



BNN Newsletter, March 2019.

Dear members of Belief Narrative Network,

With the apologies for coming out late, the first issue of BNN Newsletter is here for you to read. It includes wonderful news about the contribution of the Network's members to the international scholarship of belief narratives, report from the conference in Guwahati, news and calls. Thank you, Mirjam Mencej, Lina Būgienė, Dilip Kumar Kalita and Mare Kõiva for the contributions!

Sincerely,
Kristel Kivari

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On behalf of the BNN Committee:

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

Publications

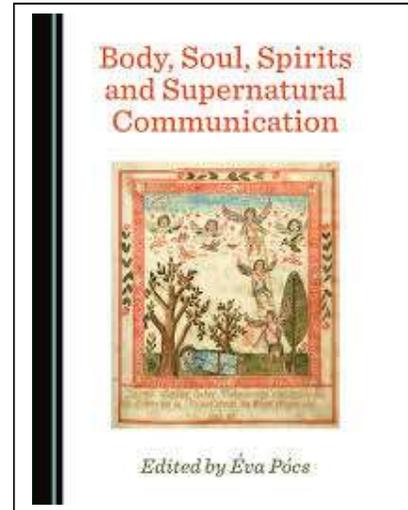
Body, Soul, Spirits and Supernatural Communication

Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019

Edited by Éva Pócs

This book provides a nuanced picture of the notions of body and soul held by the peoples of Europe through the soul concepts associated with the Judeo-Christian tradition and other religions and denominations; and the alternative traditions preserved alongside Christianity in folklore collections, linguistic and literary records. The studies also emphasize the connections between these notions and beliefs related to death and the dead, as well as questions of communication between the human world and the spirit world. The essays here focus on the roles notions of the soul and the spirit world play in the everyday life, religion and mentality of various communities; their folklore and literary representations, as well as the narrative metaphors, motifs, topoi and genres of ideas about the soul and about supernatural communication, along with questions of the relationship between narratives and religious notions.

[Click here to read the table of content and preface of the book.](#)

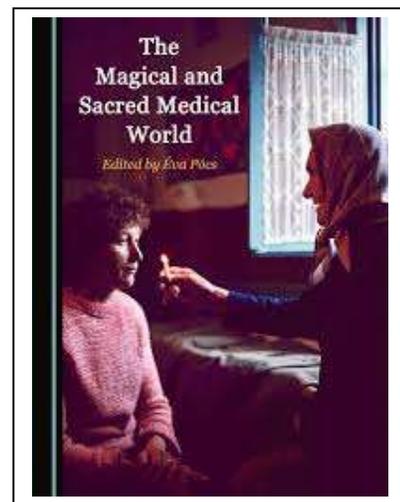


The Magical and Sacred Medical World

Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019

Edited by Éva Pócs

This collection of papers explores the sacred and magical aspects of ethno-medicine. The subject area is marked out by the points of connection between religious anthropology, ethno-medicine and medical anthropology, focusing on topics such as magical and religious concepts of health and disease, causes of disease, religious and magical averting and healing rites, healing gods, saints and, last but not least, the role that these play in the society,



religion, mentality and everyday life of a community, as well as their various representations in folklore, literature or art.

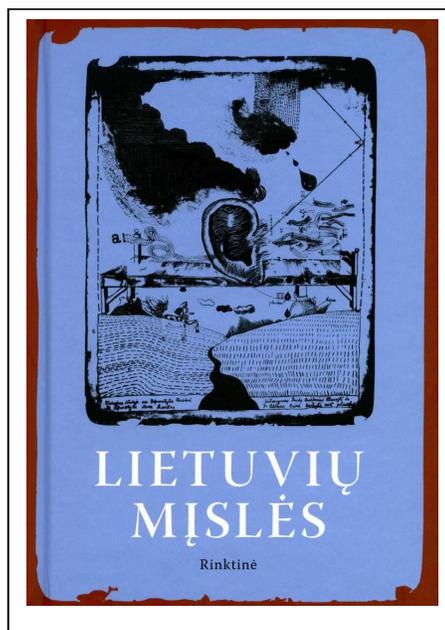
This volume includes, without restrictions of a methodological, temporal or geographical nature, works from the fields of folklore studies, anthropology, cultural history, comparative historical and textual philology, as well as research findings using the latest methods of analysis in textual folklore or based on archival research or fieldwork in or outside of Europe.

[Click here to read the table of content oand preface of the book.](#)

Lithuanian Riddles. A Collection

Lietuvių mįslės. Rinktinė, Sudarė ir parengė Aelita Kensminienė, Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2018. ISBN 978-609-425-241-9, 512 p.

The Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore published a collection of Lithuanian riddles, edited by Aelita Kensminienė. It is the first large publication of Lithuanian riddles to be published in half a century. It represents the whole scope of the genre with hitherto unpublished texts from the Lithuanian Science Society and the Lithuanian Folklore Archives, stored at the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, making its core. This publication does not aim at covering printed sources; its chief objective is providing material that has not been publicised so far. The author has a long-term experience in creating the typological system and database for the Lithuanian riddles. Riddle texts are grouped here according to the genre divisions, and inside of these, riddles are listed in alphabetic order according to the beginning of the title of each riddle type (search according to the riddle answers is facilitated by the index). The publication can partly serve as a catalogue as well, since short annotations of characteristic features of every riddle type and version are given, all the answers are listed, and the number of available variants is indicated. The Collection is not a finite systemic digest but a rather exhaustive representation of riddles, as the most characteristic texts published here reflect all major types of riddles and their versions. Of the main corpus of riddles, only the types of true or object riddles with 9–10 recordings (variants) are included, with the exception of special cases: very old recording, possibly of interest to mythology researchers, curious links with other genres, and the like. Whenever there are 9–10 recordings of the same riddle, it was an individual decision whether to distinguish the representative of the type (for example, sometimes all the texts are nearly identical, they belong to the collections of the so-called ‘unreliable’ collectors, and in such instances the type representative is not distinguished). The numbers of the riddles in other sections of the genre are considerably smaller than the object riddles – up to ten times. Therefore the criteria of selection were more liberal and the



types with fewer variants are included (3–5 records of riddle questions, and even individual records of rarer sections of the genre, for instance, neck riddles and puzzles). The book contains 888 described riddle types with various examples of riddles of each type and some individual texts that do not form types, 2223 texts in all, and descriptions of numerous riddles. We tried to reflect all types and versions while choosing texts, also attempting to include riddles from different regions, so the selection criterion was not the age of the recording, but its quality. Wherever possible, we indicate the year and place of the riddle recording, briefly annotate the typical features of the type and the version of the riddle, all type-specific answers and the number of options. The publication includes an extensive introduction, a glossary of vernacularisms, archaisms and barbarisms, two alphabetical indices (of questions and answers), a summary and an English translation of all types of the riddles described in the book. The book aims at a wide circle of readers in Lithuania and beyond – for everyone interested in ethnic culture, folklore, and mythology; for specialists in numerous fields, and especially for experts in the humanities.

Report of the BNN conference *Belief Narratives in Folklore Studies: Narrating the Supernatural* 6th to 8th February, 2019, Lalmati, Guwahati

Report is prepared by the members of organising committee: Dr. Palash Kumar Nath, Dr. Karuna Kanta Kakati, Prof. Dilip Kumar Kalita

A three day International conference on the topic **Belief Narrative: Narrating the Supernatural** organised jointly by Belief Narrative Network for International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR) and The Anundoram Borooah Institute of Language, Art & Culture (ABILAC), Assam was conducted from 6th to 8th February, 2019 at the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship, located at Lalmati Guwahati -29. This three day conference provided the opportunity to around 50 folklorists from around the world including India to present and discuss as many academically stirring aspects of folklore in the form of papers and interactions.

The inaugural session was chaired by Prof (rtd) Ashok Kumar Goswami, a renowned indologist, who is a former Head, Department of Sanskrit, Vice-Chairman, Governing Council and Chairman, Executive Committee of ABILAC. Other dignitaries who graced the occasion were Prof Satyendra Narayan Goswami and Prof. Dipti Phukon Patgiri, Members, Executive Committee of ABILAC, Prof Sadhana Naithani, Chairperson, ISFNR, Prof. Mirjam Mencej, Chairperson, BNN, Prof. Ulo Valk Renowned Folklorist from University of Tartu, Dr. Anil Baro, Head, Department of Folklore Research, Gauhati University and Prof. Dilip Kumar Kalita, Director, ABILAC.

Prof. Dilip Kumar Kalita while welcoming the scholars on behalf of the organising committee and other dignitaries presented the scenario of Folklore studies in India as well as Assam and also referred to the heritage of belief narratives in the Indian context. He mentioned that belief is the primary concern of the whole gamut of the text of Atharva Veda, the treasure house of ancient knowledge in India. Prof. Mirjam Mencej, Chairperson, BNN delivered her address as the guest of honour. She outlined the events in the previous BNN conference where Guwahati was chosen as the next venue of BNN. The other guest of honour Prof. Sadhana Naithani, Chairperson, ISFNR and Professor of German Studies JNU hailed the effort of ABILAC in holding a seminar of such a mega scale. She also stressed on the importance of the genre of

Belief Narrative within the broader scope of Folklore studies. Renowned folklorist Prof. Ulo Valk, while addressing the gathering, described this Northeast Indian region as the *paradise of folklorists*. He also stressed on the need of more research based studies into the realm of folklore studies to be undertaken in this part of the world. Prof. Anil Kumar Baro, Head, Department of Folklore while addressing the gathering commented that this is the first BNN conference held in Guwahati and wished the conference a success.

Following the trend of offering the best Research Paper award to one of the student participants of the conference for the last few years, Prof. Mirjam Mencej announced the name of Ms. Kikee Doma Bhutia from Bhutan, presently a PhD candidate in the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu, Estonia, as the recipient of this honour for the year 2018 and presented the award. The anchoring of the meeting was done by Dr. Palas Kumar Nath, Assistant Professor, ABILAC and the vote of thanks was offered by Dr. Karuna Kanta Kakati, Associate Professor, ABILAC.

The inauguration session was followed by a high tea for the guests and scholars.

Parallel sessions, each of which consisted of four paper presentations, were conducted in two halls on each of the three days of the conference. These sessions led to a substantive amount of discussions and interactions on the main as well as sub themes of the conference. The sub themes were *Beliefs and Supernaturals*, *Beliefs and the Lore of Saints*, *Beliefs and witch hunting*, *Contemporary belief Narratives (Urban legends, the play on belief narratives by politicians and so on.)*, *Beliefs and Vernacular Practices*, *Beliefs, Faith and Fear*, *Beliefs and Sacrifice*.

[See the full report and details of the presentations.](#)



The International Association for Comparative Mythology 13th Annual Conference. Mythology of Metamorphoses: Comparative & Theoretical Perspectives

June 10-13, 2019
Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia

We are happy to announce that the 13th Annual Conference of the International Association for Comparative Mythology is to be held at the Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia on June 10-13, 2019. The conference is organized in collaboration with the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies and is joint with the 8th Annual Conference of the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies. All members are warmly invited to give a paper and to participate in the discussions.

This year we have the following topics:

1. Metamorphoses and transitions in myth, including but not limited to the following sub-topics:

- Metamorphosis, shapeshifting, and transformation in myth;
- Transition and passage in myth and ritual;
- Thresholds, borders, and boundaries: related myths, characters, and worldviews.

2. Theoretical Approaches to Comparative Mythology, including:

- New theoretical and methodological approaches in the research of mythology;
- History of comparative mythology: old and novel approaches, changes in methodology;
- Mediascapes and digital mythology;
- New mythologies.

3. Topic of your choice

[See the full call \(deadline has passed, 1.03.2019\)](#)

**international association for
comparative mythology**

