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Magic in Slavia Orthodoxa: The Written Tradition

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I. Introduction

Ethnographers and folklorists interested in the Orthodox Slavs have long been aware of the rich oral traditions of magic in that part of the world, and have been collecting and studying texts of magical folklore for well over a century. Particularly valuable are the extensive collections of East Slavic folk incantations published long ago by L. Majkov and by N. Vinogradov, but South Slavic materials are also available in quantity.[1]

Philologists and historians, in sharp contrast, have paid little systematic attention to the corresponding written traditions of magic and the occult sciences among the medieval Orthodox Slavs. Some magical texts have been published, and others studied, but always only in passing, by scholars who were pursuing other interests, such as describing manuscripts or editing texts for the historical study of literature, language, the Bible, liturgy, church history, the sciences—in short, of anything and everything except magic in its own right.

This neglect of magic as a subject of scholarship is only partly the consequence of a kind of rationalistic or scientific distaste for magic itself, or of discomfort in the presence of magicians who took their magic seriously. It is also due to the intractability of the magical texts themselves.

[1] L. Majkov, "Velikorusskie zaklinanija," *Zapiski Russkogo geografičeskogo obščestva po Otdeleniju ètnografii* 2 (1869), 417–580, 747–48; Nikolaj Vinogradov, *Zagovory, oberegi, spasitel'nye molitvy i proč.* Živaja starina, Dopolnenie (St. Petersburg, 1907–10). There are convenient surveys by Joseph L. Conrad: "Magic Charms and Healing Rituals in Contemporary Yugoslavia," *Southeastern Europe / L'Europe du sud-est* 10.2 (1983), 99–120; "Bulgarian Magic Charms: Ritual, Form, and Content," *SlEEJ* 31 (1987), 548–62; "Russian Ritual Incantations: Tradition, Diversity, and Continuity," *SlEEJ* 33 (1989), 422–44.

Some few magical texts seem to have been wholly lost, and are now known only by name.[2] Others survive only in very late copies, often the work of scribes who poorly understood the texts they were copying, or who altered them to suit the views and tastes of the age in which they lived and worked. Modern editors, too, usually lack an insider's understanding of magical texts and usually have not had much experience with the practices which these texts treat. Many of the texts that have been published are anonymous or pseudepigraphic and offer little evidence for the time and place of their origin. In addition, many are what textual critics refer to as "wild texts," that is, texts that scribes felt free to alter at will or whim as they copied them. It is not easy to determine the stemmatic relations between the extant copies of a wild text. Thus an editor who wishes to edit a wild text of any length must overcome great difficulties and may perhaps be excused if he decides to turn his hand to an easier task instead.

As a result of all this there is still no published corpus of all the magical and occult texts copied by the medieval Orthodox Slavs. Indeed, there is not even a single published survey of the known materials for such a corpus. It is the simple aim, therefore, of this paper to provide a preliminary overview of the whole written tradition of magic and the occult sciences within Slavia Orthodoxa, that is, within the world of the Orthodox Slavs during the middle ages.

II. The Term "Magic"

Let us say, first of all, what we mean by "magic." We do *not* wish to limit the term to "using spells and incantations to control the forces of nature," as the skeptic James Randi once put it.[3] A broader definition will prove more useful

[2] Several of the Orthodox Slavic definitions of the canon of Scripture include at their end a list of rejected or heretical books, most of which seem to be books of magic (see section III.1 below). Some of the titles in this list are not now known to be extant, e.g., *Putnik* and *Volxovnik*. See A. I. Jacimirskij, *Bibliografičeskij obzor apokrifov v južno-slavjanskoj i russkoj pis'mennosti (spiski pamjatnikov), I: Apokrify vetxozavetnye* (Petrograd, 1921), 1–75; N. A. Kobjak, "Indeksy otrečennyx i zapreščennyx knig v russkoj pis'mennosti," *Drevnerusskaja literatura: Istočnikovedenie: Sbornik naučnyx trudov*, ed. D. S. Lixačev (Leningrad, 1984), 45–54.

[3] James Randi, "The Role of Conjurors in Psi Research," *A Skeptic's Handbook of Parapsychology*, ed. Paul Kurtz (Buffalo, 1985), 339–56 (at 342).

for our purpose here. In particular, we shall regard divination as a kind of magic.

The question of how to define magic is an old and vexed one, and we will not be able to answer it fully here. As a rule, scholars have tried to define magic in contrast to such things as religion, science, technology, or medicine. There is much to be said for this approach, since there was a time when no sharp distinctions were drawn among these several disciplines, and for centuries afterward there were large areas of knowledge and practice where they all overlapped one another.

In the beginning the Greeks had a word for magic, and that word was μαγεία. Μαγεία was the special expertise of the μάγοι, and the μάγοι were originally a tribe or a people in the lands of the Medes and the Persians. Legend claimed that the sage Zoroaster was a member of this tribe and the first μάγος of them all in the secondary sense of the term, that is, a mage or magician. He, it was said, was the first teacher of the religion and the high or hidden sciences that were practiced by the Greeks' most formidable enemy, namely, the Persian Empire. Thus μαγεία originally referred to the religion, the magic, and the science of one's enemies, and so it could easily become a term of reprobation. Subsequently both the Greeks and the Romans used the word to refer to anything alien or subversive or reprehensible that used hidden or supernatural forces and thus fell beyond the understanding or comprehension of ordinary people. By a very slight shift in meaning it could also be used to refer to any false or evil religious or parareligious practices.

As false or evil practice, it eventually came to contrast with θεουργία, a form of magical religion cultivated by certain Neoplatonists from the second century A.D. onward.[4] This positive term echoes both θεολογία and θαυματουργία, being in opposition to the former as practice to theory, and to the latter as holy practice to mere wonderworking. On the other hand, some defenders of magic insisted on retaining μαγεία as a positive term, in opposition to γοητεία as good practice to evil.

Science and technology, of course, took shape as distinct spheres of

[4] Georg Luck, "Theurgy and Forms of Worship in Neoplatonism," in *Religion, Science, and Magic in Concert and in Conflict,* ed. Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Paul Virgil McCracken Flesher (New York-Oxford, 1989), 185–225; Sarah Iles Johnston, *Hekate Soteira: A Study of Hekate's Roles in the Chaldean Oracles and Related Literature,* American Classical Studies 21 (Atlanta, 1990).

knowledge and practice much, much later. We all know the main lines, at least, of the way in which scientific truth came to be regarded as a different kind of knowledge from religious truth, and as a kind of knowledge that rests on different foundations—on observation and experiment as opposed to divine revelation. In each case, of course, one puts forth propositions that are true or false (as logicians use these terms), and from these propositions one then deduces many others by the processes of logic. The difference hinges on how one determines the truth or falsity of such propositions in the first place.

What may be less well known is the similar process by which applied science or technology came to be regarded as different from magic. This long history was the subject of Lynn Thorndike's great work, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science,* published in eight substantial volumes over the course of thirty-five years.[5] Here, too, observation and experiment were the foundations on which the wall was built that eventually separated the realm of applied science and technology from that of magic.

It should also be noted that both technology and magic can be practiced without any *explicit* theory for their practice. They can exist wholly as practical activities, where one follows certain directions in order to attain some goal; and these directions either work or do not work, as may be the case. It is just as easy to test a set of directions by observation and experiment as to test a set of propositions. Magic and technology may, but need not, entail *only* "knowing how to"; religion and science always entail a certain amount of "knowing that" alongside of their "knowing how to."

In saying that science and technology rest on a foundation of observation and experiment, and thus can be tested empirically, we do not wish to say that religious or magical claims are *never* empirically testable. The history of world religions is in fact littered with many empirically testable claims that were made, and then found empirically wanting (for example, prophecies that the world would end at some specific date now long past). Nor is it very hard to find historical magicians whose spells did not work. We merely say that the claims of religion and magic *need not* be empirically testable.

Such considerations lead us to propose that science and technology are distinguished from religion and magic in that the claims of the former are empirically testable—with our greater modern sophistication we might now say

[5] Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York, 1923–58).

Table 1. Defining Features of Science, Technology, Religion, and Magic

The claims of	Science	Technology	Religion	Magic
are:				
Empirically Testable	+	+	−	−
True/False Propositions	+	−	+	−

that they are empirically falsifiable—whereas the claims of the latter need not have this property. In semiotic terms, the former are *marked* for the empirical testability or falsifiability of their claims, whereas the latter are *unmarked* in that respect.[6]

Similarly, we would propose that science and religion are distinguished from technology and magic in that the former make claims in the logical form of propositions that may be true or false, whereas the latter need not do so. In semiotic terms, the former are *marked* for making claims in the form of propositional statements with truth-value, whereas the latter are *unmarked* in that respect.

This can be set out as a table (Table 1).

Here it is science that is doubly marked, the most narrowly specified of the four categories. Religion and technology are specified by a single mark each. Magic is the wholly unmarked category, the residue class left after the other three categories have been defined and have taken shape as organized disciplines.[7]

Residue classes need not have any positive defining characteristics of their own, but may be merely a kind of classificatory "leftovers." This is why it seems impossible to define magic in any positive terms. However, as the archaeologists among us know, residues also merit serious study, and often repay it most generously.[8]

[6] For this terminology see Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology,* trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (New York, 1967), 76–78.

[7] The problems connected with the definition of magic have been most profoundly examined by Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Culture, Thought, and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective* (Cambridge, 1985), 1–86, 123–66; idem, *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge, 1990).

[8] There is now a branch of archaeology devoted to the remains of magic and ritual: see Ralph Merrifield, *The Archaeology of Ritual and Magic* (New York, 1987).

III. The Extant Magical Texts

The written magical texts that have so far been discovered fall largely into three classes: (1) individual charms, spells, incantations, and magical prayers, including inscriptions on amulets; (2) divinatory texts of several kinds; and (3) herbals that contain elements of magical herbalism, and other texts of natural magic.

There are also a few texts that are occult in the broader sense, although not precisely magical, and that therefore do not fall clearly into one of these three classes. Among the latter is the *Laodicean Epistle,* which I view as essentially a system of cryptography appended to a brief account of the premises of a rather idiosyncratic theology.[9]

Most of these written texts are translations from Greek into one or another type of Church Slavonic, but some of them seem to have been translated from other languages, and a very few may be either original compositions or written copies of oral charms from Slavic folk magic.[10]

The majority of these magical texts in Church Slavonic were translated in the broad context of the liturgy of the Slavic Orthodox churches, or at least have been preserved in that context. That is, most of the charms and magical prayers, as well as some of the divinatory texts, have been preserved in liturgical or biblical manuscripts.[11] Since the same kinds of text in Greek seem to occur in the same kinds of Greek manuscripts, such magical texts may some-

[9] M. Speranskij, *Tajnopis' v jugo-slavjanskix i russkix pamjatnikax pis'ma,* Ènciklopedija slavjanskoj filologii 4.3 (Leningrad, 1929), 103–7, 114–15; N. A. Kazakova and Ja. S. Lur'e, *Antifeodal'nye eretičeskie dviženija na Rusi XIV–načala XVI veka* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1955), 256–76. There is a large body of scholarly literature on the *Laodicean Epistle* which need not be cited here.

[10] Most of the 125 incantations in the *Olonetsk Spellbook* appear to derive from Russian folk magic. This remarkable manuscript (48ff, written ca. 1625–50) was carefully described and published by V. I. Sreznevskij, *Opisanie rukopisej i knig, sobrannyx dlja Akademii nauk v Oloneckom krae* (St. Petersburg, 1913), 196–202, 481–512; see also Elena Eleonskaja, "Vredonosnye zagovory: Tri zagovora iz Sbornika 17-go veka," *Slavia* 7 (1928–29), 934–39. A few other such manuscripts are known to exist, but they are no older than the late 18th century and are much briefer: in addition to Majkov, "Velikorusskie zaklinanija," and Vinogradov, *Zagovory,* see V. I. Sreznevskij, "Otčet Otdeleniju russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti o poezdke v Vologodskuju guberniju," *Izvestija Otdelenija russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti Akademii nauk 7* (1902), 2, 232–72; 4, 128–245 (at 186, 188, 235–45).

[11] Even the glagolitic *Euchologium Sinaiticum,* probably written in the 11th century, contains a number of prayers which might be viewed as magical, for example, the

times have been translated without any special forethought, as part of the ongoing large-scale process of translation and redaction of liturgical and ritual texts. This process, we know, began with Constantine and Methodius around 863 and continued among the Orthodox Slavs throughout the middle ages.[12]

Smaller groups of texts may have been translated in other contexts, of course; one obvious example may be the inscriptions on amulets, a few of which are quite early examples of writing in the Cyrillic alphabet. The oldest of these may have belonged to Grand Prince Vladimir Monomax and have been made in the late eleventh century: this is the gold amulet from Černihiv.[13]

1. Charms, Spells, Incantations, and Magical Prayers

These are the only texts, of all those that we shall survey here, which merit the term "magical" in the very strictest sense of the term, where the overt purpose is to control both nature and one's fellows, and the means of that control are words and gestures alone.

Let us remind ourselves, at the outset, that our common sharp modern distinction between religion as acts of humble supplication and magic as acts of proud command is precisely that—a *modern* distinction, and one more characteristic of western than eastern Europe. Its roots lie in the reforming move-

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Prayer of St. Tryphon against insects that might harm vineyards and fields (fol. 59): see Rajko Nahtigal, *Euchologium Sinaiticum: starocerkveno-slovanski glagolski spomenik,* Akademija znanosti in umetnosti v Ljubljani, Filozofsko-filološko-historični razred, dela 1–2 (Ljubljana, 1941–42), II, 151–54). Similar texts in liturgical manuscripts are discussed by I. Ja. Porfir'ev, "Apokrifičeskie molitvy po rukopisjam Soloveckoj biblioteki," *Trudy Četvertogo arxeologičeskogo s"ezda v Rossii, byvšego v Kazani, s 31 ijulja po 18 avgusta 1877 goda* (Kazan, 1891), II, 1–24 (separately paginated); A. I. Almazov, "K istorii molitv na raznye slučai (zametki i pamjatniki)," *Letopis' Istoriko-filologičeskogo obščestva pri Novorossijskom universitete* 6 [= Vizantiskoe otdelenie 3] (1896), 380–432; S. Rozanov, "Narodnye zagovory v cerkovnyx Trebnikax (k istorii byta i mysli)," *Sbornik statej v čest' akademika Alekseja Ivanoviča Sobolevskogo,* Sbornik Otdelenija russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti Akademii nauk 101.3 (Leningrad, 1928), 30–35.

[12] For an excellent general account see A. P. Vlasto, *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom: An Introduction to the Medieval History of the Slavs* (Cambridge, 1970).

[13] B. A. Rybakov, *Russkie datirovannye nadpisi XI–XIV vekov,* Arxeologija SSSR: Svod arxeologičeskix istočnikov, E 1–44 (Moscow, 1964), 19–20, pl. XXXIV: 1–2; T. V. Nikolaeva and A. V. Černecov, *Drevnerusskie amulety-zmeeviki* (Moscow, 1991).

ments of late medieval Catholicism, and its full bloom occurred during the Protestant Reformation, as Stanley Tambiah has so decisively shown; modern historians who still oppose religion to magic on this basis are just making unexamined use of a relic of sixteenth-century ecclesiastical polemics.[14] We shall not use this relic here.

Thus it becomes very hard, perhaps impossible, to decide in every case whether some text is religious or magical. A very few of the texts that we shall treat here make no reference to God or any saint, or to the Christian religion: these, indeed, may be regarded as magical, and may unhesitatingly be labeled as charms, spells, or incantations. Also, there are many prayers that do not attempt even to influence nature or one's fellows, let alone control them, but are gratuitous acts of devotion. However, there are many texts that aim at influence or control, and yet also have religious references; and their status is wholly ambiguous. We may perhaps term them "magical prayers," but if we do so, we risk giving offense to believers who use some of them in ways that are fully approved by the Orthodox churches. In Orthodoxy, rather, the line appears to be drawn sharply between approved and rejected prayers of this class, and only the latter might be thought to merit the term "magical," which is taken as a term of reprobation.

However, in the very few cases where a medieval Orthodox Slavic churchman condemns or rejects a specific text or group of texts that belong to this class, he does so on the grounds of heresy, not magic. Thus the earliest form of the anonymous text *On the True Books and the False* (*O knigax istinnyx i ložnyx*) concludes with the following remark:[15] "And the priests have false writings in their *Euchologia,* like the bad Penitentials (*Nomokanony*) and the false Prayers for the Fevers. Heretics had distorted the traditions of the Holy Apostles, writing false words to deceive the vulgar; but the Council investigated them and cleansed them and cursed them."

Virtually the same words are included in the later, much amplified redactions of this text, two variants of which are attributed to the Russian metropolitans Kiprian and Zosimus; one composite redaction reads:[16]

[14] Tambiah, *Magic.*

[15] A. N. Pypin, "Dlja ob"jasnenija stat'i O ložnyx knigax," *Letopis' zanjatij Arxeografičeskoj kommissii,* 1 (1861), 1–55 (at 27). For the manuscripts of the earliest form of this text, see Jacimirskij, *Bibliografičeskij obzor apokrifov,* 6–9.

[16] Pypin, "Dlja ob"jasnenija," 41 (with variant readings from several manuscripts incorporated into his text).

> And in their *Euchologia,* among the Divine Writ, the stupid village priests have false writings—sown by heretics for the destruction of ignorant priests and deacons—thick village manuscripts and bad Penitentials (*Nomokanony*) and the false healing Prayers for the Fevers and for infections and for sicknesses. And they write fever letters on prosphorae and on apples, because of sickness. All this is done by the ignorant, and they have it from their fathers and forefathers, and they perish in this folly. Heretics had distorted the traditions of the Church and the Canons of the Holy Apostles, writing false words.

Elsewhere, in one or another of these amplified redactions, we also find some or all of the following condemned as false and heretical: *The Seven Daughters of Herod which are wrongly called Fevers, The Names of the Angels, The Seventy Names of God, The Letter from Heaven about Sunday, Jesus' Letter to King Abgar,* "all sorts of heretical spells" ("kobi vsjakie eretičeskie") and "also other spells about the Martyrs and about the Annunciation, which are heretical writings" ("takožde i pročie kobi o Mučennikax i o Blagoveščenii, eže sut' knigi eretičeskie").[17]

Thus it appears that the category of "magical" texts in the written tradition of Slavia Orthodoxa may be a scholars' construct, and might not correspond to any category of texts commonly recognized by the medieval Orthodox Slavs. This question needs to be investigated further.

The number of extant charms, spells, incantations, and magical prayers is surprisingly large. We can do no more than briefly list some of the major texts and types of texts that belong here.[18]

[17] Jacimirskij, *Bibliografičeskij obzor apokrifov,* 9–28, for the manuscripts; and for the texts, 44–45 (#44), 46–47 (#54), 50–51 (#62–63), 56–59 (#76–80), 70–71 (#111), 72–73 (#114). See also Pypin, "Dlja ob"jasnenija," 32–46; Kobjak, "Indeksy," 50–54; Bon'o Angelov, "Spiskăt na zabranenite knigi v staro-bălgarskata literatura," *Izvestija na Instituta za Bălgarska literatura* 1 (1952), 107–59.

[18] A. N. Pypin, *Ložnye i otrečennye knigi russkoj stariny,* Pamjatniki starinnoj russkoj literatury, izdavaemye grafom Grigoriem Kuželevym-Bezborodko 3 (St. Petersburg, 1862), 150–53, 167–68; Nikolaj Tixonravov, *Pamjatniki otrečennoj russkoj literatury* (Moscow, 1863), II, 11–17, 314–22, 339–46, 351–60; Porfir'ev, "Apokrifičeskie molitvy"; A. I. Jacimirskij, "K istorii ložnyx molitv v južno-slavjanskoj pis'mennosti," *Izvestija Otdelenija russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti Akademii nauk* 18 (1913), 3, 1–102; 4, 16–126; W. F. Ryan, "Solomon, SATOR, Acrostics, and Leo the Wise in Russia," *OxfSlPap,* n.s. 19 (1986), 46–61. See also the references in notes 10–11 above.

- lists of epithets or names for God (usually 72 in number) and for the Virgin Mary
- praise for the cross
- prayer to the archangel Michael for general protection
- charms and prayers against the bite of a snake or of a mad dog
- charms and prayers to stop the flow of blood
- charms and prayers against blocked water (urine)
- charms and prayers against toothache
- prayers against various other forms of sickness
- prayers for a speedy and safe childbirth
- prayers and rituals against thunder and lightning
- prayers to protect travelers
- prayers for protection in a court of law
- *The Letter from Heaven about Sunday*
- *Jesus' Letter to King Abgar*
- *St. Theodosius's Coffin Letter*
- the SATOR AREPO TENET OPERA ROTAS square and related talismanic seals (often ascribed to Solomon)

Most of these texts are probably translations from the Greek, and Greek parallel texts seem not to be rare, although few have been published by modern scholars.[19] However, *St. Theodosius's Coffin Letter* is an East Slavic original text, the origin of which is recounted in the first chapter of the *Paterikon* of the Kievan Crypts Monastery.[20]

2. Divinatory Texts

About a dozen divinatory texts are known in Church Slavonic translation. They fall naturally into several groups. There are, first of all, a few bibliomantic texts. In the pure form of bibliomancy, after a few prayers, a book is opened at

[19] See also F. Pradel, *Griechische und süditalienische Gebete, Beschwörungen und Rezepte des Mittelalters,* Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten III.3 (Giessen, 1907), as well as the various works by Armand Delatte cited in notes 36, 48, and 49 below.

[20] Dmytro Abramovyč, *Kyjevo-pečers'kyj pateryk,* Pam'jatky movy ta pys'mens-tva davn'oji Ukrajiny 4 (Kiev, 1930), 1–5; cf. 212 note 4 for the scholarly literature on the *Coffin Letter.*

random to yield a suggestive text. Thus one may open a book of the Bible to see what verse first catches the eye. Alternatively, the book that one opens may have been provided with special notes for divination.

The best attested of these books is the *Divinatory Psalter* (*Gadatel'naja Psaltyr'*),[21] which is extant in several copies from the eleventh century on. Here one chooses a Psalm, perhaps by opening the book at random, and reads the non-biblical sentence associated with that Psalm and written at the foot of the page. An alternate method of choosing the Psalm number seems to have involved a spiral arrangement of the numerals from 1 through 150 (a few such spirals have survived in manuscripts from the thirteenth century and later); conjecturally, one cast a pebble or seed onto the spiral. Also, the 150 divinatory notes were sometimes copied by themselves, apart from the Psalter.[22]

A second bibliomantic text is extant in only two manuscripts: the *Art Revealed to the Prophet Samuel* (*Xitrost' proroku Samuilu otkrovena*). Here the diviner records as odd or even the numerical values of the initial Cyrillic letters of the first four verses on a page selected by opening a book of the Bible at random. He then reads one of sixteen divinatory notes as indicated by the specific sequence of odd or even numbers which he chose.[23]

Closely related to these texts in its structure is an aleamantic (or astragalomantic) text, according to which the diviner selects one of 56 sentences by

[21] Here and below I give not only an invented English title for each text, but also the title (in its Russian form) by which it is most commonly cited in modern Slavic scholarship.

[22] M. Speranskij, *Iz istorii otrečennyx knig, I: Gadanija po Psaltiri,* Pamjatniki drevnej pis'mennosti i iskusstva 129 (St. Petersburg, 1899); V. M. Istrin, "K voprosu o gadatel'nyx Psaltirjax," *Letopis' Istoriko-filologičeskogo obščestva pri Novorossijskom universitete* 9 [= Vizantisko-slavjanskoe otdelenie 6] (1901), 153–202. Carlo Verdiani, "Il Salterio Laurenziano-Voliniense, codice paleoslavo del 1384," *RicSlav* 3 (1954), 1–29, provides a photograph of such a spiral (fig. 1).

[23] Speranskij, *Iz istorii otrečennyx knig,* I, 58–66, and Priloženie, 15–20; Gerhard Birkfellner, "Slavische Bibliomantie (Zur abergläubisch-prognostischen Volksliteratur bei den Slaven)," *Litterae slavicae medii aevii Francisco Venceslao Mareš sexagenario oblatae,* Sagners slavistische Sammlung 8 (Munich, 1985), 31–51. Although this text is surely a translation, no original seems to have been found or published. Each of the four numbers admits of two possibilities, odd or even; hence the total number of possible choices is $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 16$.

rolling three six-sided dice.[24] This is the *Divinatory Book of King David* (*Kniga gadatel'naja proroka i carja Davida*).[25]

In geomancy, the diviner casts four sets of four random numbers, each of which may be either odd or even. (For convenience, all odd numbers are reduced to the number 1, all even numbers to the number 2.) He may cast these numbers by any random process, for example, by throwing a handful of pebbles on a patch of ground which has already been divided into four "fields" by scratching three parallel lines, or by spattering drops of ink onto a piece of paper similarly marked with three parallel lines. From these four sets of the numbers 1 or 2, he then derives twelve further sets of four numbers 1 or 2 by a rather complicated procedure. The sixteen sets that result from this procedure are then interpreted in astrological terms. There is one lengthy geomantic text, first published within the last decade, namely, the *Rafli Book* (*Kniga Rafli*).[26]

[24] There are 6 possible rolls with all three dice the same, 30 with only two dice the same, and 20 with all three dice different; the sum is 56 possible rolls. The order of the dice is irrelevant to the choice of a text.

[25] Pypin, *Ložnye i otrečennye knigi,* 161–66; Speranskij, *Iz istorii otrečennyx knig,* I, 66–76, 114–68, and Priloženie, 76–99; S. P. Mordovina and A. L. Stanislavskij, "Gadatel'nye knigi XVII v. xolopa Pimena Kalinina," *Istorija russkogo jazyka: Pamjatniki XI–XVIII vv.* (Moscow, 1982), 321–36. Although this text is surely a translation, no original seems to have been found or published. A similar aleamantic text, where one chooses from 216 Homeric verses by rolling a six-sided die three times in succession, is found in a Greek magical papyrus of the 3rd or 4th century A.D., PGM VII.1–148: see Hans Dieter Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago-London, 1986), 112–19. Several later parallels can also be found.

[26] A. A. Turilov and A. V. Černecov, "Otrečennaja kniga Rafli," *TrDrLit* 40 (1985), 260–344; idem, "Novoe imja v istorii russkoj kul'tury," *Priroda* (1985), 9, 88–97; idem, "K kul'turno-istoričeskoj xarakteristike eresi 'židovstvujuščix'," *Germenevtika drevnerusskoj literatury XI–XVI veka* (Moscow, 1989), 407–29. The *Rafli Book* seems to me to be an adaptation of a western European Renaissance text, but I have not yet found its source; previous scholarship has emphasized its presumed eastern sources. (Note that the word *rafli,* though ultimately derived from Arabic *raml,* reflects neither the Arabic form of the word nor the Greek *ramplion* or *rabolion/raboulion,* but the Latin *raffla,* the French *rafle,* or the English *raffle,* all of which are attested from the 14th century on, and originally referred to a process of divination in which three six-sided dice are thrown. The oldest attestation of the word in western Europe seems to be in a French divinatory text, edited most recently by Erik von Kræmer, *Le Jeu d'Amour,* Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 54 [Helsinki, 1975].) A large-scale account of western European geomancy during the middle ages has now been given by Thérèse Charmasson, *Recherches sur une technique divinatoire: La géomancie dans l'Occident*

A much briefer treatise of the same general sort, but without any astrological terminology, remains unpublished except for a few brief extracts: the *Gates of Aristotle* (*Vrata Aristotelja*).[27]

Many other divinatory texts are best characterized as omen books, or manuals for the interpretation of naturally occurring omens. Most of these texts are about omens in the heavens, but one text interprets trembling in various parts of the body. Here belong at least the following texts:[28]

- the *Kalendologion* (*Koljadnik*), about the day of the week on which Christmas falls[29]
- the *Brontologion* (*Gromnik*), about thunder in terms of the signs of the zodiac and the age of the moon when it is heard[30]

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médiéval, Centre de recherches d'histoire et de philologie de la IV[e] Section de l'École pratique des Hautes Études, V: Hautes études médiévales et modernes 44 (Geneva-Paris, 1980).

[27] M. Speranskij, "Aristotelevy vrata i Tajnaja tajnyx," *Sbornik statej v čest' akademika Alekseja Ivanoviča Sobolevskogo,* Sbornik Otdelenija russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti Akademii nauk 101.3 (Leningrad, 1928), 15–18. This is not to be confused with the pseudepigraphic *Secreta Secretorum* (*Tajnaja tajnyx*) *of Aristotle,* mentioned below (note 40).

[28] Other texts, not listed here, may be found in Pypin, *Ložnye i otrečennye knigi,* 156–57, 159–60; Tixonravov, *Pamjatniki,* II, 398–424. Cf. Ihor Ševčenko, "Remarks on the Diffusion of Byzantine Scientific and Pseudo-Scientific Literature among the Orthodox Slavs," *SlEERev* 59 (1981), 321–45 (at 338–40).

[29] Pypin, *Ložnye i otrečennye knigi,* 155–56, 157–58; Tixonravov, *Pamjatniki,* II, 377–81; Biljana Jovanović-Stipčević, "O zimama i koledama u Zborniku popa Dragolja," *Arheografski prilozi* 2 (1980), 153–74. James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, N.Y., 1983), I, 601–4, gives an English translation of an early Latin version of the same text; Charlesworth was not aware either of the Church Slavonic version or of the Greek texts mentioned by Ševčenko, "Remarks," 339 note 45. All versions are pseudepigraphically attributed to the Prophet Ezra in many manuscripts.

[30] Pypin, *Ložnye i otrečennye knigi,* 154–55; Tixonravov, *Pamjatniki,* II, 361–74; V. N. Peretc, *Materialy k istorii apokrifa i legendy,* I: *K istorii Gromnika: Vvedenie, slavjanskie i evrejskie teksty,* Zapiski Istoriko-filologičeskogo fakul'teta S.-Peterburgskogo universitet 54. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1899); idem, "Materialy k istorii apokrifa i legendy, [II]: K istorii Lunnika," *Izvestija Otdelenija russkogo jazyka i slovesnosti Akademii nauk* 6 (1901), 3, 1–126; 4, 103–31. Cf. Ševčenko, "Remarks," 338–40 notes 43, 47, for the parallel Greek texts.

- the *Astrapelogion* (*Molnijanik*), about lightning in terms of the month and day when it strikes[31]
- the *Selenodromion* (*Lunnik*), about the success or significance of activities at any given age of the moon (in days)[32]
- *On the Encircling of the Moon* (*Okruženie mesjaca*), about the ring around the moon in terms of the month when it is seen[33]
- *On Good and Evil Hours and Days* (*O časax i dnjax dobryx i zlyx*)[34]
- the *Palmologion* (*Trepetnik*), about the omens to be drawn from trembling in various parts of the body[35]

Particularly interesting is a treatise on scapulomancy or omoplatoscopy, that is, on divination from the cracks or lines that appear in the shoulder blade of an animal after the bone has been heated over a fire. Only one manuscript of this text is known to exist: *On Omoplatoscopy* (*Lopatočnik*).[36]

3. Herbals and Other Texts with Elements of Natural Magic

The textology of the Church Slavonic herbals and related works is not well understood, but there seem to be at least three such texts which exhibit elements of magic. Two of them are herbals: the *Herbal* (*Zelejnik*) and the *Refreshing Garden of Health* (*Vertograd proxladnyj zdravija*).[37]

Much about these two works still remains uncertain, but it is clear that the *Refreshing Garden of Health* is a translation of a western European work, the *Hortus Sanitatis*. This massive compilation was first printed at Mainz by

[31] Tixonravov, *Pamjatniki*, II, 375–76.

[32] Ibid., 388–95; Peretc, "Materialy," II. Cf. Ševčenko, "Remarks," 338 note 42, for the parallel Greek texts.

[33] Tixonravov, *Pamjatniki*, II, 396–97.

[34] Ibid., 382–87.

[35] M. Speranskij, *Iz istorii otrečennyx knig*, II: *Trepetniki*, Pamjatniki drevnej pis'mennosti i iskusstva 131 (St. Petersburg, 1899), where a Greek parallel text is also given.

[36] M. Speranskij, *Iz istorii otrečennyx knig*, III: *Lopatočnik*, Pamjatniki drevnej pis'mennosti i iskusstva 137 (St. Petersburg, 1900). A Greek parallel text may be found in Armand Delatte, *Anecdota Atheniensia*, I: *Textes grecs inédits relatifs à l'histoire des religions*, Bibliothèque de la Faculté de philosophie et lettres de l'Université de Liège 36 (Liège-Paris, 1927), 206–9.

[37] On these texts, which remain unpublished, see L. F. Zmeev, *Russkie vračebniki*, Pamjatniki drevnej pis'mennosti i iskusstva 112 (St. Petersburg, 1895). One brief text with the title *Zelejnik* was published by Tixonravov, *Pamjatniki*, II, 425–28.

Jakob Meydenbach in 1491, and was subsequently republished many times not only in its original Latin, but also in French and Low German translations, and partly also in High German, Dutch, and English ones. The Church Slavonic translation was made in 1534 from the Low German translation, entitled *Gaerde der Suntheit,* which had been printed three times at Lübeck by Steffan Arndes in 1492, 1510, and 1520. It is possible that the oldest form of the Church Slavonic *Herbal* (*Zelejnik*) also derives from some other western European printed herbal.

In the absence of any edition of these Church Slavonic texts, one can only note that the Latin *Hortus Sanitatis* is replete with elements of magical herbalism, and that most or all of these elements would have been preserved by the two successive translations, first from Latin into Low German and then from Low German into Church Slavonic. Since the first Latin edition has an extremely full index, it is easy to find the many and various prescriptions for divination and spellcraft, for cosmetics, for poisons, for contraceptives, and for abortifacients. There is even a method which uses the herb *salvia* (sage) "to make a house seem to be full of serpents."[38] The scholarly literature on the Church Slavonic herbals also indicates the presence of charms or magical prayers in some of their manuscripts.[39]

Although it is not strictly a herbal, there is one other work which should be cited here, since it contains the same sort of prescriptions with elements of magic. This is the pseudepigraphic *Secreta Secretorum* (*Tajnaja tajnyx*) *of Aristotle,* which seems to have been translated from a version in Hebrew sometime in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.[40]

[38] *Hortus Sanitatis* (Mainz, 1491): for the indices see fols. ^{2}A1r–E5r; for *salvia* see chapter 404 of the section on herbs.

[39] O. B. Straxova, "Fragmenty zagovorov i molitv v Travnikax," *Ètnolingvistika teksta: Semiotika malyx form fol'klora,* I: *Tezisy i predvaritel'nye materialy k simpoziumu* (Moscow, 1988), 40–42.

[40] M. Speranskij, *Iz istorii otrečennyx knig,* IV: *Aristotelevy vrata ili Tajnaja tajnyx,* Pamjatniki drevnej pis'mennosti i iskusstva 171 (St. Petersburg, 1908); idem, "Aristotelevy vrata." Of particular value are five recent studies by W. F. Ryan: "A Russian Version of the *Secreta Secretorum* in the Bodleian Library," *OxfSlPap* 12 (1965), 40–48 and 2 plates; "The Onomantic Table in the Old Russian *Secreta Secretorum,*" *SlEERev* 49 (1971), 603–6; "The Old Russian Version of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secreta Secretorum,*" *SlEERev* 56 (1978), 242–60; "The *Secreta Secretorum* and the Muscovite Aristocracy," *Pseudo-Aristotle, The* Secret of Secrets: *Sources and Influences,* ed. W. F. Ryan and Charles B. Schmitt, Warburg Institute Surveys 9 (London, 1982), 114–23; "Aristotle and Pseudo-Aristotle in Kievan and Muscovite Russia," *Pseudo-Aristotle in*

IV. Considerations for Further Study

The quantity of written magical texts that has survived might surprise a scholar who had started his research by observing how Orthodox Slavic canon law, and also Orthodox penitential canons, reprehended the practice of magic.

For example, in the so-called *Syntagma XIV Titulorum,* a Church Slavonic translation of which is preserved in manuscripts from the twelfth century on, one finds several canons penalizing various forms of magic, sorcery, and divination, such as Canons 65 and 72 of St. Basil:[41] "He that confesses magic (γοητεία) or witchcraft (φαρμακεία) shall do penance as long as a murderer"; and "He that gives himself to divination (μάντις) shall be treated as a murderer."

It would be possible to multiply canon law citations such as these many times over, and to add to them a large number of brief negative comments made in passing in various homilies. Most such texts, like the Canons of St. Basil just cited, are translations of Byzantine originals, and thus must be used with caution as evidence for the attitudes of the authorities in Slavia Orthodoxa.[42]

Similar comments, however, occasionally are found in original Orthodox Slavic compositions, for example, Grand Prince Vladimir's *Statute about Tithes, Judgments and Clerics,* or Grand Prince Jaroslav's *Statute about Ecclesiastical Judgments.* Grand Prince Vladimir's *Statute,* in its earliest redaction, reserves a number of crimes for ecclesiastical judgment, including those of "witchcraft, cursing, ligatures, herbs, heresy" ("věd'stvo, urěkanie, uzly, zel'e,

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the Middle Ages: The Theology *and Other Texts,* ed. Jill Kraye, W. F. Ryan, and C. B. Schmitt, Warburg Institute Surveys 11 (London, 1986), 97–109.

[41] V. N. Beneševič, *Drevne-slavjanskaja kormčaja XIV titulov bez tolkovanij* (St. Petersburg, 1906), 500, 502. The English translation follows Henry R. Percival, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church, Their Canons and Dogmatic Decrees, Together with the Canons of All the Local Synods Which Have Received Ecumenical Acceptance,* A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2nd ser. 14 (New York-Oxford-London, 1905), 608–9. Cf. Ja. N. Ščapov, *Vizantijskoe i južnoslavjanskoe pravovoe nasledie na Rusi v XI–XIII vv.* (Moscow, 1978) for the textology of these translations.

[42] A noteworthy example of such a text translated from the Greek is the early-printed *Nomokanon ili zakonnoe pravilo* (Kiev, 1620, ²1624, ³1629), with its extensive treatment of many forms of magic. Large excerpts from its treatment of magic may be found reprinted in F. Buslaev, *Istoričeskaja xristomatija cerkovno-slavjanskogo i drevne-russkogo jazykov* (Moscow, 1861), 1049–56.

eretičestvo"); and later redactions of the same *Statute* add several other such crimes to the list.[43] Similarly, Grand Prince Jaroslav's *Statute* originally included the following clause:[44] "If a wife is an enchantress, ligatrix or sorceress or herbalist ("čarodeica, nauznica, ili volxva, ili zelejnica"), three *grivny* to the Metropolitan, and her husband, having discovered her, shall punish her and not be divorced."

In view of their brevity and generality, all comments like these may as readily, or more readily, refer to practices of folk magic than to those of the written tradition of magic. (This folk magic, of course, includes both Christian and pre-Christian elements, both native Slavic and imported elements; but whatever the origin of its elements, it is magic that is transmitted chiefly by oral tradition, not in writing.) Only rarely is there an unambiguous reference to any of the written magical texts of Slavia Orthodoxa, or to any of the practices described in them.[45]

Only one or two specific references to written magical texts are detailed enough to shed much light on the conditions under which such texts were used. Thus the following question and answer, found among the *Hundred Chapters* compiled by the ecclesiastical council held at Moscow in 1551, is uncommonly informative:[46]

> *Question 17.* And in our Sovereign Domain Christians strive unjustly, and having uttered slander, kiss the Cross or the icons of the Saints, and fight outside the city and shed blood. And on those occasions magicians and enchanters render assistance through spellcraft of the Devil's teaching, and inspect the *Gates of Aristotle* and the *Rafli Book,* and divine by the stars and planets, and inspect the days and hours, and deceive the world by such devilish acts, and separate it from God. And trusting in such enchantments, the slanderer and the calumniator do not keep the peace, and they kiss the Cross, and they fight outside the city, and having uttered slander, they kill.
>
> *Answer.* The most pious Sovereign ought to command in his Sov-

[43] Ja. N. Ščapov, *Drevnerusskie knjažeskie ustavy XI–XV vv.* (Moscow, 1976), 15, cf. 16–84 passim. Cf. idem, *Knjažeskie ustavy i cerkov' v Drevnej Rusi XI–XIV vv.* (Moscow, 1972), 30, 34–35, 46–48.

[44] Ščapov, *Drevnerusskie knjažeskie ustavy,* 89, cf. 97, 102, 105. Cf. idem, *Knjažeskie ustavy i cerkov',* 247–48.

[45] For all these texts see V. J. Mansikka, *Die Religion der Ostslaven,* I: *Quellen,* Folklore Fellows Communications 43 (Helsinki, 1922), esp. 260–80.

[46] D. E. Kožančikov, *Stoglav* (St. Petersburg, 1863), 136–37.

> ereign city Moscow and in all cities of the Russian Sovereign Domain, that such magicians and enchanters and spellcasters, and those who inspect the *Rafli Book* and the *Gates of Aristotle,* and [divine] by the stars and planets, and deceive the world by such devilish acts, and separate it from God, and do other such Hellenic deviltry—and all such God-abominated deceit has been renounced by the Holy Fathers—that from now and henceforth these heresies shall be completely stamped out. Whoever henceforth among Orthodox Christians shall by such enchantments sow deceit among the people, either in houses or outside the city, and thereafter shall be discovered, ought to suffer the great wrath of the Sovereign. And those Orthodox Christians who shall accept such devilish Hellenic enchantment ought wholly to be cast out and cursed according to the Sacred Canons.

Elsewhere in the same *Hundred Chapters* there is a second condemnation of the *Rafli Book,* the *Six Wings,* the *Raven's Call,* the *Gates of Aristotle,* and several other such works, where unusually stringent civil and ecclesiastical penalties are proposed for those who shall keep or read such "God-abominated heretical books" ("Bogomerzkie knigi eretičeskie") and "heretical rejected books" ("eretičeskie otrečennye knigi").[47]

As noted already, the surviving magical texts are likely to be only part of what once existed, as is true for every kind of medieval Slavic written text. Even so, they are sufficiently numerous to suggest further lines of inquiry, two of which touch on the motives that may have led the Orthodox Slavs to translate and to copy such problematic texts in the first place.

1. Texts Not Translated

First, one might inquire whether any class of Byzantine magical texts seem not to have been translated by the Orthodox Slavs. If so, *why* were such texts left untranslated? We may attempt to settle such a question by comparing our results with the surveys of the known Byzantine magical texts by A. Delatte and now by R. Greenfield.[48] When we do so, one class of texts emerges: there do not seem to be any Church Slavonic versions of any of the Greek manuals of

[47] Ibid., 139–40.

[48] Delatte, *Anecdota,* I; idem, *La catoptromancie grecque et ses dérivés,* Bibliothèque de la Faculté de philosophie et lettres de l'Université de Liège 48 (Liège-Paris, 1932); Richard P. H. Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology* (Amsterdam, 1988).

ceremonial magic and demonology, such as the *Testament of Solomon* or the *Magical Treatise of Solomon.*[49]

This may be the result of chance: copies of these manuals in Greek are now quite uncommon, and one may conjecture that no Greek original happened to come into the hands of any Slav who might have wished to translate it. More likely, however, is the hypothesis that such texts were among the most alarming and reprehensible in the entire corpus of Greek magical writings, and thus were copied infrequently, and frequently destroyed.

In western Europe during the high middle ages, the theory became dominant that all magic involved a pact with demonic powers or allegiance to them, and hence could be seen as the ethical and moral equivalent of treason to God. Medievalists have amply documented this line of development, which had as its final result the notorious western European witch-hunts from the late fifteenth century up to the early eighteenth.[50] Under such a theory all forms of magic, whether active or passive, are equally reprehensible and equally horrifying: there are no differences of degree between them.

It cannot be too much emphasized that such a theory is not universal, even within Christendom. Rather, its dominance is the result of quite specific developments within western European Christianity, and the resulting witch-hunts were exacerbated by the extreme stresses to which western Europe was subject in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. There is no reason to expect comparable events in the history of the eastern Orthodox churches, and they did not take place there.[51]

[49] Chester Charlton McCown, *The Testament of Solomon* (Leipzig, 1922); Delatte, *Anecdota,* I; idem, "Le traité des plantes planétaires d'un manuscrit de Léningrad," *AIPHOS* 9 [= Pankarpeia: Mélanges Henri Grégoire] (1949), 145–77; idem, "Un nouveau témoin de la littérature solomonique, le codex Gennadianus 45 d'Athènes," *Académie royale de Belgique, Bulletin de la Classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques,* 5th ser. 45 (1959), 280–321; David Pingree, "Some of the Sources of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm,*" *JWarb* 43 (1980), 1–15 (at 9–12); Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief,* 157–63, and part II, passim.

[50] Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials: Their Foundations in Popular and Learned Culture, 1300–1500* (Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1976); Edward Peters, *The Magician, the Witch and the Law* (Philadelphia, 1978).

[51] A small series of 17th-century Moscow trials for malevolent magic, allegedly practiced (in most cases) against the sovereign family, seem to me to reflect western European attitudes, and not to be the result of some purely internal development of the criminalization of magic in Russian civil law. Cf. Russell Zguta, "Witchcraft Trials in

Instead, it may always have been possible in Slavia Orthodoxa, as apparently also in Byzantium (and in western Europe before the high middle ages) to practice *many forms* of magic without utterly renouncing one's Christianity: although against canon law (and often civil law as well), magic was generally treated as a crime comparable to homicide or the reprehended kinds of sexual activity, rather than to apostasy or treason. At any rate, the penalties under canon law are generally much milder than excommunication, and typically involve several years penance only. These are severe penalties, but much less severe than those for treason or apostasy.

If, however, any kind of magical practice might have been viewed as a form of apostasy or treason, one might suppose it to have been magic that *explicitly* treated with demons, to persuade them to work one's will. I have not found any original Church Slavonic text which I can cite in clear support of this educated guess of mine, but I suspect such texts do exist.[52] This kind of magic, of course, is the subject of the untranslated *Testament of Solomon* or the *Magical Treatise of Solomon.*

2. Were the Magical Texts Useful?

Second, one might ask whether the texts that were translated and copied were actually used. If so, *why* were they used? Were they *actually useful?* Did at least some of the practices they describe *actually work?*

We may take it as an axiom that *a text rarely used is a text rarely copied.* To apply this axiom, of course, one must understand its sphere of application, which is to texts that are copied by themselves. It should be obvious that a rarely used text may be part of a frequently used longer work, and that such a longer work will often be copied in its entirety, with its rarely used parts included. Thus, some of the texts in the occasional part of the *Euchologion* (the *Trebnik,* as it is termed in Church Slavonic) are rarely used, since the occasions for their use are rare; but copies of these texts are common, since the *Eucholo-*

Seventeenth-Century Russia," *American Historical Review* 82 (1977), 1187–1207; idem, "Was There a Witch Craze in Muscovite Russia?" *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 40 (1977), 119–27; idem, "The Ordeal by Water (Swimming of Witches) in the East Slavic World," *Slavic Review* 36 (1977), 220–30, which cite the earlier literature and argue for the opposite view.

[52] The Byzantine texts, of course, are surveyed by Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief,* 125–29, 249–52.

gion as a whole is frequently used and frequently copied. By this principle, it is clear that most of the shorter magical texts and almost all of the longer ones were in fact used, since copies seem to have continued to be made of them from time to time. There might be some exceptions, perhaps among the longer texts that have survived in just one copy each.

Thus we are driven, willy-nilly, to confront some hard questions: were these texts actually *useful;* and if so, how? Is there any way in which these magical procedures may be said actually to have *worked?* One can indeed argue (even as a strictly scientific materialist) that there are ways in which magical practices can be both useful and effective, and other ways in which they can *appear* to be effective to an unsophisticated observer. Let us briefly consider some of these ways.

If magic, before the modern era, is not yet wholly distinct from science and technology, then certainly some parts of magic could be the ancestors of scientifically or technologically valid practices. Obvious examples may be found in the realm of magical herbalism, where, to cite some examples at random, a tea made from the bark of the willow tree may be useful in relieving a headache, or an incense containing ground-up hemp leaves may make it much easier to see images in a mirror when one is performing that kind of divination. Here, of course, we have crude pharmacology or psychopharmacology, for willow bark contains the active ingredient of aspirin and hemp is marijuana.

However, there are other, much less obvious factors to be considered in attempting to assess scientifically the extent to which magic might have worked in medieval Slavia Orthodoxa and elsewhere. They lie, for the most part, in the realm of applied psychology and folk psychotherapy, which can often be used by one person to help or to harm another. Among the most obvious examples of such practices are those to which we now apply such labels as hypnosis, the placebo effect, biofeedback, hallucinations, altered states of consciousness, and cold reading. The impact these practices have on a person may also be enhanced by skillful use of all the arts of deception in ways that magnify the apparent powers of the practitioner.

Moreover, magical practices that have no effectiveness whatever, even in the ways just mentioned, may often appear to be effective, simply because a favorable result may follow by chance alone: one says an incantation for wealth, and by chance finds a valuable object soon after; or one performs a rite to destroy one's enemy, whose already diseased heart happens to fail the next day.

Table 2. Natural Causes of the Effectiveness of Magical Practices

(1) non-intuitive pharmacological, chemical, or physical properties of magical ingredients or materials
(2) counter-intuitive properties of reality, for example,
(a) the mathematics of random action, and
(b) the physics of force, temperature and heat
(3) counter-intuitive characteristics of the human organism, for example,
(a) the placebo effect and biofeedback
(b) altered states of consciousness, including hallucinations and ecstasy, resulting from
–sensory deprivation
–hypnosis (including autohypnosis)
–externally administered entheogens (psychoactive chemicals)
–internally produced entheogens, including endorphines
(c) pheromones and other chemical messengers
(d) areas of natural low sensitivity to pain
(4) the need of the human mind to find patterns in randomness and to trust (suggestibility and gullibility)
(5) the psychotherapeutic effects of communication and attention
(6) the arts of deception: misdirection of attention, prestidigitation, gimmicked apparatus, cold reading, etc.

It would take us too far afield to consider all these factors in detail. Thus they are listed systematically in Table 2, without any further commentary.[53]

V. Conclusion

Thus we come to the end of our survey of the magic of medieval Slavia Orthodoxa. The texts are not numerous, in comparison to those known from other parts of medieval Christendom, Islam, and Judaism. Nevertheless, we have been able to draw some conclusions from them.

Similar lines of inquiry are now being followed by classicists and medi-

[53] The best single scientific treatment of these matters, for purposes such as ours, is by Andrew Neher, *The Psychology of Transcendence,* 2nd ed. (New York, 1990). For cold reading, see also Ray Hyman, "Cold Reading: How To Convince Strangers That You Know All about Them," *The Skeptical Inquirer* 1.2 (1977), 18–37; James Randi, "Cold Reading Revisited," *The Skeptical Inquirer* 3.4 (1979), 37–41.

evalists interested in ancient and western medieval magic, and also by anthropologists interested in the magic of other cultures. In addition to far-ranging historical surveys, we now have anthologies of translated texts with commentary, a number of quite insightful studies of individual texts and classes of texts (mostly charms), and at least two uncommonly sophisticated anthropological treatments of present-day magic which are particularly relevant to the concerns of medievalists.[54] Among the most promising lines of research are attempts to establish full corpora of specific kinds of texts, for example, charms, and rational, scientific investigations of the ways in which magic may appear to work, or may really have worked, or may have had subtle personal and social functions even if it did not work.

Such lines of inquiry have already yielded fruit that can serve also to nourish students of the written tradition of magic in medieval Slavia Orthodoxa. Even as the medieval world, both eastern and western, is in many respects a single world, so the written tradition of medieval magic is in many respects one tradition. We may all expect to gain much from a broad approach to the study of medieval magic.

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[54] In addition to the recent works cited in notes 4, 7, 8, and 25 above, see Georg Luck, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Baltimore-London, 1985); Karen Louise Jolly, "Anglo-Saxon Charms in the Context of a Christian World View," *Journal of Medieval History* 11 (1985), 279–93; idem, "Magic, Miracle, and Popular Practice in the Early Medieval West: Anglo-Saxon England," *Religion, Science, and Magic in Concert and in Conflict,* ed. Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Paul Virgil McCracken Flesher (New York-Oxford, 1989), 166–82; Brian Murdoch, "But Did They Work? Interpreting the Old High German *Merseburg Charms* in Their Medieval Context," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 89 (1988), 358–69; T. M. Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989); Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1990); Valerie I. J. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton, 1991); Suzanne Sheldon Parnell and Lea T. Olsan, "The Index of Charms: Purpose, Design, and Implementation," *Literary and Linguistic Computing* 6 (1991), 59–63; Lee Siegel, *Net of Magic: Wonders and Deceptions in India* (Chicago-London, 1991).