

Dear BNN members,

In accordance with the rules of the BNN, it is the duty of the chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, to submit an annual report on the activities of the BNN over the previous year to the other members of the BNN. The following is the report for 2017-2018.

First of all, I am happy to inform you that since my last report in September 2017, **the number of BNN members** has once again increased, now reaching a total of **124 members**. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to welcome all of our new members!

1. **Publications:**

We are still awaiting the publication of the conference papers presented at the conference on *Sacrifice and Divination* organised in cooperation with the BNN by Éva Pócs of the University of Pécs, which took place in Pécs, Hungary, in 2014, and in which many of our members participated; it is assumed that the publication will be published (in Hungarian) by the end 2018 or in early 2019.

The publication of proceedings from the joint BNN and Charms, Charmers and Charming Committees' conference *Verbal Charms and Narrative Genres* which took place in Budapest, 8-10 December 2017, is planned for publication in *Studia Mythologica Slavica Supplementa* in Ljubljana 2019 (edited by Éva Pócs and Maria Ines Palleiro / Monika Kropej, series editor).

We are currently in the process of gathering papers presented at the BNN conference on *Human-Animal Relationships in Belief Narratives* held as part of the ISFNR interim conference in Ragusa, 12-16 June 2018. The papers will be published in a special edition of *Folklore. Electronic journal of Folklore* (Tartu) (ed. Mare Kõiva; Mirjam Mencej, guest editor) and possibly partly in *Studia Mythologica Slavica 22* (Ljubljana) (ed. Monika Kropej) in August-October 2019.

2. **Conferences:**

Over the course of this and the last year, the BNN Committee members have been actively involved in organising the BNN conference *Human-Animal Relationships in Belief*

Narratives held as part of the ISFNR interim conference in Ragusa, 12-16 June 2018. Altogether 22 papers were presented over the course of eight sessions. During the course of the BNN conference, the BNN meeting took place as well. Reet Hiimäe wrote a report on the conference in Ragusa which was published in Estonian in the journal *Mäetagused* 71: 212-214 (<http://www.folklore.ee/tagused/nr71/>) and in English in *Folklore, EFJF* 72 (available online). Kaarina Koski also wrote the report on the BNN conference which Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich, the editor-in-chief of *Fabula*, was happy to receive and promised to publish in the next issue of *Fabula*.

The BNN Committee has launched the Call for Papers for the BNN conference *Belief Narratives in Folklore Studies: Narrating the Supernatural*, which will be organised by the Anundoram Borooah Institute of Language, Art and Culture in Guwahati and the BNN, and will be held in Guwahati, Assam, India, on 6th-8th February 2019. The deadline for submissions is already over and we hope to get further information from Dilip Kumar Kalita, the main organiser, very soon.

The BNN Committee is currently also commencing work on the Call for Papers for the BNN conference which will be held in the frame of the next ISFNR congress which will take place in Zagreb, Croatia, in 2020. We have already decided about the general title for our conference (*Performing Beliefs*) and you should receive the Call for papers in the beginning of 2019.

3. **BNN e-Newsletter**

Based on an inquiry amongst BNN members, we have decided to change the frequency of the **BNN e-Newsletter**. Starting in January 2018, the BNN e-Newsletters will only be issued four times a year (in January, April, June, and October), rather than once a month as used to be the case. While some of you who responded to our inquiry liked the regular monthly e-Newsletter, most of you opted for a 3-month issue and we plan to stick to this frequency. Once again, we would like to thank to all of you who sent us feedback and thus helped us make the decision. As always, we would also like to thank Kristel Kivari who is kindly taking care of the distribution of the Newsletter! Please continue to promptly send information to Kristel (kristel.kivari@ut.ee; kristelkivari@hotmail.com) on: Calls for papers that might be of interest to the BNN members; reports from conferences (local conferences included!); reports on new books and publications that may be of interest to the BNN scholars; news related to belief narratives; and above all, information on your own current publications in the field of belief narratives!

4. Student Award for the Best Paper in the Field of Belief Narratives

In 2018, the Committee has for the first time granted an award for the best student paper in the field of belief narratives. The winner of the first award is Kikee D Bhutia for her paper "I Exist Therefore You Exist, We Exist Therefore They Exist": Narratives of Mutuality between Deities (yul lha gzhi bdag) and lhopo (Bhutia) Villagers in Sikkim. Our sincere congratulations to Kikee! She will present her winning paper at the conference in Guwahati in February 2019.

The Committee has also decided to slightly change the rules of the next competition for the best student paper award. Every second year (at the ISFNR congress and at the ISFNR interim conference) two awards (rather than one) will be granted: one for the best paper written by a PhD student, and one for the best paper written by an undergraduate (BA) or graduate (MA) student. The next awards will be presented at the next ISFNR congress which will place in Zagreb in 2020. The Call for Applications, along with details about the award (that is regarding the requirements, criteria, profile of the students involved, the nature of the award, and so on) can be found at the ISFNR/BNN website, under no. 4:

(<http://www.isfnr.org/files/beliefnarrativenetwork.html>). We would appreciate it if you could encourage your students to submit their papers related to belief narratives, for evaluation. Please note that the next deadline is 30 June 2019!

5. BNN Web Site

We have continued with updating the **BNN page of the ISFNR website** and the Committee would like to thank Nidhi Mathur for all her help in regularly putting the required updates onto the BNN/ ISFNR website. The ISFNR president, Sadhana Naithani, has been putting efforts into making the ISFNR website more interesting and appealing to scholars and the results can already be seen at <http://www.isfnr.org/> . As before, we encourage all of those who still have not yet sent in data to send us their CVs (including names and surnames; degrees; present professional status and affiliations; e-mail addresses and contact details – as long as you are happy for these to be published on the Internet), along with *a list of main research interests* (in the form of key words – please add such information at the end of your CV) and a *personal bibliography*, including works related to belief narratives (that is books written in one of the major languages or

with a summary in one of these languages; and papers written in one of the major languages). The data should be sent to Kaarina Koski (kaakos@utu.fi) until the end of September to be put on the website in 2018. She is updating the list of belief narrative scholars' CVs regularly, that is once a year.

As usual, we encourage all members to continue to share information about the BNN with their colleagues: Everyone interested in belief narratives of any kind is welcome to join the Network! If you are aware of any scholar who is interested in belief narratives and wishes to become a member of BNN, please remind them that they should contact the chairperson (mirjam.mencej@ff.uni-lj.si or mirjam.mencej@guest.arnes.si) in order to receive information about all future BNN activities. Potential members should be informed that they need to join both the ISFNR and the BNN. If any of you has not yet become a member of the ISFNR, please bear in mind that in accordance with our statute, the BNN forms part of the ISFNR and that official membership is only open and free to those who are members of the ISFNR. If you are not yet a member of ISFNR, you can nonetheless receive information about our activities, and participate in our conferences and meetings. However, you will not have the right to vote for members of the BNN Committee or be able to become a BNN Committee member yourself. Everyone is therefore encouraged to join the ISFNR. Should anyone wish to cease being a BNN member, and receive no further information about our activities, please let us know and we will delete you from our list.

As always, all BNN members are most welcome to suggest their own ideas about the future activities of the BNN and to comment on the decisions taken by the BNN Committee members. We will be happy to hear from you!

We are looking forward to meeting you in Guwahati soon!

Best wishes,

Mirjam, on behalf of the BNN Committee (2016-2020):

Willem de Blécourt, Terry Gunnell, Anders Gustavsson, Desmond Kharmawphlang, Fumihiko Kobayashi, Mare Kõiva, Kaarina Koski, Dilip Kumar Kalita, Mirjam Mencej (chair), Maria Ines Palleiro, Tok Thompson and Ülo Valk.