaalne tähendusruum” ja sihtfinantseeritavate teemadega SF0030181s08 “Folkloori narratiivsed aspektid. Võim, isiksus ja globaliseerumine”, SF0180139s08 “Folkloor ja ühiskond: pärimusmälu, loovus, rakendused”

Related projects are: ETF grant 7516 “Vernacular religion, genres and the social sphere of meanings” and target-financed project SF0180139s08 “Folklore and Society: Tradition Memory, Creativity, Applications”, SF0030181s08 “Narrative aspects of folklore. Power, personality and globalization”

<http://www.folklore.ee/rl/fo/konve/2008/charms>

ISBN 978-9949-446-12-4 (online)

ISBN 978-9949-446-11-7 (trükis)

EKM Teaduskirjastus

Autorid

Symposium on Encounter Charms
May 9, 2008 Tartu
Estonian Literary Museum (Vanemuise 42, Tartu)

9.30-10.00 Registration

10.00-10.15 Opening

10.15-10.45 Jonathan Roper (Sheffield) The Concept of *Begegnungssegen* and its Applicability to English Narrative Charms

10.45-11.15 Éva Pócs (Budapest) Hungarian Encounter Charms between East and West

11.15-11.45 Andrey Toporkov (Moscow) Encounter Charms in Russian Tradition

11.45-12.15 Coffee break

12.15-12.45 Daiva Vaitkevičienė (Vilnius) Quarrel between Gods: a Dialogue in Charms and Legends

12.45-13.15 Toms Kencis (Riga) Space Dispositions in Latvian Encounter Charms

13.15-15.15 Lunch

15.15.-15.45 Mare Kõiva (Tartu). Estonian Encounter Charms

15.45-16.15 Emanuela Timotin (Bucharest) Malefic Demons in the Romanian *Historiolae*

16.15-16.45 Lea T. Olsan (Cambridge) The Earliest Forms of the St. Peter Charm for Toothache

16.45-17.15 Coffee break

17.15-17.45 Vladimir Klyaus (Moscow) The Russian traditional spells in Northern China nowadays

17.45-18.15 Sadhana Naithani (Delhi) When Charms Encounter 'Karma' (Human Endeavour)

18.15-18.45 Mihály Hoppál (Budapest) Shamanic Song as Charming Prayer

Welcome to Tartu,
and our symposium on encounter charms!

Today's meeting is somewhat of a departure for the ISFNR's Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming. Whereas earlier meetings such as London 2005 and Pécs 2007 were very broad in focus, on this occasion we have aimed to a clearly delimited topic. For the study of charms, charmers and charming to continue its current regeneration, the terms used and developed during the golden age of charms studies need to be returned to, interrogated and reassessed. How might such concepts enlighten us, and how might they limit our understanding? The concept of 'encounter charms' (or *Begegnungssegen* as they are often known), is just one such of these golden-age concepts, and I am glad to see from the programme how broadly it will be explored and applied in a variety of periods and places.

Normal service will be resumed next year, when the Committee will be accepting abstracts on *all* aspects of charms studies once again for the charms panels that we are hosting at the 15th ISFNR Congress, which meets in Athens from the 21st to the 27th of June, 2009. Abstracts of between 75 and 200 words should be sent to j.roper@shef.ac.uk, ulo.valk@ut.ee and pocse@chello.hu

The deadline for these proposals is September 30th, 2008. I should remind you that the early bird registration at this conference before 30th June 2008 will be cheaper. More details are available at the ISFNR's website: <http://www.ut.ee/isfnr>

Good thoughts,
Jonathan Roper

SHAMANIC SONGS AS CHARMING PRAYER

Mihály Hoppál (Budapest)

Hoppal@etnologia.mta.hu

Shamans have various tasks in their communities. One of them is being the keeper of oral tradition. They are the singers of traditional shamanic songs and reciters shamanic myths, legends. The shaman/ess is the person who performs the sacrificial rituals for the benefit of the community. Having all these functions their role is quite complex since they must remember the texts of charms, songs, prayers, invocations, hymns, etc. This means that they have a special relationship to language since the shamanic use of language is a poetic one with its own rules. Shamanic songs and/or prayers, are representing the main body of their sacred knowledge. Furthermore shamanic songs and prayers/charms can be labelled as speech acts within the context of shamanic rituals, which will genuinely contribute to the effectiveness of the seances.

Taking into account all the above features of shamanic narratives, it is a moral obligation to declare all of them as important pieces of the intangible cultural (and oral) heritage of mankind.

SPACE DISPOSITIONS IN LATVIAN ENCOUNTER CHARMS

Toms Kencis (Riga)

toms1985@gmail.com

According to several models of research of the mythological narratives, time and space in the so-called mythological consciousness have multitude of different meanings, whether ordered in binary oppositions or not. Many motifs in vernacular narratives provide us with the means of mapping the mythological consciousness. Spatial semanthemes, especially those of borders, acquire sacral, distinct meaning and thus serve as markers in the wider world-view.

The purpose of my presentation is to analyze historolas of Latvian encounter charms to distinguish between specific semanthemes and to compare them with their appearances in other genres, thus reveling how magic functions referring to a particular world order.

THE RUSSIAN TRADITIONAL SPELLS IN NORTHERN CHINA NOWADAYS

Vladimir Klyaus (Moscow)

v.klyaus@mail.ru

The paper deals with the functioning of the spell tradition among the “local Russians” in the North of China. In the summer of 2007 I conducted an expedition to six Russian villages in this region.

“Local Russians” is the official Chinese name for the descendants of Russian-Chinese, Russian-Tungus and other interracial marriages involving Russians. The history of the “local Russians” is often tragic. In the 20- and 30-s of the 20th century they, though taking marginal part in the life of the Russian communities – for example, they attended Russian schools and churches and used mostly Russian language in their families – they were generally considered outsiders. With the establishment of the Communist regime, “pure” Russians either repatriated to the USSR or emigrated to Australia, Argentina, America, etc. The “local Russians”, however, could get neither exit visas, nor entry visas into other countries.

During the Cultural Revolution the “local Russians” underwent political repressions which to a large extent led to the dissolution of their culture. For example, there was a total ban on the use of the Russian language, even at home. Second, Russian clothes were also banned. Third, all Russian churches were torn down, and all Russian cemeteries were driven into the ground. All “local Russians” were given Chinese names. Besides, their territories were turned over to the Muslims who moved from the Center and South of China.

Nowadays the attitude of the Chinese government towards the “local Russians” is totally different. Their Russian names have been restored, they are getting financial aid, they are even allowed to have more than one child; there is also support for the Russian Orthodox religion. According to the census of 1999, there are 4219 “local Russians” in the area, among whom there

are two “pure” Russian women who married Chinese men in the 1950-s.

The level of Russian language competence is presently very low among the “local Russian” population. Only those local Russians who are over sixty can speak and understand the language fairly well. They are the last remaining representatives of the Russian folklore tradition in the region. It is from them that I managed to record fairy tales, songs, legends and spells.

Interviewing the population of the Three River region, I have discovered that the following spells were in use: against snakes, against fright, against infant insomnia, “the reds”, toothache, blood, evil people, even spells designed to help winning in court.

In one village I managed to discover the text of one written spell, but no-one knew it by heart. I have found three healers in three other villages. I have elicited the spell texts from these healers not by directly asking for them, but in the process of their performance in an act of healing. I myself was playing the role of a patient. They performed spells over water to neutralize effect of the “evil eye”; I was supposed to drink the water or wash my face with it. The structure of the healing ritual was the same in all three cases, with certain variations of wording and smaller details of the procedure.

I would like to comment in more detail on the process of acquiring the spell that I was told about by a healer from Karavannaya village who is a “pure” Russian.

According to baba Niura, she learnt the spell for healing the effects of the evil eye from a Tungus woman who treated her child. Any doubts I had about this story disappeared when I heard her retell her conversation with the Tungus woman, copying her intonational patterns.

As a matter of fact, another healer – baba Marusia from the village of Schuchje is nicknamed “Tunguska” because her ancestors included not only Russians and Chinese, but the Tungus as well.

Overall, the attitude of the Russian population of the Three River region towards the Tungus was quite friendly. One of the “local Russians” made a comment: “The Tungus are like Russians – in their faith as well as their culture.

He probably means the Tungus who fled to the North of China together with the Russian emigrants after the civil war in Rus-

sia. This group of the Tungus were Orthodox, had a good command of the Russian language, had a lot of shared cultural customs with the Russians, and even made up part of the Transbaikalian Cossack army.

In the Three River region the Tungus became even closer to the Russians and that is how some of them became carriers of the Russian spell tradition, which helped to preserve it.

The textual analysis of the spells performed by baba Niura (Karavannaya), baba Marusiya (Schuchje), baba Shura (Dragocenka), their structure, imagery, formulas etc. shows that they belong to the Russian tradition. However, overall the spell tradition in the Three River region is fading. It seems that the only spells that remain in use are those for the treatment of the “evil eye”, “child scare”, and insomnia in children. They have remained relevant for the “local Russians” in the Chinese environment, despite the prohibition against using the Russian language.

I was lucky to have worked with probably the last remaining carriers of the Russian spell tradition in Northern China. I hope that new research, especially among the Tungus population of that region will help to elicit Russian spells for other ailments, such as toothache or “khomut” (the local name for a kind of “spoilage” associated with a severe skin condition). It would also be productive to research the Russian spell tradition along the Russian-Chinese border.

Study is executed under financial support RGNF (project No. 07-04-12133b)

ESTONIAN ENCOUNTER CHARMS

Mare Kõiva (Tartu)

mare@folklore.ee

I will give an overview of Estonian types of encounter charms, one of the oldest recorded and most researched type of charms. The most common types are very characteristic of charms of a long-time Lutheran country.

Attention is focused on the structure of dialogue, the accompanying rite institution and participants of a magical rite, its requirements to room, space and object and their inter-relations.

For example, in healing charms based on describing or reporting mythical events, dialogue has an enlivening and action-carrying role; it is a means of building a healing narrative, a story independent of the accompanying rite to relay an invariant message. As such, it is considerably different from the direct simplistic communication of dialogue incantations that only describe the rite. The accompanying healing methods are, compared to other dialogue incantations, modest: the disease locus is surrounded with circles or crosses, is blown upon, massaged, words are read onto it. However, the accompanying system of taboos determines that only a professional can perform the incantation.

WHEN CHARMS ENCOUNTER 'KARMA' (HUMAN ENDEAVOUR)

Sadhana Naithani (Delhi)

sadhana.naithani@gmail.com

In folk narratives across India the hero comes across divine and supernatural forces that offer magical charms in forms of things or written formulae that can solve problems. These are often confronted with the theory of *karma* and a battle between them ensues – is charm better, bigger or stronger than *karma* (action, deed, human labour). In this paper I shall discuss a few such battles and their outcome.

THE EARLIEST FORMS OF THE ST. PETER CHARM FOR TOOTHACHE

Lea T. Olsan (Cambridge)

olsan@ulm.edu

Among the earliest known examples of the St. Peter charm for toothache are three variants found in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. One appears in a vernacular Anglo-Saxon manuscript written near the year 1000 for the use of a Anglo-Saxon 'leech', or doctor. Another version appears on a throw-away leaf of parchment used as a fly-leaf in an unassuming manuscript containing two religious texts. This version varies from that found in the medical text, as its opening is different and its text is more elaborate. The third example in an Anglo-Saxon manuscript preserves only a fragment of the first line of the formula. But this line is significant because it serves as a second witness to the form of the encounter which begins 'Saint Peter [was sitting] on a marble stone' (*Sanctus Petrus supra marmoream*), as opposed to the one in the medical text.

These particular variants are of interest in themselves because they are the earliest versions of the most long-lived charm in English, as well as a motif that is known to have become widespread through Europe. The manuscript contexts of the St. Peter charm for toothache are evidence of the monastic origins and preservation of charms in monastic contexts. The contents of the second (fly-leaf) variant mentioned above suggests that this charm functioned specifically as a benedictional prayer. This point is significant since the church's spokesmen, such as the ninth-century Anglo-Saxon monk Aelfric of Eynsham, warns against the use of incantations. This paper is intended to reconsider the Latin St. Peter charm as it emerges within early medieval monastic environments.

HUNGARIAN ENCOUNTER CHARMS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

Éva Pócs (Budapest)

pocse@chello.hu

In my paper I will give a survey on the Hungarian types of the Encounter charms. I will pay special attention to the classical heritage and to the analogous Coptic, Byzantine and Latin Christian tradition, to the persistence of pagan elements, to the interaction between pagan and Christian personage of the narratives; to the presence of improvised text-motives closely related to local folk belief in the frame of the constant text structures; to the text-types linked to healing rites *resp.* to church exorcising rites or Christian apocryphal legends and prayers; and to the transmitting media (written recipes, practice of priests and monks, magic books used by village healers, etc.).

THE CONCEPT OF *BEGEGNUNGSSEGEN* AND ITS APPLICABILITY TO ENGLISH NARRATIVE CHARMS

Jonathan Roper (Sheffield)

J.Roper@sheffield.ac.uk

In my paper I intend to discuss the emergence and development of the concept of 'Begegnungssegen' (or 'encounter charm') as it emerged in late nineteenth century, and how it was subsequently developed by charms scholars, notably Ferdinand Ohrt, in the first half of the twentieth century. In the second half of my paper, I turn from the history to the uses of the idea. The concept has not been as developed or explored as it might have been, not applied to a broad range of culture, so it may be instructive to attempt to examine its applicability to a fresh set of data - namely a corpus of English narrative charms (Roper 2005).

Roper, J. 2005. *English Verbal Charms*. Helsinki: Suomalainen tiedeakatemia.

MALEFIC DEMONS IN THE ROMANIAN *HISTORIOLOAE*

Emanuela Timotin (Bucharest)

etimotin@yahoo.com

Many Romanian charms, both manuscript and oral, have the form of a *historiola*. Among their protagonists, the malefic demon is a protean figure, alternatively depicted as a human or a supernatural being, as a foreigner or as a relative, acting single or in couple, as a member of a certain family or of an indistinct group.

By describing the multiple aspects of this key figure, this analyse investigates to what extent such a systematic classification can turn into a useful instrument for the comprehension of the subjacent mentality of these narrative charms.

ENCOUNTER CHARMS IN RUSSIAN TRADITION

Andrey Toporkov (Moscow)

atoporkov@mail.ru

The paper will analyze three types of Russian encounter charms:

1) NN leaves home and goes to sea; a mythical character is standing on an island; NN addresses him/ her with a request to cast out or destroy the disease of NN or another person (or evoke love, making somebody to desire NN).

2) The mythical character is walking on road (on bridge) and meets a personified disease; they start a dialogue: Where are you going? –I am going to NN! The mythical character curses the disease and forbids it from going to NN.

3) The mythical character is near the sea or a mountain; the personified diseases go by; the mythical character beats the diseases and demands that they don't go to NN; the diseases promise that they will not go to NN any more.

The magical effect of the text is based on the fact that the formula, which is uttered by one of the characters in the encounter charm, has the character of a performative, which is called upon to influence the real situation outside the text.

QUARREL BETWEEN GODS: A DIALOGUE IN CHARMS AND LEGENDS

Daiva Vaitkevičienė (Vilnius)

vaidaiva@liti.lt

The starting point is a Russian charm against snakebite published by L. N. Maikov in 1869. The charm presents a quarrel between the charmer and the great snake *Skoropeja* sitting in the mythological centre of the world. The related dialogs are known in folk narratives depicting the quarrel between Thunder god or God and Devil. According to the survey made by J. Balys the relevant legends were recorded in Lithuania, Byelorussia, Ukraine and Russia. Comparing the charm and folk legends some important aspects can be revealed: the Maikov's charm dialog is based on the mythological pattern – a charmer assumes the role of the God or Thunder god while a snake is perceived as a demonic being or even the Devil; the charming as repetition of the mythological dialog is comparable to ritual; the dialogs in verbal charms can be very old in Balto-Slavic tradition.

Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore

<http://www.folklore.ee/folklore>

Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore is a peer-reviewed interdisciplinary journal published in English since June 1996 three times a year (occasionally with an additional special edition) by academic publishers. The printed publication is complemented by an online version of the journal.

A submitted manuscript is accepted for publication following two positive anonymous reviews (or after the comments of reviewers and editors have been taken into consideration). Each article is complete with an abstract, a list of keywords and references.

The articles are divided in scholarly studies and overviews of applied research:

Academic studies (10-30 pp.): Original articles with a lengthier argumentation on a topical issue and problem areas. The articles require an abstract and keywords.

Applied research overviews (5-15 pp): Shorter articles discussing single phenomena, topical issues, introducing research projects, including specialised overviews and articles on folklore studies, cultural history, folk religion, ethics and philosophy, curricular, subjects and related topics; introductions of projects and research results at research centres, departments and institutions.

In addition to scholarly articles, special section is dedicated to reviews and introductions of specialised literature, CDs, etc., overviews of conferences and fieldwork expeditions, introductions of research centres of different countries, interviews with eminent scholars in folklore studies, reviews of defended dissertations, etc. The electronic journal incorporates supplementary interactive materials – audio and video samples, photos and tables.

Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore is indexed in: MLA Folklore Bibliography, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, Internationale Volkskundliche Bibliographie, DOAJ, C.E.E.O.L.

More information and full-text articles available on our home page: *<http://www.folklore.ee/folklore>*

CALL FOR PAPERS

The 15th Congress of the International Society for Folk
Narrative Research (ISFNR)

Narratives Across Space and Time: Transmissions and Adaptations

Athens, Greece, on June 21-27, 2009

<http://www.ut.ee/isfnr/page>

Subtopics:

- I. History and Future of Folk Narrative Research
- II. Mythologies, Ecology and Environmental Representations
- III. Migrant and Diaspora communities: Adaptation and Memory
- IV. Social Strategies and Collective Identities
- V. Storytelling and Storytellers
- VI. Folk Narrative in the Modern Media

Panels: Participants wishing to suggest a panel are most welcome. Those wishing to organize a panel need to submit their suggestions following a specific form (chair/convenor of the panel, topic, titles of papers and participants). In doing so they must comply with the thematic guidelines of the sub-topics and general topic of the congress.

Two **exhibitions** are scheduled in the context of the 15th Congress of the ISFNR in Athens:

- a) an exhibition of books and latest periodical publications released since the last congress of the ISFNR in 2005;
- b) an exhibition celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the ISFNR.

For more information: *<http://www.ut.ee/isfnr/page.php?p=12>*

Symposium

The ISFNR Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming will hold its second symposium in Athens, at the 15th Congress of the ISFNR. For more information please contact: Jonathan Roper [*J.Roper@sheffield.ac.uk*]

Symposium on Encounter Charms

May 9, 2008
Estonian Literary Museum
Vanemuise 42, Tartu, Estonia

Many narrative charms feature an encounter between the chief protagonist of the *historiola* and another key figure. These may be encounters with a supernatural helper or encounters with an evil power. The great charms scholar Ferdinand Ohrt termed such charms '*Begegnungssegen*' in a series of influential articles and in his entry on '*Segen*' in the *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*. But little concentrated work has been done on encounter charms since then - a situation this seminar intends to remedy.

This symposium is dedicated to addressing encounter charms across cultures and over time.

The symposium is organised by the Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research in collaboration with the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu, and Department of Folklore, Estonian Literary Museum.

International Society for Folk Narrative Research
<http://www.ut.ee/isfnr>

Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore
<http://www.folklore.ee/UTfolk1>

Department of Folklore, Estonian Literary Museum
<http://www.folklore.ee/rl/fo>

Symposium home page
www.folklore.ee/rl/fo/konve/2008/charms

ISBN 978-9949-446-11-7



9 789949 446117 >