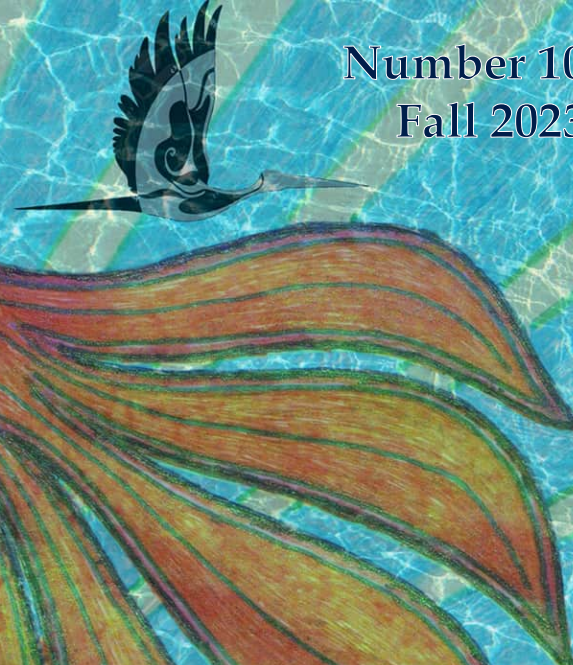


Number 10  
Fall 2023



# Newsletter



**International  
Society for  
Folk  
Narrative  
Research**

## *Highlights*

*Renewing the Newsletter  
Interview with Ülo Valk  
“How Now, My Good Folklorist...”  
Exciting new books  
Fresh PhD research  
The 19th ISFNR Congress is Coming!*

**News, Notes & Narratives**



The **International Society for Folk Narrative Research** (ISFNR) is a scholarly and professional organization of international specialists in the areas of folk narrative, popular literature, folklore, and related fields. The ISFNR works to foster and develop work in the field of folk narrative research and to stimulate contacts and the exchange of views among its members. Our society encompasses all aspects of narrative as a pivotal category of human communication.

*ISFNR Newsletter* was founded in 2006 as an instrument to stimulate contacts and exchange among the society's members. In addition to news, information about forthcoming events and reports on those recently held, we also publish short research articles, interviews, book reviews and other information of interest to ISFNR members.

Please send your contributions to *ISFNR Newsletter* to:  
isfnnewsletter[at]gmail.com

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Frog

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#### Editorial board

Frog  
Terry Gunnell

Cover photo: Gathering of Rotenese and Tetun ritual poets in Sanur, Bali, Indonesia, June 2019. From left to right, Ande Ruy, James J. Fox, Gabriel Bria, Simon Bere, Piet Tahu, Mikkris Ruy, and Jonas Mooy (photo by Frog).

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## A Short Tale for the Day

Recorded from an unknown teller in 1920 in Kittilä, Lapland, Finland; the motif of a shaman swimming in fish-form stabbed by a second who lies in wait is recorded about 750 years earlier in the description of a shamanic-type ritual in the *Historia Norwegie*:

“Pietu raukka – vaina – ” Ryselini eli Ryssä – kuollut toista sataa vuotta sitten – noitui itsensä loheksi ja ui Kemiin lohia hakemaan. Saikin sieltä satoja ja satoja ja asetti itse viimeiseksi kalaksi parvea ajamaan ylös Ounasjokea. Mutta kun eräs toinen noita sai asiasta tiedon, piilottui hän noita kaloja pyydystelläkseen ja varsinkin Ryseliniin surmataksaan. Hän saikin viimeistä kalaa – lohta – pistetyksi pyrstön puolelle. Pistoksesta oli se seuraus, että Ryseliniin jalka tuli vialliseksi. – Sama vika on sittemmin seurannut useaa Ryseliniin jälkeläistä, ja muutamilla nyt elävilläkin, jotka kertoja tuntee, on toinen jalka toista lyhyempi, tahi muutoin jalkavikaisia. – Ryseliniin eli Ryssä muuttivat sittemmin nimensä talonsa mukaan Pietulaksi.

— SKS KRA (*Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society*) Bergman, K. E. A. b) 5.

“Poor Pietu” – “the late Pietu” – Ryseliniin or Ryssä – he died a few hundred years ago – shamanized himself into a salmon and swam to Kemi to fetch salmon. He just got hundreds and hundreds there and set himself up as the last fish to drive the school over the Ounasjoki River. But when a certain other shaman got to know of this, he – the shaman – hid himself to catch the fish and of course to be the death of Ryseliniin. He did get the last fish – the salmon – so it was stabbed/stung (*pistää*) on the tail end. The consequence of that stab/sting (*pistos*) was that Ryseliniin’s leg was bad. – The same problem has subsequently followed most of Ryseliniin’s descendants, and even some now living, who the teller knows, have one leg shorter than the other or otherwise have a bad leg. – The Ryseliniin or Ryssä subsequently changed their name with that of their house to Pietula.

— Translated by Frog.

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## *President's Address*

Dear ISFNR Members,

The world of folk narrative is constantly changing and evolving – both in terms of materials and scholarship. The research of our members in different parts of the world keeps a track of the changes and continuities and presents it analytically in many languages. While none of us can access the knowledge being produced everywhere, our Society endeavours to rise above the linguistic divide and bring forth scholars from everywhere. The *ISFNR Lecture Series: Voices from Across the Globe* that started in April 2022 has been a successful effort in this direction and it will grow in the coming years. One lecture every two months, excluding the months of July and August, we have listened to fascinating research papers from all the five continents. The second year has started with a bonanza – three presentations in one long session from folklorists in Ghana. If you missed the lecture you will find the recording on the ISFNR YouTube channel. Continue to join the forthcoming lectures and make the exchange of knowledge vibrant with your intervention.

The editorial team of the newsletter looks forward to receiving news and information concerning researches, publications, conferences, and PhD dissertations in your place of residence and work and will be happy to publish the same.

With best wishes,



*Sadhana Naithani*

## *Renewing the Newsletter*

### *'New's by and for You*

The pandemic had countless unforeseen consequences, such as driving a virtual turn that has impacted on lives around the world. On the backdrop of the isolation experienced by so many during that period, several complementary projects have been implemented to enhance connectivity and engagement, which include the online lecture series, renovation of the Society's website, which will appear on a new platform later this year, and renewing *ISFNR Newsletter*, beginning from the current number.

An international society such as ours is brought together by shared interests, but it is only through communication that we are transformed from an assembly of people into a community. Since 1959, ISFNR has centrally built its community around periodic conferences, a practice that has been expanded and diversified through our several committees. However, there are gaps of four years between our main events, with an interim conference in between. The online lecture series offer an opportunity to connect more frequently, but they are not a channel for general information sharing. *ISFNR Newsletter* is being renovated to share this function with the website, and we hope that you will participate in this channel of communication by sharing information about your work, thoughts, recent events, and publications that are relevant to members of our Society.

Gerður Sigurðardóttir of the University of Iceland will be taking over the position of Editor-in-Chief of the *Newsletter*. Gerður will work in collaboration with the Vice Presidents of ISFNR to facilitate global representation of information relevant to members of the Society. Because the work of layout on top of editorial responsibilities was earlier a problem for getting numbers of *ISFNR Newsletter* published on a regular schedule, we will streamline this process with document templates that will be made available on the renewed website along with instructions how to use them. The templates are files into which you will be able to directly enter your announcements, calls for papers, descriptions of research and events, introductions to traditions or performers, and so on. Collaborating in the work that goes into an issue of *ISFNR Newsletter* is essential to maintaining it at this level when we do not have resources to hire a full-time professional. We look forward to your contributions and participation in this renewed communication channel and its future development.

# *Reanimating Extinct Oral Poems*

## *Seventeenth-Century Scribal Performances of Medieval Scandinavian Eddic Poetry*

*Frog, Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies*

**Abstract:** This article introduces the scribal performance of Scandinavian eddic poetry on non-Christian mythological and heroic subjects, presenting perspectives from ongoing research. The poems were documented in Iceland centrally during the thirteenth century. They dropped out of oral use, but the written texts were discovered in the seventeenth-century, leading to a remarkable boom in copying activity. Some copyists took active responsibility for the traditions that they were learning from the written texts. They varied the poems in diverse ways, including expansions, omissions, reorganizations, and even the production of new poems: they reanimated rather than reified the dead oral poems.

The term *scribal performance* was coined to describe how medieval and ancient copyists could vary poems in the copying process based on their knowledge of the respective oral tradition. The concept has focused on the linguistic level of verbal art and much discussion has been linked to so-called Oral-Formulaic Theory, exploring variations that may be linked to oral practices, such as exchanging one formula for another. Scribal performance began coming into focus and developing in different directions especially beginning from around 1990 (see Ready 2019: ch. 4). The following pages offer perspectives from ongoing research on scribal performance in seventeenth-century copies of eddic poems on mythological and heroic subjects – poems that were originally written down almost 400 years earlier. I have elsewhere offered some comments on aspects of scribal performance in these copies at the level of meter and line-internal phraseology (Frog 2022a). Such variations are a classic topic of scribal performance. Here, however, I focus on scribal performances that manage regularity in narration, structures of presentation, or that take responsibility for narrating the tradition to their audiences. The spotlight is on the dynamism with which some copyists handled the traditions they mediated.

### *Eddic Poems in the Seventeenth Century*

In very broad strokes, ‘eddic’ poetry refers to poetry in forms and variations of the common Germanic alliterative meter as it evolved in the Old Norse language – i.e. in

Scandinavia. The poetry was documented predominantly in Iceland during the thirteenth century, and is especially known for the narrative poems on non-Christian mythological and heroic subjects (e.g. Gunnell 2005; Clunies Ross 2005). Iceland became a Christian land by law in AD 1000, and why non-Christian mythological poems were written down by medieval Christians remains debated (for my own view, see Frog 2022b), but this question is incidental to the seventeenth-century reception of the poems. In 1220 or shortly thereafter, Snorri Sturluson wrote a mythography in his treatise on the art of vernacular poetry called *Edda* (to which the mythology was relevant), which incorporates quotations from a number of eddic poems. A scattering of complete poems are preserved individually, compiled with other texts such as Snorri's *Edda* or even integrated into larger prose works, but the majority of poems is preserved in manuscript GKS 2365 4to, commonly called the Codex Regius. This manuscript appears to bring together, perhaps for the first time, one collection of poems on mythological subjects and a second of heroic poems (Vésteinn Ólason 2019: 235–242). Another collection of mythological poems is preserved as only a few leaves (i.e. pages) of the manuscript AM 748 I a 4to, where it was copied together with a version of Snorri's *Edda* (separated as AM 748 I b 4to) (Finnur Jónsson 1896). The poems in these collections are copies of copies. Although only two collections have reached us, it is apparent (and unsurprising) that written versions of poems tended to be copied rather than written out anew, and that these written versions of poems were copied, organized, and reorganized in collections.

The Codex Regius was presumably preserved in a library of a Church institution in Iceland through the end of the Middle Ages. The Kalmar Union united the Scandinavian kingdoms until Sweden withdrew in 1523; Norway then tried to do the same and was subjugated by Denmark. Iceland, which had been subjugated by Norway already in the thirteenth century, was then a possession of Denmark. The breakup of the Kalmar Union paired with the spread of the Reformation: the dissolution of Catholic Church institutions presumably set collections of eddic poetry on the move in the middle of the sixteenth century as medieval libraries' collections scattered into private hands. Across the rest of the century, the geopolitical situation in Denmark and Sweden developed alongside the Reformation's valorization of the vernacular, which would dovetail with a rise in antiquarian interests spreading through Europe. The outcome was the gradual emergence of heritage-construction projects that became state-centralized (e.g. Almgren 1931; Klein 2006: 58). The interests and enterprizes in heritage construction echoed outward from the political centers and began to manifest locally in Iceland beginning from the end of the sixteenth century (Lassen 2018: 219–221), and Snorri's *Edda* was copied from a medieval manuscript already in the 1590s (Faulkes 1985: 9). These developments gained momentum and produced social networks of local actors across the seventeenth century (Springborg

1977), and Icelanders became involved also in the national heritage-construction projects.

The roles taken by Icelanders in these projects are bound up with language history. In the thirteenth century, Danes, Icelanders, Norwegians, and Swedes all spoke forms of the same language in a (somewhat fragmented) dialect continuum. The Icelandic language was historically very conservative while Danish and Swedish underwent marked changes in phonology and morphology. By 1600, Icelanders could still read the medieval texts, whereas speakers of Danish or Swedish could not do so without special learning. As Annette Lassen notes, “[v]irtually every early edition of Old Norse texts was prepared by Icelandic scholars, including the accompanying translations” (2018: 219–220).

In the first decades of the seventeenth century, a scattering of individual eddic poems had become known through different manuscripts, but they had not been elevated in the heritage-construction projects of the kingdoms. In Iceland, a theory had emerged that Snorri’s *Edda*, introduced above, was based on an earlier work (Einar G. Pétursson 1998: ch.1). This idea is unsurprising since Snorri’s *Edda* was written in prose with innumerable quotations of poetry, so it resembled a seventeenth-century commentary on a medieval work of or filled with poems. Already in 1623, a self-educated Icelandic Jón Guðmundsson the Learned (1574–1658) identified this earlier work as being a work by Sæmundr the Learned (1056–1133); indeed, Einar G. Pétursson highlights that Sæmundr’s work is never characterized as ‘lost’, and that Jón may have already encountered a collection of eddic poetry that he identified as being the work in question (1984: 284–286).

Another self-educated Icelandic, Björn Jónsson of Skarðsá (1574–1655), quotes lines from the poem *Hávamál* (“Things Said by the High One [=Odin]”) already 1626 (Einar G. Pétursson 1984: 272; Haukur Þorgeirsson 2015: 132). During this same period, the Danish scholar Ole Worm (1588–1654) had begun networking with Icelanders, especially with the help of Þorlákur Skúlason (1597–1656) (Einar G. Pétursson 1998: 30–36). Þorlákur was ordained Bishop of Hólar in 1628, where he then employed scribes and was borrowing manuscripts to copy with the aim of establishing a library for antiquarian research (Springborg 1977: 63–64).

Another figure who was closely involved in this work was Brynjólfur Sveinsson (1605–1675) who was vice-rector of the Roskilde Cathedral School in Denmark from 1632–1638 before being ordained Bishop of Skálholt in 1639, where he retained strong connections with Denmark and was named Royal Danish Historian in 1650. Bishop Brynjólfur sought to acquire manuscripts rather than only copy them, and he became the owner of the extant Codex Regius collection of eddic poems in 1643 (in detail, see Springborg 1977; Einar G. Pétursson 1998: ch.1.).

It is unclear who may have owned the Codex Regius before 1643 (cf. Louis-Jensen & Stefán Karlsson 1970). One quire (gathering of manuscript leaves) had evidently



already been lost, and with it the end of the poem *Sigrdrífumál*, yet the poem is complete in seventeenth-century copies, of which the earliest must have been made before Bishop Brynjólfur acquired the manuscript (Einar G. Pétursson 1984). Björn of Skarðsá's quotations from *Hávamál* in 1626 come from another contemporary copy, which Haukur Þorgeirsson describes this as *The Reshuffled Hávamál* (p.c.), because the passages as known from the Codex Regius are reorganized, rephrased, many are omitted, and one added (Haukur Þorgeirsson 2015). Björn quotes this version again in 1642 (Einar G. Pétursson 1984: 272; Haukur Þorgeirsson 2015: 132). In 1641, Jón the Learned also wrote works quoting and referencing a number of eddic poems, one of which (*Sólarljóð*) is not contained in the Codex Regius and another of which may have been quoted from an independent medieval copy which no longer exists (Einar G. Pétursson 1998: 422–434). Overall, it seems evident that one or more collections of eddic poems were being circulated in the networks of self-educated Icelanders at least as far back as the 1620s.

Bishop Brynjólfur seems to have changed everything. His high standards for exactitude in copying these manuscripts became legendary (Haukur Þorgeirsson & Teresa Dröfn Njarðvík 2015: 156). Like Jón Guðmundsson, he subscribed to the idea that Sæmundr the Learned had composed a work before Snorri's *Edda*, which by the 1640s was also being called *Edda*. In 1623, he acquired the Codex Regius manuscript, which aligned with his expectations and could even have been introduced to him as Sæmundr's work (Faulkes 1977: 74; Haukur Þorgeirsson & Teresa Dröfn Njarðvík 2015: 157–158). He dubbed the collection *Sæmundar Edda* ('Sæmundr's *Edda*') and had the manuscript copied into a 'more complete' version of *Sæmundr's Edda* that included additional poems.<sup>1</sup>

Bishop Brynjólfur propagated the significance of 'Sæmundr's *Edda*' to the learned community both in Iceland and abroad, circulating his reconstruction of the work through handwritten copies.<sup>2</sup> His first manuscript is not preserved, and the corpus of seventeenth-century copies of eddic poems is largely made up of copies of Brynjólfur's *Sæmundr's Edda* and selections taken from it (Haukur Þorgeirsson & Teresa Dröfn Njarðvík 2015: 158–163). Brynjólfur had a fundamental role in heritagizing the eddic poems and also in establishing the still-current convention of referring to them collectively as an *Edda* (Haukur Þorgeirsson & Teresa Dröfn Njarðvík 2015). The two *Eddas* were distinguished by authorship (*Snorri's Edda* / *Sæmundr's Edda*), relative age (*Younger Edda* / *Elder Edda*), and later by form (*Poetic Edda* / *Prose Edda*). Of course,

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<sup>1</sup> AM 738 4to (78r) and Rask 21 a 4to (8v) appear to preserve copies of the table of contents from this *Sæmundr's Edda*: the Codex Regius provides a base, but with the order of the poems *Völundarkviða* and *Alvissmál* reversed and *Baldur's draumar* (in its seventeenth-century form) added following *Prymskviða*; the poems *Grottasöngur*, *Grógaldur*, *Fjolsvinnsmál*, and *Hyndluljóð* were added following the heroic poems (Haukur Þorgeirsson & Teresa Dröfn Njarðvík 2015: 161–162).

<sup>2</sup> The only printing press in Iceland was controlled by Bishop Þorlákur of Hólar and the king refused Brynjólfur's request to establish another at Skálholt for the publication of ancient texts (Gottskálf Jensson 2019: 27–28).



Sæmundr's connection to the eddic poems was debunked already in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, the idea associated idea of the two *Eddas'* relative age was debunked: Snorri's *Edda* came first. At the same time, the poems were acknowledged as entering into writing for the most part separately and their organized arrangement in the Codex Regius, which contrasts with that of the later AM 748 I a 4to collection, as probably attributable to the individual scribe. The poems seem never to have been viewed collectively as a 'work' before the seventeenth century, and the reference to collections and their translations as an *Edda* through the present day belongs to the *longue durée* of Bishop Brynjólfur's impacts.

Bishop Brynjólfur's critical concern for exactitude seems to have been linked to his earlier career at a school in Denmark and impacted on the copying milieu in Iceland. The demands for exactitude combined with an ideology of the texts as heritage artefacts and led people to present variant readings and occasionally variant spellings as marginal notes. Such notes were then reproduced in the margins of later copies, and are especially common in copies of *Völuspá*.<sup>3</sup> In the eighteenth century, this practice included indicating the different manuscripts from which variants derive (as in Nks 1109 fol.). Bishop Brynjólfur's propagation and promotion of the extant medieval manuscript being *Sæmundr's Edda* had clearly conferred new value on the poems that they had not previously been seen to have and had evidently resulted in a boom of copying activity that makes possible the current study of variation.

### ***Scribal Performance and the Reanimation of Eddic Poems***

The oral traditions of both the mythological and heroic eddic poems had collapsed by the seventeenth century, opening a gap of three to four centuries between the medieval poems and the seventeenth-century copies. The copyists were learning the tradition through reading the poems in conjunction with their knowledge and understanding of contemporary poetry. In the Middle Ages, vernacular poetry was not normally written out with the metrical cuing devices used for Latin verse, such as placing each metrical unit on its own line (e.g. O'Keeffe 1990: 1-3). This was also the case for eddic poems, which were written out like prose. Punctuation and capitalization marked boundaries of verse groups commonly called stanzas, half-stanzas, and similar units, while the line structure had to be inferred from the rhythms of the language. In seventeenth-century in Iceland, a folktale genre known as *sagnakvæði* was still being performed in a meter historically derived from the eddic meter called *fornyrðislag* (Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir 2013). This poetry also had historical continuities in its formulaic phraseology (Haukur Þorgeirsson 2013; forthcoming). Knowledge of these traditions provided a lens for engaging with the

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<sup>3</sup> Compare, for example, the copy in Nks 1110 fol. and those in Stock papp 15 8vo and Thott 1493 fol., which have both been made additional notes and/or changed the text while comparing the version being copied to a second, different version of the poem.

medieval texts in *fornyrðislag*, although the meter had evolved somewhat with language change. However, the same lens was used by some copyists to interpret the other central eddic meter called *ljóðaháttr*, which had no seventeenth-century counterpart. *Ljóðaháttr* alternates lines of two metrical types, and some copyists tried to interpret these lines through *fornyrðislag*, which impacted on how that imagined the meter (Frog 2022a: 8–11).

Analysis of the material dimensions of the aforementioned post-medieval copies of eddic poetry includes considerations of the use of scripts, text size and spatial organization, ornamentation, and colour. Rather than adopting the more or less continuous prose of the medieval manuscripts, seventeenth-century copyists customarily laid out eddic poems in groups of lines as paragraphs or with large spaces between them within otherwise continuous text (cf. O’Keeffe 1990), although some poems were also laid out in verse lines (e.g. AM 754 4to). Punctuation and word spacing were integrated into the seventeenth-century scribal repertoire as a means of rendering the rhythms of lines visible, something not (prominently) done in the medieval manuscripts. These practices suggest that metrical reading of the poems was a common part of Icelandic scribal competence by the 1640s.

Scribal performances and reanimations of this poetry can be viewed on a spectrum from transformations of the medieval poems like those found in *The Reshuffled Hávamál* to meticulous copies that keep closely even to the orthography of the exemplar. Haraldur Bernharðsson frames a person’s ideology relating to what is being reproduced in terms of engagement with a *living text* as opposed to a *relic text*, stressing that the text is mediated through the mind of the reading and reproducing scribe (2022). An engagement with a living text involves treating the poem as a thing used in contemporary language practices, for instance in public reading (cf. Coleman 1996). An engagement as a relic text treats the text as an artefact made of language, correlating exactitude with value in reproduction. Rather than a simple binary, these can be viewed as forming a spectrum, on which *The Reshuffled Hávamál* is at an outer extreme. Haukur Þorgeirsson argues that the only way to account for its extensive reorganization and omissions, its rephrasing of passages that draws on formulaic phraseology known from a second poem (*Hugsvinnsmál*), and the incorporating of a full passage known from a third (*Sigrdrífumál*) is that someone learned the poem from a medieval manuscript and then wrote it down from memory (2015).<sup>4</sup> If Haukur Þorgeirsson’s argument is correct, a temporal gap was opened between reading and writing: rather than reading a stretch of text, processing it as living language, and reproducing it in writing before advancing to the next stretch of text, someone read the whole text, engaged it as living language, and only wrote it down later. Scribal

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<sup>4</sup> This argument should be seen against the backdrop of the long history of the fluidity of orality and literacy in medieval and post-medieval Iceland. Not unlike in broadside ballads of print culture elsewhere in Europe, poems could evidently move from orality to writing or from writing to orality with public reading in between.

performance still occurred in writing from personal knowledge, and it seems probable that learning the poem and writing it down again was linked to it having uses beyond private reading. Even at the most conservative end of the spectrum, the breakthrough into performance (Hymes 1975) can be observed in meticulous copies where punctuation and word spacing reflect reading with vocal or mental performance (Tsur 1992: ch. 2) – i.e. articulating the words as lines of poetry and rendering the rhythms visible (O’Keeffe 1990). Even copyists who approached the poems as relic texts often reanimated them in such ways, if only to a small degree (e.g. in Lbs 1562 III 4to).

Bishop Brynjólfur’s demand for exactitude seems to echo across the centuries in the copying of variant readings as marginal notes. Copyists also compared variants and selected the wording they preferred, adding the alternative among the marginal variants (e.g. Stock papp 15 8vo). Of course, copyists could also simply ignore the marginal notes or exchange marginal variants for the wording in the main text according to their preferred interpretation (e.g. Nks 1867 4to). Adding variant readings in the margins is not here considered to be a form of scribal performance; the notes are an apparatus to facilitate the reader’s interpretation. These notes are comparable to marginalia that, for instance, identifies a word as a name of the god Odin or adds a cross-reference to a relevant chapter in the edition of Snorri’s *Edda* published in 1665 (Resen 1665; e.g. ÍB 299 4to).

Whether looking at medieval or later manuscripts, minor variations in wording are often difficult to evaluate in terms of scribal performance (Orton 2000). However, several examples point to copyists picking up on eddic poetry’s *inclination to non-variation* and applying it in the copying process. In oral verbal art, an ‘inclination to non-variation’ reflects an ideology that, when repetition is salient, words and phrases and perhaps complex sequences are presented in ‘the same’ way each time (Frog 2021: 43). Engaging with this principle accounts for cases in which a variation in one line of a poem is matched by the same variation when the phrase, name, or whatever it is occurs again. There are a few cases where such systematizing is particularly apparent. For example, the eddic poem *Vafþrúðnismál* (‘Things Spoken by Vafþrúðnir’) presents a knowledge competition between the god Odin and a giant Vafþrúðnir organized in three series of questions and answers. In the first and third series, each question opens with a repeating sequence of three lines, a type of macro-parallelism (Urban 1989) also found in other dialogues and historically characterized by an inclination to non-variation (Frog 2021: 45–49). The second group also opens its twelve questions with three-line macro-parallelism, but the questions here are numbered and the number in the first line determines which formula is used for alliteration in the second, something which can also vary the third on the basis of its semantic content. The second and third lines thus vary between alternatives (2021: 55–60). In the seventeenth-century version of the poem titled *Valþrúðnismál* (‘Things Spoken by Valþrúðnir’ – i.e. *Val-* rather than *Vaf-*), which I describe as *The Shorter Vafþrúðnismál*

(e.g. AM 747 4to), a copyist numbers the questions but reuses the line sequence from the first two questions (which have the same alliteration) for the fourth through to the ninth questions as well as the eleventh (e.g. Nks 1871 4to). Some regularizations of this kind can seem a bit arbitrary. For instance, later versions of this poem exhibit the systematic change of *-lm-* to *-ml-* in *Bergelmir* (> *Bergemlir*) and related names. Alongside the use of non-variation of this kind, serial progressions may be regularized. In one branch of these copies, a copyist accidentally skipped the number in the sixth question and renumbered every consecutive question accordingly, ending with eleven questions rather than twelve (e.g. Lbs 1199 I 4to). These examples illustrate that at least some copyists were personally taking responsibility for the representation or performance of the tradition in these texts.

Regularization is also found at the level of the rhythms of stretches of text. All seventeenth-century copies of *Baldrs draumar* ('Baldr's Dreams'), for example, are of the version I distinguish as *The Longer Baldrs draumar*. The poem in question centers on a dialogue between Odin and a dead seeress. The medieval poem in the *fornyrðislag* meter is commonly edited as if it is composed in regular units of four short-line couplets, with the exception of one passage that has an extra couplet. The dialogue of the poem has a repeating series of two couplets opening each question, much like those discussed in *Vafþrúðnismál*. These repeating series of lines were often heavily abbreviated by medieval copyists, usually by writing out the first word and then abbreviating each word thereafter until the sequence was recognizable – which meant that the more times it was repeated, the shorter the abbreviations became. Whoever recomposed *The Longer Baldrs draumar* evidently did not understand the extended abbreviation used for the final question, which did not include abbreviations for any words in the second couplet. The person interpreted the passage as one couplet short and added a pair of lines to make its length uniform (found in all seventeenth-century copies).

Regularization is also found at the level of turns of dialogue in *Alvíssmál* ('Things Said by AlviSS'). This poem presents a dialogue between the god Thor and the dwarf AlviSS with a consistent rhythm of one passage per speaker, each of regular length – except in one place where Thor speaks two consecutive passages. At some point, a copyist composed an additional passage of speech for the dwarf and inserted it between the two consecutive sequences attributed to Thor, regularizing the conversational turns (e.g. AM 738 4to). These examples point to scribes having a structural awareness beyond the level of individual lines, leading to scribal performances that make perceived or presumed structures more uniform.

In this context, *The Shorter Vafþrúðnismál* may be mentioned again. The three groups of questions in the medieval *Vafþrúðnismál* are interpreted today as organized with the first group posed by the *jötunn* Vafþrúdnir to Odin, the second group by Odin to Vafþrúdnir, and then the third also by Odin to Vafþrúdnir. Questions in the first group each open with 'Say, Gagnrathr [=Odin], ...'. Questions in the second then

regularly name the Vafthrudnir as the addressee. The repeating introduction to questions in the third group, however, include only the pronoun 'I' and the addressee remains unnamed. Bearing this in mind, one notes that the extant medieval manuscripts containing this poem have marginal abbreviations that note the changes in speaker (Gunnell 1995: chs. 3–4). Interestingly, these marginal notes are absent in the main manuscripts considered to derive from Bishop Brynjólfur's first *Sæmundr's Edda* (following Haukur Þorgeirsson & Teresa Dröfn Njarðvík 2015). Without knowing the poem, a reader would likely infer that the change in the opening lines of this third group of questions indicates a change in the questioner. Here, the speaker roles only become explicit in the final answer to the final question, which would contradict this previous expectation by revealing that Odin has actually been asking these questions as well as the preceding series. Recognizing that the questioner of both the second and third series is the same speaker can give the impression that one turn of the giant has been left out, or that something has simply gotten mixed up. Interestingly, the puzzle is avoided in *The Shorter Vafþrúðnismál*: the dialogue concludes with the first question of this third question group and thus no need to consider a change in the speaker. The different opening lines of the final question can instead be interpreted as marking of the concluding question of the poem. If the truncation of the poem is not attributable to some sort of material cause like losing pages of a manuscript, whether the final question is interpreted as being spoken by Odin or the giant, concluding the poem in this way looks structurally motivated.<sup>5</sup>

Rather than varying only form, some copyists also revised content, something which could be accomplished by changing a single word. For example, the poem *Grímnismál* ('Things Said by Grímnir [=Odin]') lists locations inhabited by different gods. The passage mentioning the goddess Freyja states the location in the first half and then states that 'she' (*hon*) received half the slain and Odin the other half. At some point, a copyist seems to have considered this information incorrect: as a result, in one group of manuscripts, the pronoun 'she' has been replaced with the name 'Thor' (*Þórr*), Thor thus being made the god who receives half the slain alongside Odin (as in Lbs 1562 4to). In this case, a copyist has asserted authority of knowledge.

A remarkable case of narrative elaboration is found in *The Longer Baldrs draumar*. *Baldrs draumar* is the shortest mythological poem in the medieval eddic corpus, but it is between one third and one half longer in the seventeenth-century copies. Much of the expansion involves the versification of an additional episode narrated in prose by Snorri Sturluson in his *Edda* (see Bugge 1867: 139). The elaboration is interesting in its divergence from the medieval tradition. In the medieval sources, the death of the god

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<sup>5</sup> Hypothetically, it is possible that the end of the text was the end of a manuscript page and the following page or pages were lost, but seventeenth-century copies of *The Shorter Vafþrúðnismál* were written out as continuous prose, which would make the correlation of the completion of this answer with the end of a left-facing page presumably at the end of a gathering an exceptional coincidence. Probability thus falls to the side of intention.

Baldr is at the intersection of one narrative cycle linked to Baldr's mother Frigg and a second narrative cycle linked to Baldr's father Odin, the two cycles involving different sets of actors and incompatible assumptions about the avoidability of prophesy or fate (Frog 2010). *The Longer Baldrs draumar* combines episodes from both cycles, which is never found in the medieval sources. The synthesis reflects the seventeenth-century tendency to view the diverse medieval sources as fragments of a coherent and unified system that can be reconstructed by fitting the pieces together.

As is well known, a number of eddic mythological poems present inventories of information in the form of a monologue or dialogue. Whereas a narrative is usually organized by means of units through a combination of structural patterns and causal relations, inventories such as these are organized on the basis of structural patterns and interpretations (or conventions). *The Reshuffled Hávamál* could thus rearrange the inventory of information in the poem without harm to its essence. A similar reorganization is found for *Völuspá*, a monologue that presents glimpses of numerous events beginning with the creation of the world and ending with its destruction and rebirth. *Völuspá* is preserved in two medieval versions, one in the Codex Regius manuscript and another in what seems a separate oral-derived version in the Hauksbók manuscript (AM 544 4to). The two versions differ in the order of the passages in the middle of the poem, and each version contains passages not in the other. In the seventeenth century, someone took contemporary copies of the two versions of *Völuspá* and compared them, identified every passage in each, and systematically combined these into what I describe as *The Synthetic Völuspá* – a new version of the poem that does not regularly follow either exemplar (e.g. Stock papp 15 8vo). Whereas *The Reshuffled Hávamál* seems most likely to reflect a personal act of transcription, *The Synthetic Völuspá* seems to be a planned production at a writing table.

The most radical variations of eddic poems seem to predate Bishop Brynjólfur's *Sæmundr's Edda*. *The Reshuffled Hávamál* seems to have already been in circulation when it was quoted in 1626, while *The Longer Baldrs draumar* is included in Brynjólfur's *Sæmundr's Edda* and seems to have been the only version circulating in seventeenth-century copies. Since Bishop Brynjólfur seems to have built his *Sæmundr's Edda* on the Codex Regius, it may be surprising that he seems to have included *The Synthetic Völuspá* rather than a direct copy: of the three lines of descent from this compilation that have been traced by Haukur Þorgeirsson and Teresa Njarðvík (2015: esp. 163), *The Synthetic Völuspá* is represented in two (Stock papp 15 8vo and Nks 1867 4to). The third has a conventional seventeenth-century *Völuspá* based on the Codex Regius. In spite of this, even this line exhibits changes in the poems contained, omitting heroic poetry, the earliest copies including a 'complete' table of contents that list *Völuspá tvífold* ('The Twofold *Völuspá*') (AM 738 4to, 78r; Rask 21 a, 8v), a title which most likely refers to *The Synthetic Völuspá*, pointing to it in this line of copies as well. All of these cases suggest a scenario in which the medieval eddic poems were being engaged with

more as living texts up until the point that Bishop Brynjólfur acquired the Codex Regius and increased demands of copying the poems as relic texts. *The Synthetic Völuspá* presents a special case, as potentially a commissioned work within the framework of Brynjólfur's project to reconstruct Sæmundr's work. In spite of rising philological concerns, it is clear that copyists continued to take responsibility for poems' form and content as they reperformed them in the copying process.

In addition to exercising agency in the reproduction of individual poems, copyists also participated in the evolution of *Sæmundr's Edda* as a work, which was subject to ongoing variation despite Bishop Brynjólfur's impacts on copying standards. One early copyist reduced the collection to the mythological poems only, while another placed the medieval Christian visionary eddic poem *Solarljóð* ('Song of the Sun') at the beginning of the collection, and followed it immediately with *Hrafnagaldur Óðins* ('Odin's Charm of Ravens') (Haukur Þorgeirsson & Teresa Dröfn Njarðvík 2015: 162). Opening the collection with *Solarljóð* would seem to affirm the Christian background of *Sæmundr's Edda*, while *Hrafnagaldur Óðins* provides a narrative prequel to the earlier first poem *Völuspá* (e.g. Stock papp 15 8vo).

*Hrafnagaldur Óðins* is a poem that advances beyond varying medieval texts to producing entirely new ones: it is a new seventeenth-century composition of unknown authorship (Lassen 2011), whereas eddic poems on medieval subjects composed in the eighteenth century become identified with authors (Hughes 2013). The new compositions must be viewed on the backdrop of Brynjólfur's *Sæmundr's Edda*: these were not compositions on any mythological or heroic subject that were intended to be received separately: they were instead elaborations that tell stories not covered by the surviving poems but are connected with the respective events and extended cycles of events. The circulation of *Sæmundr's Edda* was thus dynamic, being continuously reorganized, combined with other texts (often including material from Snorri Sturluson's *Edda*), reduced to selections, and reconstituted in different ways, as well as both increasing the contemporary value of the poems and making their form and contents sources of inspiration for new composition. All in all, even though *Sæmundr's Edda* was conceptualized as a historical work circulating in writing, it was remarkably variable in ways that are very much comparable to an oral tradition.

### **Closing Remarks**

Although the survey of examples presented above may make creative scribal interventions to the reproductions of the eddic poems seem like the norm, it needs to be remembered that most manuscripts exhibit regular and systematic copying of their exemplar texts (see also Orton 2000). As Jonathan Ready reminds us, while copyists may have been the agents of scribal performances that are of interest to research today, they were also artisans who worked for consumers in a contemporary economy (2019: ch. 5). Many of the examples above are found in multiple copies, where they have



been regularly reproduced, in some cases over the course of many generations of retranscription. Nevertheless, even conservative copies point to a potential breakthrough into performance, something which can be seen in copyists' reading of their exemplars, and is subtly reflected in the visible rhythms of metrical lines. The survey has highlighted a range of scribal performances that considerably exceed small variations of phraseology, ranging from imposing interpretations to occasionally radical interventions that change the meanings of the stories told, add to their substance, or complement them with additional stories. Although these poems had died in the oral tradition, they were given new life through the performances of scribes centuries later – scribes who created a living tradition through the reanimation of written versions of once-oral texts.

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|--------------------------------------|--|
| AM 544 4to (Hauksbók, ca. 1302–1310) | GKS 2365 4to (Codex Regius, ca. 1255–1285)                           |
| AM 738 4to (1680)                    | ÍB 299 4to (1764)  |
| AM 747 3 4to (17 <sup>th</sup> c.)   | Lbs 1199 I 4to (17 <sup>th</sup> or 18 <sup>th</sup> c.)             |
| AM 748 I a 4to (ca. 1300–1325)       | Lbs 1562 III 4to (17 <sup>th</sup> or 18 <sup>th</sup> c. and later) |
| AM 748 I b 4to (ca. 1300–1325)       | Nks 1109 fol. (mid-18 <sup>th</sup> c.)                              |
| AM 754 4to (ca. 1650–1654)           | Nks 1110 fol. (ca. 1700–1750)  |

Nks 1867 4to (1760)

Nks 1871 4to (18<sup>th</sup> c.)

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Interview

## Talking with Former ISFNR President Ülo Valk

Ülo Valk is Professor of Estonian and Comparative Folklore at the University of Tartu. He has wide-ranging interests but is especially known for his extensive work with belief legends and place lore. Valk was president of ISFNR from 2005–2009. He is Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Numen: International Review for the History of Religions* and currently leads the projects Vernacular Interpretations of the Incomprehensible: Folkloristic Perspectives Towards Uncertainty (2020–2024), funded by the Estonian Research Council, and Restored Sites and Routes as Inclusive Spaces and Places: Shared Imaginations and Multi-layered Heritage (2020–2023), funded by the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area (EEA) countries Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

*What is your particular current topic of interest in the field of folklore?*

*Or: What are you currently working on?*

One of the research questions that I keep returning to is the relationship between factuality and fiction in belief narrative genres. As the late Dan Ben-Amos noted, the truth-value of folklore is one of the basic questions in genre analysis, and I think the problem concerns both scholars and the group members who share traditions. Those of us who see folklore from an analytic and temporal distance often consider it as a realm of poetic expressivity and fantasy, and we cannot notice the intention of storytellers of sharing their knowledge about the world, i.e. telling the truth. Currently I am studying the giant-lore of Estonia – short narratives and fragmentary knowledge of the gigantic mighty men who lived in the distant past, who transformed the landscape, built and destroyed churches, and fought with each other. The disappearance of giants marked the end of a time period of extraordinary feats and great deeds. Today we tend to see this giant-lore through the prism of poetic enchantment – of blending the landscape and storyworld. One of these local giants, belonging to the *kalevipoeg* kin – was selected as the national hero of the Estonian epic. Today Kalevipoeg appears as a fictional character but before the modernisation of Estonia in 19<sup>th</sup> century there was no reason to doubt his historical existence. The giants belonged to the race of Nephilim, mentioned in the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of Genesis in the Old Testament. Everything that relied on the Bible represented valid knowledge. Today we think about giants as characters of fairy-tales or assign metaphorical meaning to this word. For example, Dan Ben-Amos was one of the giants

of the “Young Turks” generation who transformed international folkloristics. As we have sadly lost him, this marks the end of a certain era in our disciplinary history.

### ***How did you hear about the ISFNR and when did you join?***

I studied folklore in the 1980s at the University of Tartu. Because of Communist censorship and other restrictions, the access of students to contemporary Western scholarship was limited. Fortunately, the University of Tartu library maintained contacts with academic institutions and publishers in Finland – the friendly neighbouring country of Estonia, who managed to avoid the eventual invasion of the Soviet army and occupation in 1944. I remember browsing the scarce collections of the library and discovering the proceedings of the ISFNR congress in Helsinki (1974), published in the series *Studia Fennica*. This was probably in 1982 – the first time I delved into international folklore studies and became conscious of the lively intercultural communication and debates between scholars from Europe and other continents who met at the forums of the ISFNR. Participation in the work of the society on the other side of the iron curtain was unthinkable. I became a full member of the ISFNR in 1998 at the congress held in Göttingen.

### ***What do you like about the ISFNR?***

The ambition of the ISFNR to bring together folklorists of the whole world is remarkable. International diversity also means versatility of approaches and wide range of research interests. The conferences of the ISFNR are excellent venues of learning about something new, gaining inspiration, talking to the best experts in regional and ethnic traditions, listening to the intellectual leaders of the discipline, and meeting friends and colleagues. Fortunately, the ISFNR has wisely grown beyond the European and Western realm of scholarship. Keen interest in cultures worldwide is a catalyst for analytic and theoretical thinking. The ISFNR tradition of holding regular meetings outside Europe and supporting contacts with scholars who carry indigenous and local knowledge is valuable.

### ***Do you have any suggestions about how to improve the ISFNR?***

This is an important question to all ISFNR members. The future of the ISFNR depends on the commitment and energy of individuals who make up the society. The establishment of research groups and networks, such as the Belief Narrative Network and Charms, Charmers and Charming has proven to be a major success in developing scholarship. The democratic spirit and freedom to take the initiative to organise events, start research or artistic projects, develop contacts and networks, prepare joint publications, etc. can only be encouraged. The potential of the mental, scholarly and cultural resources provided by the ISFNR is extraordinary, and much of it is still latent.

### *What is your favourite fairytale or legend?*

My favourite folk narrative is always the one that I happen to focus on at a particular time in research or teaching. It can also be a fascinating story that I hear while doing fieldwork – anything that offers food for thinking. In February 2023, I visited Airlangga University in Surabaya, Indonesia, where I gave a lecture on place-lore as a concept and a method. I also made some interviews with the students of folklore and anthropology, focusing on the supernatural as a realm of vernacular knowledge. One story that I heard reflected a personal encounter with Slender Man. Two young people saw him sitting on the roof of a house, staring at them as they walked by. Obviously, this was not a pleasant scene, but a scary incident. However, as a memorate this offers a thought-provoking case of reflecting on the invigorating role of imagination in evoking and experiencing the supernatural. As we know, the Slender Man was brought to life in 2009 as a fictional character, but soon he started his active life both in virtual reality and the world beyond. Again, we can see that the relationship between truth and fiction is not simple. As an epistemological problem it makes one wonder about the scope and reality of the storyworld, and it does not matter whether you are the person who has witnessed the supernatural in your everyday life or are a scholar who observes it from a safe distance.

*Questions prepared by Mirjam Mencej*

Interview

## *How Now, My Good folklorist, I have Some Questions for You...*

There are many unsolved mysteries in the universe and questions nobody ever dared asking. The ISFNR took it upon itself to address folklorists with some of the riddles of our folkloristic existence and thus we sent our questions off into the darkness. Luckily, a few brave individuals returned answers that can really change the cosmos, or at least make us wiser and merrier, which is the same thing...

### *Mrinalini Atrey, University of Jammu (India)*

Dr Mrinalini Atrey, with a doctorate in History, works as a Lecturer at The Law School, University of Jammu, Jammu, India. Her research is largely focused on local deity cults, folk rituals, folk narrative songs, and women's role in the transmission and recreation of intangible cultural heritage. She coordinates the Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS) India Chapter and the National Scientific Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) India.

#### *Who is a folklorist from the past who you think wrote things that are relevant today?*

Franz Boas, American anthropologist and folklore scholar.

Since the Grimm brothers, scholars from interrelated fields, in various countries, have been contributing to the discipline of folklore, thus transforming it from antiquities to artistic expressions in a group. In my opinion, the contributions of Franz Boas, a leader in American anthropological and folklore scholarship in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century will remain relevant so long as the cultures continue to be the focus of study. Franz Boas looked into the diffusion process, the way texts moved and changed from culture to culture. His concepts of ethnographic fieldwork and cultural relativism gave a new direction to folklore research. His emphasis on the importance of local histories for an analysis of cultures was another contribution where he argued that to understand specific cultural traits – the behaviours, beliefs and symbols – they need to be examined in their local context.

***What is a piece of folklore that you particularly like or find especially interesting?***

Oral narratives, especially the narratives, legends and anecdotes connected with built heritage.

I am currently working on the stories related to temples, *baolis* ('stairwells') and *sarais* ('inns') on the traditional/pilgrimage routes in the Jammu region. Their analysis is helpful to gain insight into the socio-economic life of the communities and groups in the region. My attempt has largely been to emphasise the importance of folklore as an important source for building historical narratives in the region.

***What is something you wish will one day be uncovered in an archive?***

The lost legends about Dogra (Jammu) women heroines.

A local folklore collector, Shiv Nirmohi refers to their names but their stories are lost. It is hoped that someday references to them are found in an archive.

***What is a concept in folkloristics that changed your intellectual path?***

Women's folklore studies.

Women's folklore studies which emerged in the 1970s when the expressive culture of women became the focus of research. Earlier, women were part of folklore research but in relationship to men. The credit goes to Claire Farrer's edited special issue of *The Journal of American Folklore* (1975) which stressed the need for focused research on the folklore of women. Contributions from women scholars have resulted in extensive studies in this field and have helped in building Her story.

I have been working on women's role in the transmission and recreation of folk traditions, be it rituals and ceremonies, arts and crafts, culinary skills, collective memory in the form of oral narratives, songs and legends, and the traditional healing systems—all that constitute traditional knowledge. The aim is to stake that a narrative about women, can be weaved by understanding her involvement in rituals, making of arts and crafts, and as the custodian of traditional knowledge and folk narratives.

***Name something you are currently reading?***

Presently I am enjoying *Devi Purana*, a blend of Brahmanical (from Hinduism) and folk stories. *Devi Purana* is Rendition of *Srimad Devi Bhagavatam* by Dinesh Bhatia. Classified as an *Upapurana*, *Devi Purana* is one of the many works of Maharishi Veda Vyasa (composer of the Indian Epic, *Mahabharata*). The book reiterates through varied stories, legends and anecdotes that the Supreme Goddess or the Divine Mother is one beyond and above the trinity of Gods (i.e. the Hindu Gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiv).

Dinesh Bhatia has separated and simplified the stories and the underlying philosophies to make them easily understandable to the reader, both scholar and layman.



***Name a folktale that has to be adapted to a film?***

A Dogri Folk Tale of a hilly village Tikri (Udhampur, Jammu), in which the story starts with *Vidai* (when the bride leaves her house after the solemnisation of marriage rituals). This folktale has already been staged as a play titled *Ghumayee* ('Lament') by Natrang Theatre and has received international acclaim. As the story goes, the bride, while on her way to her in-law's house, felt thirsty but she was not provided water. As the track became strenuous, her thirst increased but repeated requests were met with the assurance of water at the next available source. After some distance, when her thirst became unbearable, her *Doli* ('bride-carriage') was put down and the marriage procession was halted. The water source was found in the deep gorge which was difficult to access. The bridegroom requested people around to fetch water but no one came forward. Then a young man, putting his life in danger, was able to fetch water from the gorge. Though the bride's thirst was quenched, the young man died due to fatigue. The bridegroom's family wanted to continue with the marriage procession but the bride refused to do so. She declared herself a widow and started weeping a lament, a *Ghumayee*, in the local language and gave up her life.

This folktale is a beautiful story about the interplay of human relations which should be adapted into a film so that it can reach a larger audience.

***Mehri Bagheri, Tabriz University (Iran)***

Mehri Bagheri is Professor of Tabriz University, Director of the Shahriyar Research Foundation, Founder of the Academic Folkloric Research in Iranology Foundation, and former vice-president of ISFNR for Asia.

***Who is a folklorist from the past who you think wrote things that are relevant today?***

Lauri Honko, especially his works on Siri Epic shed a vivid light in my theory of transformational generative formula for traditional and folk narratives research and encouraged me to propose establishing "Folkolinguistics" as a new branch of Applied Linguistics.

***What is a piece of folklore that you particularly like or find especially interesting?***

"Travelogue" usually attracts me from different aspects.

***What is something you wish will one day be uncovered in an archive?***

It will be very fascinating if one day a fragment of an explanation about the Mithraic lion-headed figure, written by a follower of Mithraism, is discovered. This will support the accuracy of one of the current theories.

***What is a concept in folkloristics that changed your intellectual path?***

As human beings all over the world, in spite of being various in appearance and pose, are created in common visible organs and forms, there should be the same similarity in the exquisite invisible and spiritual component of their entity and essence.

Thus, at the meeting point of mankind “as microcosm” with the universe “as macrocosm”, the main motives of formation and creation of various folkloric issues and materials such as curiosity, joy, sorrow, hope, fear, desire, appreciation and so on, will cause the manifestation and advent of various types of folkloric material and substances like: myth, epic, ritual, tale, arts, literature, charm, talisman, belief, proverb, parable, etc.

Therefore, I became interested in this path to perceive the similarity of the folkloric elements and products and possibly a bit of the essence, the gist and the function of the invisible structure of mankind.

***Name something you are currently reading?***

For comparative research I am reading books about Greek and Indian mythology for the time being.

***Name a folktale that has to be adapted to a film?***

*Pancha Tantra* is a Sanskrit book which was translated into Persian in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and entitled by the name of two animals, *Kalila & Demna*, who are the main characters in its serial tales and anecdotes, which, besides of being very amusing, are didactic as well. I believe *Kalila & Demna* is a very attractive source for cartoon animation.

***Katherine Borland, The Ohio State University  
(U.S.A.)***

Katherine Borland, Director, Center for Folklore Studies and Professor, Department of Comparative Studies at the Ohio State University. Currently, I am working on embodied forms of knowing and communicating, particularly contemporary dance, improvisational movement and theatre, and in a somewhat different field, bottom-up (as opposed to institutional or community) archives.

***Who is a folklorist from the past who you think wrote things that are relevant today?***

I am increasingly drawn to reading and re-assessing the work of scholar-artists operating in our field. Zora Neale Hurston is perhaps the most well known and oft revived scholar-artist in North American Folklore Studies. However, many less well-known (to folklore) figures, such as Katherine Dunham and Violeta Parra, have been

celebrated as performers but not as collector/scholars. In each of these cases, and particularly for Parra, the identity of folklorist/collector has been overshadowed by the identity as folk, due to race, class and gender hierarchies. Yet these scholar-artists offer a means of exploring the complexities of self-other positionalities in ethnography.

***What is a piece of folklore that you particularly like or find especially interesting?***

Flee, fly. Flee, fly flow. Kumbalada, kumbalada kumbalada vista. Oh no no no no da vista, vista. Eeny meany ixbalini uwah ambalini; acha cacha kumaracha uhwau; ixpediddly ohbotin duwatin wawbatin shhh.

(My childhood version of a nonsense rhyme from West Philly. Still around in multiple versions – I checked Youtube. I like the sensory feeling in your mouth when you chant it.)

***What is something you wish will one day be uncovered in an archive?***

This question makes me think of Sadhana Naithani's discovery of the handwritten manuscript by Pandit Ram Gharib Chaube in the archive of the Folklore Society, London, and how that discovery led to a reassessment of colonial era folktale collecting in India, reinserting a native intellectual presence in collections that had been dismissed as distorted by a colonial lens. I would love to be able to find accounts of people who were displaced by 1960s-era highway construction in the U.S., a project I'm currently working on in Columbus with community partners. What were they thinking and feeling and doing as they saw their neighborhoods dismantled? Did they understand the long-term impacts of this destruction in the name of progress? Real Estate plays such an outsized role in my own city's formation and character. How did people counter the progress narrative and where are their narratives of the highways coming in?

***What is a concept in folkloristics that changed your intellectual path?***

Gosh. Discovering folklore changed my intellectual path. But I think the idea of collective performance as composed of a series of mutual misunderstandings among diverse groups who share just enough to pull things off helped me recognize and appreciate the dynamic nature of groups and the shifting and negotiated quality of the borders between them.

***Name something you are currently reading?***

*Urgent Archives: Enacting Liberatory Memory Work* by Michelle Caswell (Routledge, 2021) offers a critique of institutional archives and a discussion of the ways that community archives can be activated not only for representational equity but also to

dismantle oppressive social systems. The drawback of the book for folklorists is that the institutional/community binary doesn't make room for the kinds of collections we most often produce. However, Caswell's concepts can inform our work in pushing toward more activist and engaged kinds of research/collecting.

***Name a folktale that has to be adapted to a film?***

The salmon of knowledge. When Fionn MacCool burns his thumb and becomes aware of everything all at once! I love the story, because the gift is totally random, not sought or deserved. Too bad the fish had to die.

***Ian Brodie, Cape Breton University (Canada)***

Ian Brodie is the Professor of Folklore and SSHRC Exchange University Research Chair at Cape Breton University. He writes mainly about the intersection of folklore and popular culture in intimate forms, whether that is small markets, like radio song contests, or commodified variations on folk forms, like stand-up comedy as an extension of vernacular small talk.

***Who is a folklorist from the past who you think wrote things that are relevant today?***

It grieves me to say it, given his – at best – 'tepid' response to National Socialism, but each time I read Carl von Sydow I am startled by how prescient he was on the dynamics and practicalities of tradition and transmission.

***What is a piece of folklore that you particularly like or find especially interesting?***

The sandwich: it is a remarkable illustration of type, oikotype, variation, transmission, vernacularity, and commodification; discussions intersect with issues of class, ethnic identity, socioeconomic status, and taste (Bourdieu and otherwise); and it is delicious.

***What is something you wish will one day be uncovered in an archive?***

This question really privileges the vernacular creativity of the past over that of the present, doesn't it? But, in the fun spirit of the question, an answer to the Olrik / Grundtvig / Child issue of the connection between the Danish and Anglo-Scottish ballads: a "rough draft" manuscript with attempted translations crossed out and marginalia expressing frustration at the task!

***What is a concept in folkloristics that changed your intellectual path?***

Peter Narváez and Martin Laba's articulation of the folklore-popular culture continuum. It certainly is the lodestone for my work.

***Name something you are currently reading?***

For research: Todorov's *The Fantastic*. For pleasure: Nguyen's *The Committed* (well: it's on my bedside table waiting to be read, at least).

***Name a folktale that has to be adapted to a film?***

*Happy Gilmore* is essentially ATU 551 but with golf.

## ***James Fox, The Australian National University (Australia)***

James Fox is Emeritus Professor at The Australian National University, with research interests in Comparative Austronesian, including Austronesian folklore.

***Who is a folklorist from the past who you think wrote things that are relevant today?***

I look to Vladimir Propp for sense and to Claude Lévi-Strauss for provocation.

***What is a piece of folklore that you particularly like or find especially interesting?***

I am currently writing about the "Austronesian" tale of the lost fishhook and its recorded occurrences over one thousand and four hundred years and across islands stretching from Japan to Timor.

***What is something you wish will one day be uncovered in an archive?***

More versions of the Tale of the Lost Fishhook.

***What is a concept in folkloristics that changed your intellectual path?***

Dealing with the complexities of dualism is what has charged, not changed, my intellectual path.

***Name something you are currently reading?***

I read science fiction novels as a genre of folklore. I just finished Nicola Griffith's *Ammonite* - a planet of only women who must struggle to get on with each other.

***Name a folktale that has to be adapted to a film?***

The wide-spread Austronesian tale of the half person who goes in search of his or her other half - a morality tale with physical attributes and gender significance. I have already engaged Balinese artists to paint scenes from Balinese versions of this tale.

## ***Anna Katrina Gutierrez, Lantana Publishing (Philippines)***

Anna Katrina Gutierrez received her PhD in English, specialising in Children's Literature, from Macquarie University. She has written the book *Mixed Magic: Global-local dialogues in fairy tales for young people* published by John Benjamins. She is currently a Commissioning Editor at Lantana, an award-winning independent children's publisher in the UK with a mission to publish inclusive books for children.

### ***Who is a folklorist from the past who you think wrote things that are relevant today?***

Damiana Eugenio who became known as the Mother of Philippine Folklore. Her seven-volume series *Philippine Folk Literature* is awe-inspiring in its attempt to compile our national folklore and to represent genre as well as the 180+ ethnolinguistic groups of the country. Her series is a treasure trove for anyone who is interested in Philippine and Asian folklore.

### ***What is a piece of folklore that you particularly like or find especially interesting?***

Our mythical creatures in the Philippines are very interesting and many still believe they exist. One creature that frightened me and continues to fascinate me is the *manananggal*, a type of vampire. Often depicted as a beautiful woman, she can sprout huge bat-like wings and sever her torso from her lower body. She flies through the night looking for prey, leaving her lower body behind. It's so strange and scary and it makes me wonder how we ever imagined such a creature.

### ***What is a concept in folkloristics that changed your intellectual path?***

The idea of a fairy-tale network developed by Donald Haase (2006) is the backbone of my work on glocal dialogues in retold fairy tales for young readers. I am forever fascinated by the decentered and intertextual meaning-making that emerges when understanding and analysing folk and fairy tales from this perspective.

### ***Name something you are currently reading?***

An English translation of The Boxer Codex, a late-sixteenth century manuscript that contains eyewitness accounts of the customs, ways of dress and ways of life of various peoples from the Philippines and other East and Southeast Asian countries. It was unearthed in 1947 by Prof. Charles R. Boxer. My copy of the second edition just arrived yesterday!

***Name a folktale that has to be adapted to a film?***

*Tall Story* is a middle grade novel written by Candy Gourlay where she brings together the Philippine legend of Bernardo Carpio, a culture hero tale analogous to the Prometheus story, with a coming-of-age basketball story. It's a fantastic modern retelling that brings the legend to life for kids today in a wonderful, joyful and magical way.

***Galit Hasan-Rokem, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Israel)***

Galit Hasan-Rokem, born in Helsinki in 1945, has lived mainly in Israel since 1957. She received her PhD from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1978 and her dissertation was published as Folklore Fellows' Communication 232. She studied folkloristics at the University of Helsinki under the guidance of Matti Kuusi and Lauri Honko. Among her other published work: *The Wandering Jew: Interpretations of a Christian Legend* (with Alan Dundes, Indiana University Press, 1986); *The Web of Life: Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature* (Stanford University Press, 2000); *Tales of the Neighborhood: Jewish Narrative Dialogues in Late Antiquity* (University of California Press, 2003); *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Folklore* (with Regina F. Bendix, 2012). She served as Max and Margarethe Grunwald Professor of Folklore at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem until her retirement in 2012, and was President of the ISFNR 1998–2005.

***Who is a folklorist from the past who you think wrote things that are relevant today?***

Indeed, too many to mention, but for me personally especially Claude Levi-Strauss and Elli Köngäs-Maranda.

***What is a piece of folklore that you particularly like or find especially interesting?***

Proverbs and riddles, always. Although just now I am deep into epic Kalevala poetry, as I am translating Lönnrot's classic work into Hebrew.

***What is something you wish will one day be uncovered in an archive?***

An autobiographical text written by a woman who lived in Late Antique Roman or Byzantine Palestine.

***What is a concept in folkloristics that changed your intellectual path?***

Structure, ecotype, transformation.

*Name something you are currently reading?*

Eleazar Meletinsky, *The Poetics of Myth*.

*Name a folktale that has to be adapted to a film?*

Little Brother, Little Sister, Grimm 11, ATh 450.

## *Éva Pócs, University of Pécs (Hungary)*

Éva Pócs is professor emeritus at the University of Pécs, Hungary. Crucial areas of her research are the comprehensive analysis of lived religion and folk beliefs, witchcraft and demonology in the early modern and modern period, verbal charms, the cult of the dead, divination, supernatural communication, shamanism, witchcraft, and fairy cult.

*Who is a folklorist from the past who you think wrote things that are relevant today?*

Lauri Honko.

*What is a piece of folklore that you particularly like or find especially interesting?*

The narrative of a seer's visionary experience about the death of a man who suffered a car accident, to whom she travelled in spirit to prevent the devil from taking his soul to hell.

*What is something you wish will one day be uncovered in an archive?*

The testimony of a living fairy-woman about her dream experience of an otherworldly fairy-feast.

*What is a concept in folkloristics that changed your intellectual path?*

The application of complex anthropological methods to European cultural phenomena with their social context in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when anthropologists, who have previously exclusively studied peoples outside Europe, also began to consider the traditional village communities of Europe as an anthropological field. This inspired me to consider the category of traditional folk beliefs tied to peasant orality as part of a wider religious culture, to investigate folklore as embedded in society, and as part of a functionally determined system.



***Name something you are currently reading?***

Hristoforova, Olga: *Kolduny i žertvy. Antropologija koldovstva v sovremennoj Rossii* ('Witches and Victims: The Anthropology of Witchcraft in Modern Russia') (Moskva, 2010).

***Name a folktale that has to be adapted to a film?***

I have such bad experiences with folktales made into films that I don't consider further adaptations important.

## ***Victor Hugo Sampaio Alves, The Federal University of Paraíba (Brazil)***

Victor Hugo is about to finish his PhD on Religious Studies, in which he analyses possible vestiges of shamanism in the mediaeval and modern literatures of Scandinavia. He teaches psychology at the university level and is also a member of the Nucleus of Viking and Scandinavian Studies (NEVE, in Portuguese).

***Who is a folklorist from the past who you think wrote things that are relevant today?***

Anna-Leena Siikala is the first one who comes into mind. Before reading her work I was used to seeing authors dealing with Scandinavian and Finnic mythologies and religions from a strictly historical point of view. Her multidisciplinary approach which made use of Folkloristics, History, Cognitive Anthropology, Neuropsychology, Linguistics and Comparative Religion mesmerized me and made me open my mind to new (and more innovative) conceptions and methods.

***What is a piece of folklore that you particularly like or find especially interesting?***

Anne Vabarna's twin epic *The Maiden's Death Song & The Great Wedding*, which was collected by A. O. Väisänen. Perhaps the reason why it has a great appeal to me is the fact that it sounds as if a lament (or a series of lament songs) from Balto-Finnic tradition had received influences from the epic genre. It is both beautiful and intriguing.

***What is something you wish will one day be uncovered in an archive?***

I am deeply interested in traditions of charms and other forms of magical oral repertoires, so the idea of new texts of charms or magic songs from Finno-Ugric cultures being uncovered really excites me.

***What is a concept in folkloristics that changed your intellectual path?***

It is really difficult to choose only one. I reckon I would choose the concept of Symbolic Matrix as proposed by Frog in a series of studies. It is one of the most effective and adaptive tools for approaching expressions of mythology and religion in specific and multi-cultural milieus. One of its biggest advantages in my opinion is that it is able to keep in focus multiple cultural inheritances belonging to specific peoples and languages (i.e. "Uralic", "Indo-European", etc.) while at the same time aiming to successfully explicate them in order to explore how different elements that originated in different cultures end up mixing with each other in wider cultural contexts. This is especially interesting for analysing religions and mythologies in Scandinavian or the Circum-Baltic area for example, where a remarkably diversity of cultures have been in contact. Frog's Symbolic Matrix has been a tool of great importance in helping me to understand the occurrence of (supposedly) similar symbols and practices in the cultures of medieval and modern Scandinavia.

***Name something you are currently reading?***

Clive Tolley's *Shamanism in Norse Myth and Magic*. I consider this work to be an unavoidable and classic study on the matter, so I find myself constantly coming back to it and understanding something new each time.

***Name a folktale that has to be adapted to a film?***

Either one of the two versions of a Sami folktale called *The Haunting of the Old Deceased Noaidi*. One of them was collected by A. V. Koskimies and the other by T. I. Itkonen. Like many of the Sami folktales it is rather short, but the haunting atmosphere, I think, could easily be adapted into the basic plot of a film.

## ***Sainkuin Tsetsenmunkh, Northwest Nationalities University (China)***

Sainkuin Tsetsenmunkh, ScD, Professor of Northwest Nationalities University (Lanzhou City, Gansu, China) has over 100 scientific publications, including 10 monographs; he is currently director of postgraduate projects.

***Who is a folklorist from the past who you think wrote things that are relevant today?***

Antti Amatus Aarne and Stith Thompson; their work *The Types of the Folktale* is of relevance for modern world folkloristics.

***What is a piece of folklore that you particularly like or find especially interesting?***

The folktale that I am mostly interested in at the moment is “Why old people should be respected and appreciated”. It is popular all over the world, there is a great variety of the stories that belong to the type.

***What is something you wish will one day be uncovered in an archive?***

Any discovery of archival records of Mongolian tales makes me immensely happy because my cherished dream is to complete my monograph *A Comparative Index of the Types of Folktales of Mongolian Peoples*.

***What is a concept in folkloristics that changed your intellectual path?***

The research on folktale types and motifs was most important for me; it influenced the direction of my research on the folktales of the Mongolian peoples.

***Name something you are currently reading?***

*The Types of International Folktales* by Hans-Jörg Uther (Helsinki, 2004).

***Name a folktale that has to be adapted to a film?***

My choice is “Why old people should be respected and appreciated” because the folktale is based on the idea of humanity and love.

*English translation by Dr Tatiana Bogrdanova and  
Russian translation from Mongolian by Dr Baazr Bicheev*

## ***Dong Xiaoping, Beijing Normal University (China)***

Dong Xiaoping is Professor of Folkloristics of Beijing Normal University, PRC (since 1995), the first Chinese to get the Ph.D. in folkloristics (1989; supervisor: Professor Zhong Jingwen, the founding father of Chinese Folkloristics). She was the doctorate fellow of history in the University of Iowa, USA (1994), member of Folklore Fellow’s Summer School at University of Joensuu, Finland (1995), and academic visiting fellow of the Oriental Institute of the University of Oxford, UK (2001). In recent years, she is the director of Research Institute for Chinese Folk Culture, BNU, director of Digital Folklore Laboratory, BNU, dean of College of Transcultural Studies, BNU.

***Who is a folklorist from the past who you think wrote things that are relevant today?***

Elias Lönnrot, Julius Krohn & Kaarle Krohn, Antti Aarne, Lauri Honko, Anna-Leena Siikala, Walter Anderson, Lauri Harvilahti, Ülo Valk, Lotte Tarkka, Frog; Johann Gottfried von Herder, Jacob Grimm & Wilhelm Grimm, August Wilhelm von Shlegel

& Friedrich von Schlegel, Wolfram Eberhard; Arnold Van Gennep, Claude Lévi-Strauss; Y. M. Sokolov, Vladimir Propp, Mikhail Bakhtin, Eleasar Meletinsky; Boris Lyvovich Riftin, Milman Parry, Albert B. Lord, Richard M. Dorson, Alan Dundes, Richard Bauman; Zhong jingwen, Yanagita Kunio, and Hiroko Ikeda.

***What is a piece of folklore that you particularly like or find especially interesting?***

The star husband, the snake beauty, the butterfly madam (lovers), the moving pagoda, Buddhist legends, the underground world or life in the lower world, the singing bone(harp), the wise carpenter, the epic Manas, village opera, rites of passage, and rituals of herbal curing.

***What is something you wish will one day be uncovered in an archive?***

Folktales, folksongs and related folklore that were collected in China or India by Nordic folklorists or missionaries in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century or earlier and are preserved in the Finnish Folklore Archives.

***What is a concept in folkloristics that changed your intellectual path?***

Popular and traditional worldview, knowledge systems and their perspectives on technological innovation.

***Name something you are currently reading?***

*Study in Oral Narrative*, edited by Lauri Honko and Anna-Leena Siikala (Helsinki, 1989), the Chinese edition of *Mikhail Bakhtin's Complete Works* (Shijiazhuang, 1998), *Zhong Jingwen's Complete Works* (Beijing, 2018), Gong Yushu's Chinese translation of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Beijing, 2021), Shi Yang's *Oral Narratives and Ritual Practice: A Study of the Myth, Witchcraft and Rituals of the Alangan Mangyan People, Philippines* (Beijing, 2022), and much more.

***Name a folktale that has to be adapted to a film?***

Aarne-Thompson folktale type 1\* is "The Fox Steals the Basket", in which a rabbit plays dead, a girl lays her basket down to pick up the rabbit and a fox steals the basket. A folktale like this is spread in both China and India in the following form:

An old man carries cloth and vinegar in a basket and on his way he sees an eagle catching a rabbit. The old man goes to catch the eagle and the rabbit. The fox steals his cloth and vinegar from the basket.

In my opinion, this folktale should be made into a film. Why? What is lost in this folktale is two items: cloth and vinegar, and vinegar is a symbol of water and grain. The tale presents water, grain and clothing as the most precious resources for human existence on the earth. A most important lesson can be given to people through this

simple text. Human beings should resist the greedy desire exhibited by the old man in this folktale: he gave up his cloth and vinegar when he saw the eagle with a rabbit, which he had no real chance of catching. This is a lesson about safeguarding resources: people should protect the Earth's environment and cherish these three basic resources no less than they cherish their own eyes.

### *Postscript*

If you have other questions you wish we address in our next newsletter OR if you are brave enough to take the ISFNR challenge, please write to: [isfnrnewsletter\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:isfnrnewsletter[at]gmail.com).

*Organized by Frog, University of Helsinki  
and Dani Schrire, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

In memoriam

## *Dan Ben-Amos (1934-2023)*

*Simon J. Bronner, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

Dan Ben-Amos, who made major contributions to folkloristic theory and folk narrative research, died on 26 March 2023 at the age of 88. Despite his advancing age and illness, he was actively teaching, writing, and working at the University of Pennsylvania (USA) weeks before his death.

Dan was instrumental in the performance studies movement in folkloristics arising during the 1960s and his name is inexorably linked to the keyword of “context” in folkloristic methodology and interpretation. Every student of folklore knows his foundational 1971 essay “Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context” in which he famously declared, “folklore is artistic communication in small groups”. While the use of the term is not original to Dan, he used it to refer to the traditionalization of narrative expression in the “context” of social interaction that is variable in different settings. Although connected to the ethnographic study of storytelling events, as a scholar of literature he appreciated and studied texts, and annotated them masterfully, as evidenced in his monumental tomes that formed the *Folktales of the Jews* series (2006, 2007, 2011). He privately shared with me that this series, of which he published three of the projected five volumes, each topping a thousand pages, would be his parting scholarly gift to folk narrative research.



Dan’s book of groundbreaking essays in the performance turn of folkloristics, *Folklore in Context* (1982), contains headings for research directions that he pursued throughout his career. Understandably leading the list is “Context”, followed by “Genre”, “Jewish Humor”, and “Folklore in Africa”. I could add to this list expertise he shared in publications and presentations on European folktale, structuralism, collective memory, folk speech, religion, translation and textualization, motif analysis and classification, history of folklore studies and the relationship of history to folklore, and

Jewish literature and biblical studies. His contextual approach was often deemed opposed to symbolic and psychological interpretation, but in fact, he viewed the observation of social interaction as a first step toward finding meaning, one of which could be outside of the awareness of participants in social events. Nonetheless, it is true that in various exchanges with fellow analysts fermenting contextual approaches during the 1960s, including Alan Dundes, he preferred structural and sociolinguistic analysis to semiotic and psychological interpretation. Toward the end of his career, Dan's theoretical contributions beyond performance were gathered by Henry Glassie and Elliott Oring in *Folklore Concepts: Histories and Critiques* (2020), for Indiana University Press.

Dan's family and educational context informed his international interests and outlook. Parents Zalman (1898–1983, original last name of Castroll) and Rivka (Feinsilber) Ben-Amos (1898–1984) of Lithuanian Jewish background, and older brother Emmanuel (1923–2007), welcomed Dan into the world on 3 September 1934 in Tel Aviv, British Mandatory Palestine, and raised him just east of the city what was then an agricultural community of Petah Tikva. Young Dan's education was mainly in the secular schools of the labour movement. After being discharged from the army, he joined an agricultural kibbutz. Creatively engaged with poetry and fiction, however, Dan left to study English literature and Biblical studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Wanting to change majors but desiring to keep the credits he had earned, he turned to Hebrew literature. That is when he fell under the influence of his first folklore professor, Dov Noy. Dan recalled that his first two papers, all based on library work were comparative studies of the Hebrew versions of Aarne-Thompson tale type 505 "The Grateful Dead" and "Color Symbolism in Jewish Folk-Literature". He received praise for his research and Noy advised him to continue folklore studies at his alma mater of Indiana University in the United States.

At Indiana University, Dan expanded beyond comparative literary approaches to anthropological perspectives on myth and tales from professors David Bidney, Ermine Wheeler-Voegelin, and Thomas Sebeok. Along with fellow students, Dan was drawn to structuralism and it was the focus of his dissertation, "Narrative Forms in the Haggadah: Structural Analysis" (1966), under the direction of folklorist Richard M. Dorson. Dan credited his folklore professor Jerome Mintz (1930–1997) for first guiding him to use fieldwork in his studies. Among his first field projects for Mintz was recording a master Jewish joke-teller. The experience led later to more thinking about the performance of jests in a Jewish social context and the social construction of a category of "Jewish humour". Mintz later collaborated with Dan on annotating and editing the first English translation of a collection of legends about the founder of Hasidism titled in Hebrew *Shivhei Ha-Besht* ('In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov', 1972). Dan had earlier helped with the annotation and editing of folk narratives with Noy when Dorson included *Folktales of Israel* in his *Folktales of the World* series for the

University of Chicago Press (1963). In these works, and especially with his longer annotations for the multi-volume *Folktales of the Jews* series, Dan shows an incredible command of folk literary sources from antiquity to the present. More than marking motif and type numbers as was the practice in earlier headnotes, one reads in Dan's commentaries multi-perspectival learning in which he considers the various previous interpretations of the story and analyses historical and social contexts from whatever archaeological, literary, and ethnographic sources are available. From this analysis, he proposed possible meanings as the story was used in different situations through history. As he did repeatedly with a number of concepts such as genre and tradition, he took what scholars viewed as givens such as motif and type, and subjected them to deep historiographical and philosophical analysis.

As Dan frequently reflected, his intensive period of field experience in Benin City, Nigeria, in 1966 set the stage for his definition of folklore as artistic communication in small groups and his later theorizing of storytelling events. The book that resulted from the fieldwork, *Sweet Words* (1975), is thin compared to later tomes, but it was thick with ethnographic documentation and provided the seed for later forays into areas of cultural memory, symbolism, poetics, and performance. Within the book his conclusion is brief; it is notable for its perspective on narratives from the viewpoint of Benin storytellers. More than concentrating on the text alone, Dan showed the workings of storytelling as an *event* that included music and family activities. Especially eye-opening for him was the intensity of storytelling as a group activity, often lasting hours at a time, in contrast to performances of single stories by a lone teller in his previous fieldwork. The content as well as the process also led him to theorize later about the social role of storytellers, particularly in African society, because he found that unlike the expectations of *griots* as professional tellers reinforcing the social establishment, the tradition-bearers he encountered used tales in performance as subversive strategies.

After receiving his doctorate in folklore, Dan landed a one-year position in anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles, in the 1966-1967 academic year. His big break occurred when the University of Pennsylvania hired him for a tenure-track position devoted to folklore and folklife beginning in fall 1967. He had an immediate impact mentoring doctoral students who went on to have impressive careers. Dan reached the rank of professor in 1977 and in 1999 added a departmental affiliation with Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (later Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations) and a programmatic connection to the Jewish Studies Program. He stepped up to leadership roles as chair of the Department of Folklore and Folklife in 1973-1974 and again in 1982-1984; he continued his championing the study of folklore at Penn by chairing the Committee on Folklore, which granted a Graduate Certificate in Folklore Studies, into the twenty-first century. Among his honours over his career have been coveted fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies (1972-



1973), the Guggenheim Foundation (1975–1976), and the National Endowment for the Humanities (1980–1981), and prestigious grants from the National Science Foundation (1968, 1970), the African Studies Association (1971), and the National Institute of Mental Health (1968). Of special meaning is the honour from the American Folklore Society bestowed on him in 2014 for lifetime scholarly achievement. Most of all, he took great pride in the work of his students, and he maintained supportive relationships with them well after they graduated. Having edited a festschrift for him in 2019, I can attest to tributes by students and colleagues alike to his generosity and kindness as well as his intellectual brilliance.

Dan was the author and editor of over a dozen books, and hundreds of essays, translations, and reviews. The program builder and globally minded person that he was, he also made major contributions that helped define fields, with leadership of “Translations in Folklore Studies” for the Institute for the Study of Human Issues and Indiana University Press and the Raphael Patai Series in Jewish Folklore and Anthropology for Wayne State University Press. In addition, he gathered colleagues to dialogue in special issues of journals, often on controversial topics such as “The European Fairy-Tale Tradition between Orality and Literacy” for the *Journal of American Folklore* in 2010 and “The Challenge of Folklore to the Humanities” for *Humanities* in 2018.

His critical stock-taking of the terminology, as well as content, of folklore hardly stopped with his first conference presentation on “artistic communication” in 1967. Thirty years later he addressed the big picture when he defended the continuation of the use of the term “folklore” before folklorists concerned by how outsiders construed the appellation and whether they should change it or align with other fields (e.g., ethnology, cultural studies, heritage studies, performance studies). Instead of bowing to the expectations of popular and public culture of conducting “research of the eleventh hour”, folklorists should be concerned, he avowed, with the “communal process of traditionalization and the scholarly search for tradition” (1998). His clarion calls to folklorists and the lasting legacy of scholarship will undoubtedly continue to ring in countless classrooms, publications, and conferences around the globe. He should also be remembered for his strength of character and collegial spirit that drew scholars to him wherever he went.

### ***Acknowledgement***

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### ***Notes***

*Contexts of Folklore: Festschrift for Dan Ben-Amos on His Eighty-Fifth Birthday* was edited by Simon J. Bronner and Wolfgang Mieder (New York: Peter Lang, 2019) and contains

a biographical introduction by the editors (pp. 1–24). See also a special issue of *Western Folklore* in Winter 2020 (vol. 79, no. 1) titled “Essays in Honor of Dan Ben-Amos”. Gila Gutenberg compiled a bibliography of 175 publications up to 1999 for *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* 19/20 (1997–1998), pp. 43–62; it is available online at <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/folklore/faculty/dbamos/dbabib.html>. Ninety-six full-text articles by Ben-Amos are available from 1963 to 2016 in the online Scholarly Commons of University of Pennsylvania Libraries at [https://repository.upenn.edu/nelc\\_papers/index.html](https://repository.upenn.edu/nelc_papers/index.html). The quotations on traditionalization from “The Name is the Thing” (1998) and the definition of folklore in context (1971) are reprinted in Dan Ben-Amos, *Folklore Concepts: Histories and Critiques*, edited by Henry Glassie and Elliott Oring (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020). Dan’s last published paper that originated as an address to the International Society for Folk Narrative Research appeared as “Between Intangible Cultural Heritage and Folklore”, *TFH: Journal of History and Folklore* 36 (2019): 17–72, and introduced by my “The Historical Folklore of Dan Ben-Amos”, in the same issue, pp. 4–16.

Spotlighted Performer

## *Ande Ruy*

### *Rotenese Master Poet*

*James J. Fox, Australian National University*



Ande Ruy is a stunningly versatile chanter, performer and singer with a wide repertoire. He is the best known of all of Rote's master poets and was chosen to welcome President Jokowi when he visited the island in January 2018. Ande Ruy has enthusiastically attended all the recording sessions on Bali since 2006 and has personally sought out other master poets on the island to invite them to record on Bali.

He becomes deeply involved in his performances, weeping, for example, when he recites the final lament addressed to the spirit of the deceased. His performances have included traditional origin chants as well as recitations that seem to be of his own imagining. He can recite as do other poets in strict parallelism, but he can also perform the same chant in a partially reduplicated parallel form. He is by far the hardest of the poets to translate.

In addition to traditional origin chants, he has fashioned his own version of the Biblical Genesis, rendering it in a form like that of a traditional origin chant:

#### *The Opening Lines of a Rotenese Genesis*

At a time long ago  
At a time since past  
Still dark as the inside of a clam  
Still gloom wrapped all round  
Sun light was not yet  
Day light was not yet  
Still surface water throughout

Still the water of sea surrounding.

The Insciber of the Moon

In the Fullness of Nine

Or the Creator of the Sun

In the Abundance of Eight

Still isolated as buffalo

Still lonely as a chicken

Still in the heights.

The Patterner of the Heart comes

Still hovering above

Or the Marker of the Core comes

Or still hovering over the earth

Moving over the water

The waters of the sea extending.

The Insciber of the Moon

Or the Creator of the Sun

Raises forth his voice

The leaden voice comes forth

Lifts forth his words

Golden words go forth, saying:

“Let there be sun light

And let day light appear.”

## *XXI International Symposium on Balkan Folklore*

### *“Tradition, Media, Digital World”*

25<sup>th</sup> November 2022, Skopje, R.N. Macedonia

*Lidija Stojanović, Institute of Folklore “Marko Cepenkov”, Skopje*

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2022, the Institute of Folklore “Marko Cepenkov”, organized the 21st Symposium on Balkan Folklore, devoted to Tradition, Media and Digital World. Participants from Serbia, Croatia, Russia, Poland, Canada, Moldova and Macedonia presented their theoretical and empirical viewpoints dedicated to the relationship between two paradigms: tradition vs. media and digital worlds.



*Opening ceremony*

The current context blurs the boundaries between the art of industrialized countries and the art of “the rest”, between “elite” and “low” genres, between artists and critics, between ethnologists and historians. Together, these changes represent a complex reorientation made up of different elements.



*Working session*

But at some level, both are moving in the same direction: they challenge the conventional structure of research and propose the abolition of the boundaries of the traditional study of art – disciplinary boundaries, geographical boundaries, the boundaries of an established hierarchy of

values. Folkloristic and ethnological studies cannot ignore this movement, questioning the boundaries established between traditional aesthetic modes of expression or between the disciplines that study them.

The new challenges, expectations, euphoria and phobia of the new digital era was the main topic of the conference. What has happened to the human being as an individuum, what has happened to folklore, and what impact the digital transformation has had on human psychology, and above all on folk culture. What kind of folk transformations have been established during the last three decades were in centre focus of the various presentations on this conference.



*Working session*

The presentation of very important traditional archival materials (photo documentation) was the inspiration for several papers such as Emilija A. Čalovska: “The Monumental Sacral Architecture in the Photo-Documentation from the Expedition of N. P. Kondakov in Macedonia in 1900”. Transformational challenges of a “very old narrative” within a multimedial context was a main topic in Jasminka Ristovska Piličkova presentation. Irina Teplova focused on “Media in the educational practice of an ethnomusicologist”. On the other hand, the very expressive relationship between new folklore methodology and the digital world was a main focus of Jelena Marković’s presentation: “Digital Mediation of Post-Covid Syndrome Experiences: Tales of Pain and Suffering” (using the autoethnography method).

Perception and interpretation of small, unique, extraordinary local folk items in the world of multimedia were in a focus of the most presentations in this conference. The full program in Macedonian can be found at:

The advantages of the digitalization were part of several presentations: the digitization of folk archives (Ljupčo Ristevski and Ines Crvenkovska-Risteska), the internet as a new arena of field research (Vesna Petreska). Two contributions were focused on the ethnological film as a form of ethnological knowledge (Vladimir Bocev) and as a medium in the context of sensory ethnography (Joanna Rekas, Mirjana Mirčevska).



*Working session*

<https://eprints.ugd.edu.mk/31142/2/XXI%20Simpozium%20oficijalna%20programa.pdf>

As a reflection of the whole atmosphere, we can conclude: the contemporary super modern human being is a part of the world that is gradually ruled by information, not knowledge. His “action” tends to be entirely “communicative”. The relationship to the body, the relationship to oneself and to the other, the hybridization with machines is, one might say, revolutionary. The body no longer agrees with the ways of understanding of only a few decades ago: a set of living devices, biological systems that need to be maintained in their proper function, supporting the construction of phenomena for itself and marking its coding, expressions and postures.

## *18th International Saga Conference*

### *Sagas and the Circum-Baltic Arena - Developing Dialogues between Sagas, Archaeology, Language and Folklore*

7-14 August 2022, Helsinki, Finland & Tallinn, Estonia

*Sirpa Aalto, Hanken School of Economics,  
Reynir Eggertsson, University of Helsinki,  
and Kendra Willson, University of Helsinki*

The International Saga Conference is held once every three years in locations around the world, bringing together scholars of diverse backgrounds to discuss the narrative worlds of medieval Icelandic and Scandinavian saga literature along with their relationships to the societies that surrounded them. Between Scandinavians' diaspora on the North Atlantic and their energetic participation on the Eastern Route is the lively activity and interactions with diverse cultures around the Baltic Sea – the *mare nostrum* of Baltic, Finnic, Sámi, Scandinavian and Slavic speakers. Sagas provide the richest early written sources not just for Scandinavian cultures but also for their interactions with other groups in this part of the world. In the spirit of these contacts and mobility, the 18th International Saga Conference came to the eastern side of the Baltic Sea to be hosted in two countries, Finland and Estonia, with movement between them.

The conference was organized with Monday and Tuesday as full days in Helsinki, Wednesday as a day for excursions, and Thursday and Friday as full days in Tallinn. One group of physically present participants travelled together by ferry across the Gulf of Finland on Tuesday evening, in order to leave bright and early the following morning on one of the exciting excursions in Estonia, or to sleep in and enjoy a quiet day exploring the city of Tallinn. The second group of those physically present had the pleasure of experiencing one of the excursions in Finland or enjoying the lovely weather in Helsinki and departing together for Tallinn on Wednesday evening. The event started off with registration and a welcome reception already on Sunday



evening in Helsinki and those wishing to stay a bit longer in Estonia participated in a two-day post-conference excursion on the following weekend.

Originally supposed to be held in 2021 but, due to the Covid19 situation, the event was postponed for a year. In addition to being the first Saga Conference ever to be held in two countries, the pandemic situation also made it the first hybrid Saga Conference. Despite being held in the wake of the global pandemic and roughly six months after the beginning of the Russian Federation's unconscionable invasion of Ukraine, the conference was well-attended, with about 180 people on site and close to 50 who did distance-participation only.

The conference featured three keynote lectures. Archaeologist Neil Price (Uppsala University) started off the conference with an outstanding discussion of working across disciplines and perspectives in his talk on "Viewing the Vikings: An Interdisciplinary Challenge". Linguist Haraldur Bernharðsson (University of Iceland) then offered a marvellous elucidation on how medieval and post-medieval writers engaged with the sagas they copied in "The Vernacular Scribe in Medieval Iceland: On the Transmission of Texts in a Living Language vs. 'Relic Texts'". Folklorist Stephen A. Mitchell (Harvard University) maintained the high standard of the keynote lectures with his talk on "Revisiting 'Folkminnesforskning och filologi'" – returning to a classic discussion of the relationship between folklore studies and philology.

The interdisciplinary aims of the conference was supported by organizing four strands of papers: *Sagas and Archaeology*, *Sagas and Language*, *Sagas and Folklore*, and *Sagas and Cultural Geography*.

The strand *Sagas and Archaeology* brought into focus relationships between written sources and the material record. Sagas reflect and construct a Norse intangible heritage of traditions of the past while archaeology reveals acts and practices in the material world. The relationships – or lack thereof – between the worlds of verbal discourse that reach us as literature and the events and manifestations of culture in the archaeological record are not always clear. For example, the mass burial of Scandinavians at Salme on Saaremaa, Estonia, reflects what was no doubt an event engraved on cultural memory and reflected perhaps in kings' sagas or other monuments in the archaeological record.

The strand *Sagas and Language* centered on relationships between sagas as discourse or sagas as sources in Norse or other languages. Language provides some of the richest data for exploring the history of cultures, their categories, conceptions and contacts. Sagas provide valuable resources for exploring diverse areas of culture built into language, ranging from the earliest attestations of many place names to theonyms from other cultures like *Puruvit* (< Slavic) of the Wends or *Jómali* (< Finnic) of the Bjarmians. Words and their use in sagas are resources for understanding social categories like 'slave' in society. They have also been key to debates, for example, on Norse magic and ritual linked to the word *seiðr*, and more recently in the so-called

Vanir Debate – i.e. the argument that the Old Norse word *vanir* did not refer to a race of gods, as scholars have believed since before Jacob Grimm’s time. Conversely, language outside the sagas can also provide perspectives that can be brought into dialogue with the sagas, such as the South Samic name *Hovrengaellies*, which contains a form of *Þórr*, perhaps indicating the other side of contacts with *Finnar* described in sagas.

The strand *Sagas and Folklore* drew together these three central ways of looking at sagas in relation to folklore. In Old Norse studies, ‘folklore’ has customarily been discussed in terms of oral traditions documented in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but folklore has been increasingly recognized as a phenomenon of discourse also in the background of much Old Norse literature. In recent years, there has been a boom of interest in gaining insights into Old Norse sources through compare-sons with later traditions, viewing sagas as windows through which traditions in their background can be glimpsed, and considering relationships between traditions reflected in Norse sources and those only documented much later in other cultures around the Baltic Sea.

The strand *Sagas and Geographies* turned attention to the anthropocentric constructions of the Baltic Sea region as an arena of long-term contacts and relations between diverse groups. In the Viking Age and medieval period, the multicultural world of the Baltic Sea region was conceived in terms of organized geographies that situated peoples and places relative to one another, in some cases tracing these back to events of cosmological proportions. Such geographies are often implicit frames of reference in sagas, some of which exhibit a *longue durée* through more recent times while others may be more ephemeral or scholars may even be deceived by reading geographies of the past through geographies (and geopolitics) of the present.

A long-standing tradition of this conference has been to have a pre-print publication – i.e. a publication of working papers made available *before* the event, to facilitate discussion and to make it possible to cite work presented at the event immediately. We took a flexible approach to the pre-print that gave presenters the option of publishing either a full paper or an abstract. The volume of more than 400 pages is available open access at: <https://helda.helsinki.fi/handle/10138/346783>.

The 18th International Saga Conference was a remarkable success. Thanks to the hard and watchful work of our numerous student helpers, technical issues with the hybrid format in the six parallel sessions were always resolved swiftly and our online participants could feel fully integrated in the hybrid event whether they were presenting or asking questions as part of the audience. That live participation was three to four times more than virtual participation only belonged to the post-pandemic excitement of being able to gather once more in the physical world, anticipating the joy of in-person conversations.

The 19<sup>th</sup> International Saga Conference will be held in Poland in 2025.

# *Dreams, Prophecies, Altered States of Consciousness in Folklore Genres*

## *Round Table*

4<sup>th</sup> November 2022, Belgrade, Serbia

*Nemanja Radulović, Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade*

The round-table entitled “Dreams, Prophecies, Altered States of Consciousness” took place at the Institute for Literature and Arts in Belgrade on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

These phenomena have been the focus of investigation of ethnologists and literary folklorists in Serbian folkloristics, but never the topic of a conference or a themed issue. The intention was for the scholars to gather and confront their opinions. The emphasis was on genre characteristics rather than belief aspects, especially because more and more attention in Serbian folkloristics newer research is devoted to the genres which were under-researched or not researched at all in the past, such as dream narratives, NDE narratives, life stories. Moreover, this was an opportunity for ethnologists and psychologists to join literary folklorists.



Smiljana Đorđević Belić spoke about dreams in folk religion under the influence of New Age; Annemarie Sorescu Marinković about dreams in a modern cult of a woman saint; Bojan Jovanović and Dejan Ilić about dreams in Serbian epic poetry, Zorica Vitić in medieval prose literature and Danijela Mitrović compared prophecies in Serbian and Old English epic poetry. Branko Zlatković presented a paper on the prophecies in historical belief

narratives, Lidija Delić on old and new prophetic topoi, Nemanja Radulović on prophecies in urban folklore, Danijela Popović Nikolić and Ana Milinković on altered states of consciousness in belief narratives. Velimir Popović presented Jungian approach to dreams.

A number of questions were raised in the final discussion: genre classifications and definitions, unresearched sources and the possibility of collaboration of different disciplines, which just proves how much novelty these topics can offer to folklorists.

## *On Stories and Storytelling 2.0*

### *In Honour of Maja Bošković-Stulli's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> November 2022, Zagreb, Croatia

*Nataša Polgar, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research*

From the 8th to the 9th of November 2022, the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb hosted a conference titled *About Stories and Storytelling 2.0* in honour of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Maja Bošković-Stulli, folklorist and member of the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences.



*Ljiljana Marks, Jelena Marković and Natka Badurina*

Maja Bošković-Stulli (1922–2012) is the originator of modern folkloristics in Croatia, one of the founders of ISFNR and the journal *Fabula*, associate and editor of the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, a scholar who marked the development of European folkloristics with her theoretical and field work. In addition to her numerous research interests, her focus was on the folkloristic notion of story as a dialogic transmission of imaginary, experiences and knowledge in which collective and individual, traditional



*Ljiljana Marks, Sibila Petlevski, and Renata Jambrešić Kirin*

and contemporary, verbal and non-verbal intertwine. An important legacy of Maja Bošković-Stulli's scholarly work is the expansion of disciplinary frameworks towards the research of the relationship between text and context, performance, storytelling and narrators, narrative situations and genres in everyday communication, new



Some of Maja's publications

forms of orality, etc. This is precisely why this conference was thematically focused on stories and storytelling, and colleagues from Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, Italy and Croatia participated, while the president of ISFNR, Sadhana Naithani, gave the welcome speech.

Lidija Stojanović spoke about the influence of M. Bošković-Stulli on the Macedonian folklore research, Monika Kropelj spoke about the Slovenian echoes of her work, while Evelina Rudan and Davor Nikolić presented her concept of the history of oral literature, that is, the rhetoric of orality. Twenty participants in the two days of the conference mainly focused on new forms of orality, new genres and narrative modes that rely on traditional genres. The participants questioned topics that were also dealt with by Bošković-Stulli, such as *krsnik* ('witches') (L. Šešo), oral stories about animals (S. Marjanić), legends about miraculous healing (Pešikan-Ljuštanović and Delić), but also completely new ones such as genre determination of a story about dreams (Đorđević Belić), shape-shifting, silence, the Holocaust and more. The conference thus successfully demonstrated that folkloristics is a vibrant and relevant discipline in the contemporary context, whose horizons are wider than oral literature and oral tradition.



Finishing the conference

# *The Nordic Congress of Ethnologists and Folklorists*

## **RE:22**

13–16 June 2022, Reykjavík, Iceland

*Valdimar Tr. Hafstein, University of Iceland  
and Dagrún Ósk Jónsdóttir, University of Iceland*

The Nordic Congress of Ethnologists and Folklorists took place in Reykjavík, Iceland, from 13–16 June 2022 under the heading *RE:22*. The conference gathered 450 participants for three days of conferencing, from Tuesday to Thursday. Monday was the opening night, starting things off with a visit to the the President of the Republic of Iceland at his official residence at Bessastaðir. It continued with a pool party in the midnight sun: the opening event took place in an open-air geothermal public pool/waterpark with a large pool, hot jacuzzis, a wave pool, and a tall water slide. It featured music and drinks, poolside barbecue and a Nordic slide-landing competition, which the Faroese contestant handily won.

Over three days, participants gave – and heard – 335 papers in 82 panels and roundtables. These were organized into 12 panel streams which give an idea of the breadth of the topics: Base (Bodies, Affects, Senses, Emotions); Digital Lives; Environment; Heritage; Intersectionalities; Mobilities; Museums and materialities; Narrative; Posthumanism; Sustainabilities; and Temporalities. The panels and papers connected in various ways to the conference theme, *RE*: and made sense of *repetition*: repeated patterns, repeated actions, repeated words, repeated rhythms and melodies, repeated forms and dispositions. They queried various notions of *return*: the ways in which people *recycle* ideas, *restore* behaviors, *remix* words, *recreate* tunes, *reuse* objects, *remember* customs, *remake*, *repair*, *rehash*, *refine* and *reduce*.

Between panels, participants gathered for two plenary lectures. Tine Damsholt (Professor of European Ethnology, University of Copenhagen) delivered a keynote on *Re-assembling everyday temporalities*, in which she used the pandemic as a prism to develop an ethnological understanding of the affective and material temporalities that shape our everyday lives. In his keynote on *The Art of the Ripples: The Development of Folk Tale Illustration in Northern Europe (1816–1870)*, Terry Gunnell (Professor of Folkloristics/Ethnology, University of Iceland) brought to life in vivid detail the

degree to which the collection of folklore in the north was closely intertwined with the creation of national culture, national art and national image.

A number of other events brought scholars at the conference together, indoors and outside. After lunch on Wednesday, delegates went on a carbon footprint offsetting adventure and planted 4,000 birch, pine and willow trees in a new forest outside the city, guided by members of the Reykjavík Forestry Association, and were rewarded with a picnic. On Thursday, the lunchtime karaoke tested the musical talent and social courage of ethnologists and folklorists – and it was clear that there was plenty of both to go around. The closing party took place in the Reykjavík Art Museum in the city center with food, drink, conversation, music and dancing (from Disco to Can Can) as well as feminist burlesque pop-up performances.

The Nordic Ethnology and Folklore Congress takes place every three years. The one in Reykjavík was the 35<sup>th</sup> in the conference series and also marked its centennial anniversary, as the inaugural conference took place at Nordiska museet in Stockholm in 1920. The next Congress is scheduled to take place in Turku/ Åbo in Finland in 2025. The one in Reykjavík – *RE:22* – was the largest one to date and also the most international one so far, with participants from 38 countries (including two-thirds from the Nordic countries). It was our pleasure to host the conference which was organized by the professional and good-humored people of NomadIT, Triinu and Ro and their team, along with the 38 student volunteers, they made us look good.

For a better sense of the conference, check out this four-minute film on the sensations of the congress: <https://vimeo.com/814614929>.



## *51st International Ballad Conference*

### *Song Genres in Social and Cultural Contexts*

29 May – 2 June 2023, Helsinki, Finland

*Éva Guillorel, University of Rennes 2*

The 51st International Ballad Conference of the KfV (Kommission für Volksdichtung) took place at the Finnish Literature Society in Helsinki, in Finland, from the 29th of May to the 2nd of June 2023, with delegates from Albania, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Kosovo, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, Ukraine and the USA.

The theme this year was “Song Genres in Social and Cultural Contexts”. This topic allowed a high variety of theoretical and practical approaches based on a large number of cultural and linguistic area. The many Finnish, Swedish and Estonian scholars at the conference explain that the oral traditions of these countries were well represented in all their diversity – as beautifully shown from the opening lectures of the conference on Monday, with four speakers describing the Sami, Swedish, Finnish and Roma song traditions in Finland. However, the variety of speakers coming from other areas and the diversity of topics meant that we heard about many oral genres – with a constant discussion about the definition, fluidity and porosity between these genres – and their circulations in different parts of Europe, Asia, Africa and America.

The conference was hosted in the splendid building of the Finnish Literature Society, where very rich written and sound archives from ethnographic fieldwork are preserved, as well as a splendid library about folklore and cultural studies. A visit to these collections was proposed on Tuesday morning, followed on Friday morning by another one to the Swedish archive collections held in a neighbouring building.

On Wednesday, an excursion to the Seurasaaari Open-Air Museum was a good opportunity to attend a guided tour of several ancient and beautifully preserved buildings from different parts of Finland. Three singing workshops had also been organised there with great singers and teachers, thanks to which we could better understand and have a live practice of three different styles of songs: Finnish ballads, Swedish ballads and Kalevala-meter runosongs. Music and dance were also at the heart of the Hungarian evening organised at the Liszt institute on Tuesday evening.

Multicultural songs and dances were interpreted as well by scholars present at the conference during the evening reception on Thursday evening, where splendid Finnish food was proposed.

The whole week was perfectly organised by the team of organisers, Katti Kallio and Venla Sykäri, with the support of a devoted team of students and members of the Finnish Literature Society. All of them were warmly thanked by the participants for this very successful conference.

Project

## *Aineellisuus, suullinen runous, myyttinen tieto ja eletty ympäristö (ASME)*

### *Materiality, Verbal Art, Mythic Knowledge and the Lived Environment*

*Frog (PI), Joonas Ahola, Jesse Barber, Tuukka Karlsson, Siria Kohonen, Karina Lukin, and Heidi Henriikka Mäkelä, University of Helsinki*

The *Aineellisuus, suullinen runous, myyttinen tieto ja eletty ympäristö (ASME)* – *Materiality, Verbal Art, Mythic Knowledge and the Lived Environment (ASME)* project (2021–2025) aims to liberate the concept of materiality from the tyranny of science-based epistemologies through a wide-ranging and extensive exploration of emic materialities linked to verbal art and mythic knowledge. The project is organized around premodern Finno-Karelian and Scandinavian traditions, from their earlier life in historical environments through their modern reinventions and reuses today.

The *ASME* project is organized around six anchor studies that follow the arc of history. Anchor Study 1, led by Tuukka Karlsson, is on Finno-Karelian Kalevala-metric oral poetry especially in the nineteenth century and the materialities of texts of different genres as ‘things’ in the world. This study explores the often incompatible perspectives of both the performers and the educated outsiders who collected ‘poems’ in connection with nation-building projects. Anchor Study 2, led by Siria Kohonen, focuses on Finno-Karelian mythic knowledge and ritual poetry. This study elucidates the seen and unseen materialities through which dynamic forces are wielded and manipulated. Anchor Study 3, led by Joonas Ahola, examines medieval Icelandic discourses in oral-derived poetry, prose sagas, legal formulas, prophesies, and other types of utterances. This study evaluates whether performative force can be considered an aspect of emic materiality in twelfth-, thirteenth-, and fourteenth-century Iceland. Anchor Study 4, led by Jesse Barber, focuses on Scandinavian mythic knowledge, incantations, and power in material objects. This study centers on materialities that link traditions of oral culture to tangible artefacts and landscape features, considering archaeological evidence, legend traditions, and charm traditions, mainly of the sixteenth through the nineteenth century. Anchor Study 5,

led by Frog, concerns the capture and transformations of Finno-Karelian and Scandinavian oral poetry through writing from the earliest examples through their heritagization and commodification in the present. Anchor Study 6, led by Heidi Henriikka Mäkelä, explores ways in which Finno-Karelian kalevalaic poetry and associated mythic knowledge are materially situated, embodied, and reinvented by people in Finland today, from exhibitions of the Finnish National Museum to hiking routes and the Finnish forest yoga phenomenon.

Our project is making pioneering advances in the exciting and rapidly-growing area of cultural materialities. We recognize unseen materialities of premodern oral traditions and place these in relation to the materialities of heritage production, their embodiment by people, objects, the environment, or by print and digital media. The insights, new understandings and theoretical perspectives produced by this project impact on the way people understand these traditions.

Project

## *The Roles of the Agency of the Dead in the Lives of Individuals in Contemporary Society (DEAGENCY)*

*Mirjam Mencej, University of Ljubljana*

An ERC Advanced Grant project (no. 101095729), running September 2023 – August 2028.

Mirjam Mencej (Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Ljubljana) has won an ERC Advanced Grant for the project *The Roles of the Agency of the Dead in the Lives of Individuals in Contemporary Society (DEAGENCY)*.

The DEAGENCY project will provide a broad understanding of the role of the agency of the dead in individuals' lives. Instead of treating the dead as mere expressions of "folk belief", or symbols and metaphors of larger cultural and social problems and changes, they will be treated from the perspective of their agency, affecting the body, ideas, and actions of individuals (and vice versa), actively involved in the intricate relationships between individuals and larger social and cultural processes. The project will observe how individuals are affected by the agency of the dead (and vice versa): in what way it affects their thoughts, values, and behaviour; how it is involved in their social relations with others; and what impact its effect may have on an individual in a wider social, cultural, and political context. To gain insight into the widest possible set of roles of the agency of the dead in individuals' lives, the project will examine the interplay between the agency of the dead and individuals, situated within a variety of disparate social, cultural, and religious contexts. Research will take place in four post-socialist countries: Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina and will focus on the roles of the dead within three fields of social and cultural changes and problems in the post-socialist period: a) the effects of the political past, specifically, mass graves, b) the changing religious landscape, and c) the changing social life in rural communities. For the collection of data, the project will apply ethnographic methods, specifically in-depth semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The aim of the project is a comprehensive theory of the roles that the dead fulfil for individuals in contemporary society.

New Book

## *Grimm Ripples: The Legacy of the Grimms' Deutsche Sagen in Northern Europe*

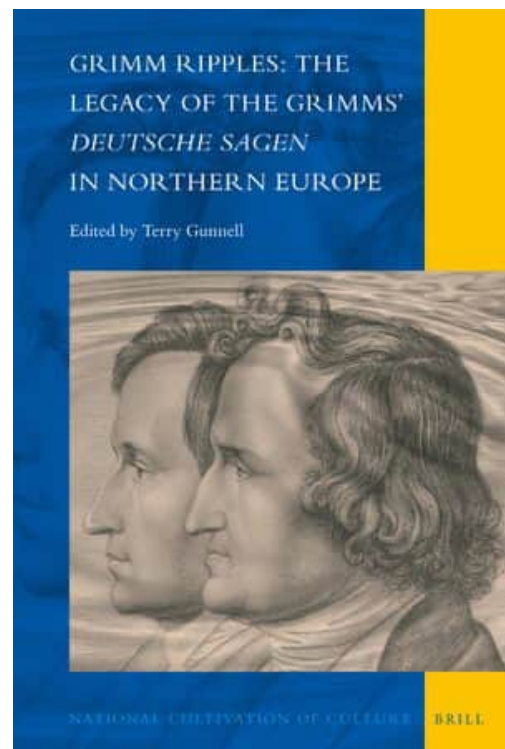
National Cultivation of Culture 30, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2022, 591 pages

*Terry Gunnell, ed., University of Iceland*

Authors of chapters: Terry Gunnell, Joep Leerssen, Holger Ehrhardt, Timothy R. Tangherlini, Herleik Baklid, Ane Ohrvik, Line Esborg, Fredrik Skott, John Lindow, Éilís Ní Dhiubhne Almquist, John Shaw, Jonathan Roper, Kim Simonsen, Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, Liina Lukas, Pertti Anttonen, Ulrika Wolf-Knuts, and Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch

This book sheds new light on the central role of the Grimms' all too often neglected *Deutsche Sagen* (German Legends), published in 1816-1818 as a follow up to their famous collection of fairy tales. As the chapters in this book demonstrate, *Deutsche Sagen*, with its firmly nationalistic title, set in motion a cultural tsunami of folklore collection throughout Northern Europe from Ireland and Estonia, which focused initially on the collection of folk legends rather than fairy tales.

*Grimm Ripples* focuses on the initial northward wave of collection between 1816 and 1870, and the letters, introductions and reviews associated with these collections which effectively demonstrate how those involved understood what was being collected. This approach offers important new insights into the key role played by Folkloristics in the Romantic Nationalistic movement of the early nineteenth century.



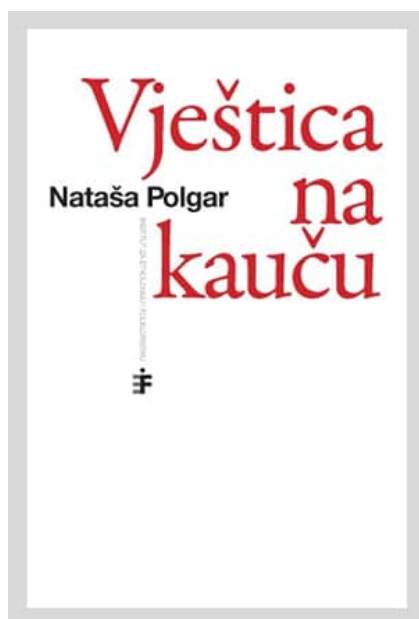
New Book

## *Vještica na kauču [Witch on the Couch]*

### *Psihoanalitički ogleđi o suđenjima vješticama u Hrvatskoj [Psychoanalytic Essays on Witch Trials in Croatia]*

Biblioteka Nova etnografija, Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore, 2021, 271 pages

*Renata Jambrešić Kirin, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb, Croatia*



Nataša Polgar, folklore fellow at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore, Zagreb, Croatia, was one of the organizers of the 18th Congress of the ISFNR *Encountering Emotions in Folk Narrative and Folklife* in virtual Zagreb, 5-8 September 2021. Her new book *Vještica na kauču* [Witch on the Couch. Psychoanalytic Essays on Witch Trials in Croatia], was successfully launched on 21 April, 2023 by ethnologists and cultural anthropologists Ines Prica, Tomislav Pletenac and Naila Ceribašić. According to the promoters, the book is the result of many years of archival and theoretical research that offered methodologically innovative and interdisciplinary relevant reinterpretation of an intriguing topic.

Polgar's main thesis is that the early modern period used the bodies of witches — women beyond the human and natural whose ability to heal or to harm was an integral part of their menacing, monstrous Otherness — as a repository of illicit emotions. The book consists of three chapters: a history of persecution and an overview of previous approaches; witch hunts in Croatia — theory and practice; trial records — psychoanalytic reading. Combining a historiographical description of the socio-ideological circumstances of early modern Croatia with meticulous folkloristic insights into folk genres and popular beliefs of that time, the author leads us through an exciting psychoanalytical exploration of the construction of witches as anti-mothers

and anti-women, and as bodies designated for channeling the aggression and violence of entire communities. Mass persecutions of witches in Europe took place from the 15th to the end of the 17th century, and in Croatia for almost a century longer. The author outlines in detail the historical circumstances, the political climate, the affective atmosphere of the early modern Croatia, under the constant threat of



*Naila Ceribašić, Ines Prica, Nataša Polgar, Tomislav Pletenac, Zagreb, 21 April 2023*

numerous invaders, as well as the role of demonological literature and folk beliefs in the creation of witches as hostile Otherness. Polgar takes into account the conflicting ideas of reformation and counter-reformation, demographic changes, class redistribution, the epidemiological, agrarian and political crises as an interweaving of factors that created a figure of witch as a threatening Otherness on which to project all the unpleasant emotions, fears and anxieties that regularly accompany the mentioned adversity. As the author emphasizes, there were significantly fewer trials against witches during the wars, when the fantasies of the monstrous other were projected onto the war enemy.

Psychoanalytical Lacanian apparatus here indicates the role of the unconscious in the construction of witches, so the author reconsiders the reasons for the persecution of witches from a different perspective than those established in historiography and folkloristics, but relying on the reach and methodologies of the aforementioned disciplines. The reviewer Željka Matijašević emphasized that the psychoanalytical methodology is appropriate to the topic since the belief in witches belongs to the system of belief in fantastic beings, while psychoanalysis deals with the relationship between the fantastic and the real and their problematic correlation in Western culture. According to Matijašević, "Fantasies are always related to fears and anxieties, which is why it should be pointed out that this refers to negative phantasies from which a person or collective gets rid of through the mechanism of projection, that is, projective identification. Thus, the author, in addition to explaining the projection of fears on witches, also points to wider possibilities of approaching fear in other historical periods as well." As the reviewer Ljiljana Marks concluded, In Polgar's book "the persecution of witches in Zagreb and its surroundings become important contributions to the history of women, the history of the unconscious, but also a warning indicator of the way Otherness is constructed and manipulated as the main means of controlling subjects, unfortunately not only in the early modern period."



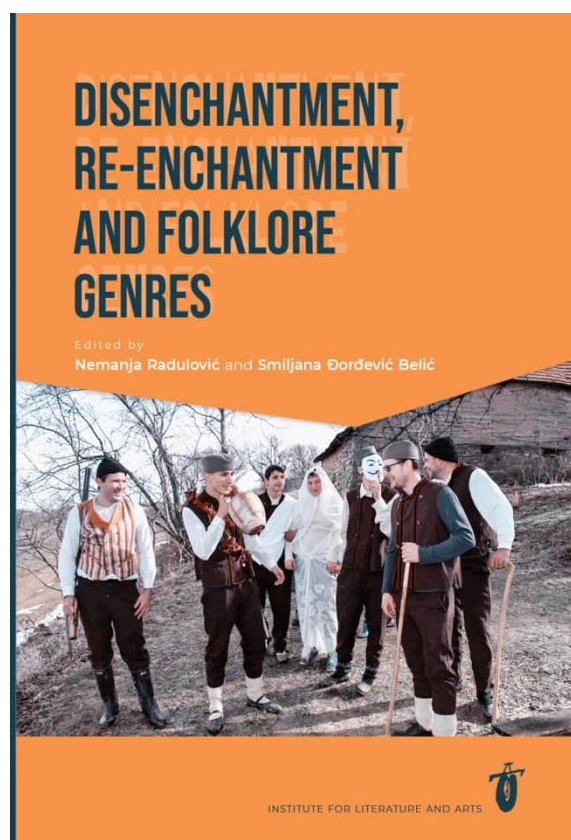
New Book

## *Disenchantment, Re-enchantment and Folklore Genres*

Belgrade: Institute for Literature and Arts, 2021, 286 pages

*Nemanja Radulović, Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, ed.*

Authors of the chapters: Francisco Vaz da Silva, Marianthi Kaplanoglu, Romina Werth, Marina Mladenović Mitrović, Suzana Marjanić, Lidija Delić, Danijela Mitrović, Maria Palleiro, Smiljana Đorđević Belić, Eymeric Manzinali, Mehret Fehlmann, Elene Gogiasvili, Nemanja Radulović.



Disenchantment is Max Weber's concept that has been exerting influence on a number of social sciences and the humanities since 1917. The opposite thesis of re-enchantment processes has been formed in reaction to Weber's understanding of modern world as a place devoid of magic. These opposing views have been the grounds for discussions of new studies in the spheres of anthropology, religious studies, popular culture. The editors of this collection of papers, Nemanja Radulović and Smiljana Đorđević Belić, have noticed that this discussion has not reverberated with the folkloristic studies although it deals with the question of supernatural in folklore as well as its disappearance or retention. Thus, they invited authors to give their contributions

to enlighten the extent to which the disenchantment and re-enchantment concepts can help folkloristics (but also whether folkloristics can help other disciplines). In the introduction to the collection of papers they gave an overview of the discussions and,

subsequently, the reasons why the overall discussion seemed pertinent to folkloristics, giving examples such as the question of the existence of traditional belief narratives today, contemporary legends or the creation of terms in the history of folkloristics itself. The emphasis, however, is on genres rather than on the encompassing ethnological questions of beliefs.

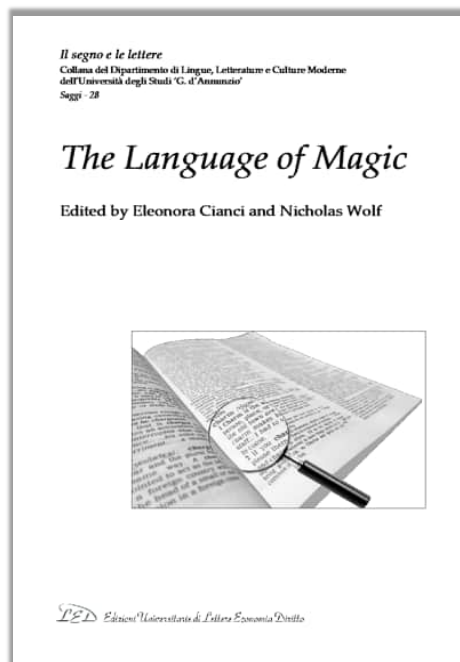
The collection consists of three segments: (1) traditional culture and the position of enchantment in it; (2) disenchantment in contemporary folklore; (3) attempts at re-enchantment. F. Vaz da Silva writes about the place of magic in oral fairy tale. M. Kaplanoglou investigates the relationship between enchantment and disenchantment in the Greek tales corpus. R. Werth discovers the traces of fairy tale in Icelandic sagas. M. Mladenović Mitrović analyses how these concepts affected the Serbian folklorists of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the second segment, S. Marjanić presents the processes of change in the examples of animal spouse in folklore and contemporary culture. L. Delić and D. Mitrović follow those exact same processes in the examples of commercials. M. Palleiro does the same in Argentinian tales, taking modern media into consideration. S. Đorđević Belić conducts an analysis on the basis of dreams about the deceased corpus which are a means of communication with the otherworldly. In the third segment, E. Manzinali explores the rebirth of magic in the world of the Internet folklore (creepypasta). M. Fehlmann shows how popular literary folk horror novel series utilises re-enchantment. E. Gogiashvili recognises the magical patterns of fairy tale in soap operas. N. Radulović analyses re-enchantment processes based on the example of folklore mystification which has become the holy book of Neo-Paganism. The book is equipped with an index. The response of the authors to the call to examine this question has resulted in the contributions from a number of environments and countries, as well as many various disciplines (traditional folklore, contemporary folklore, popular culture, media, mystifications). It seems that the question of disenchantment and re-enchantment in folklore could yield yet more fruitful discussions.

## The Language of Magic

"Il segno e le lettere" : Collana del Dipartimento di Lingue, Letterature e Culture Moderne dell'Università degli Studi 'G. d'Annunzio", Edizioni LED, Milano 2022, 269 pages

*Eleonora Cianci, Chieti-Pescara University  
and Nicholas Wolf, New York University, eds.*

Authors of chapters: Eleonora Cianci, Liudmila V. Fadeyeva, Lia Giancristofaro, Lubov Golubeva - Sofia Kupriyanova, Sarah Harlan-Haughey, Barbara Hillers, Henni Ilomäki, Laura Jiga Iliescu, Mare Kõiva, Maria Cristina Lombardi, Andrei Toporkov, Ilona Tuomi, Inna Veselova, Nicholas Wolf.



This book contains a selection of fourteen papers presented at *The Language of Magic* conference (2019) organized by the *Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming*, part of the *International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR)*.

The idea of focusing on the *languages* of magic is connected to the genuine value of *verbal* charms. They can be considered as *parole* acts that refer to the actual instances of the use of a *langue*, that is, magic. Those speech acts may be oral or written, spoken, whispered, sung, carved on objects, and carried on or swallowed. However, they must be expressed in a specific fashion and language to gain the necessary power. Many scholars in the last decades have studied charms in many fields

according to different research approaches: anthropology, folklore, history, religious studies, history of science and medicine, literature, philology, and linguistics. In this book, subjects range from the study of magic formulas in the Middle Ages to the modern rituals still practised in northeastern Europe. Studying the power of words in magic reveals its unexpressed potential and unlocks new research paths.

The book is comprised of an "Introduction" by Eleonora Cianci (University of Chieti-Pescara), who is also author of the following chapter on "Neumes in three Old High German Charms". Liudmila V. Fadeyeva (State Institute for Art Studies, Moscow) writes on "The Word as Gesture: Allusions on the Christian Iconography in East-Slavic Charms and Magic Formulas". Lia Giancristofaro (University of Chieti-

Pescara) follows this with a paper on “Undoing the ‘Evil Eye’ in Italy: A Comparison of Folk Documentation from 1965–1970 with Present Research”. Lubov Golubeva and Sofia Kupriyanova (St. Petersburg) present “Taboo Words and Secret Language as Verbal Magic in Childbirth (Russian North)”. Sarah Harlan-Haughey (University of Maine) writes on “Charms, Changelings, and Chatter: Sonic Magic in the Secunda Pastorum”. Barbara Hillers (Indiana University, Bloomington) offers a study of “A Written Charm in Oral Tradition: ‘Peter Sat on a Marble Stone’ in Ireland”. Henni Ilomäki (Finnish Literature Society Helsinki) discusses “Arguments for the Authority of the ‘tietäjä’”. Laura Jiga Iliescu (The Romanian Academy Bucharest) offers a paper on “The Dream of The Mother of God and Its Oral-Written Performances, with Examples from Early Modern and Contemporary Romanian Tradition”. Mare Kõiva (Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu) then addresses “Euphemisms upon the Example of Incantations”. Maria Cristina Lombardi (University L’Orientale Napoli) follows this with a paper on “Old Norse Poetry and the Language of Magic”. Andrei Toporkov (A.M. Gorky Institute of World Literature, Russian Academy of Sciences) explores “An Episode from the History of Publishing Russian Folklore Charms and Their English Translations”. Ilona Tuomi (University College Cork) then addresses “Urine for a Treat! Or, how to Cure Urinary Disease in Early Medieval Ireland”. Inna Veselova (St-Petersburg State University) looks at “Magic as a Statement of Power and Weapons of the Weak: Heroines of the Russian Epos”. Nicholas Wolf (New York University) concludes the volume with the study “Restrain, Liberate, Kill: Parsing the Language of Blocking Sickness in Irish Charms”.

New Book

## *Folklore and Old Norse Mythology*

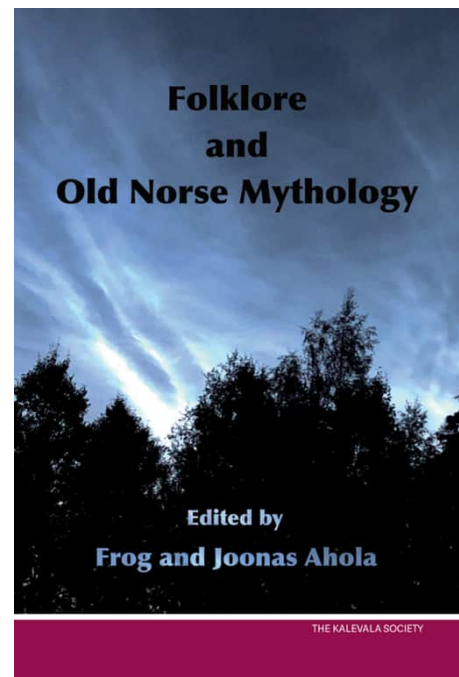
Folklore Fellows' Communications 323, Helsinki, 2021

*Frog and Joonas Ahola, eds.*

Authors of chapters: John Lindow, Jens Peter Schjødt, Sophie Bønding, Olof Sundqvist, Frog, Kendra Willson, Stephen A. Mitchell, Bengt af Klintberg, Clive Tolley, Joonas Ahola, Leszek Gardeła, Rudolf Simek, Valerie Broustin, Tommy Kuusela, Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir, Laila Kitzler Åhfeldt, Kirsi Kanerva, Karen Bek-Pedersen, Else Mundal, Joseph S. Hopkins, Eldar Heide, and Terry Gunnell (with Tom Muir).

This book responds to the rising boom of interest in folklore and folklore research in the study of Old Norse mythology. The twenty-two authors of this volume reveal the dynamism of this lively dialogue, which is characterized by a diversity of perspectives linking to different fields and national scholarships.

The chapters open with a general overview of how the concepts of 'folklore' and 'mythology' have been understood and related across the history of Old Norse studies. This is followed by a group of chapters that discuss and present different approaches and types of source materials, with methodological and theoretical concerns. The interest in folklore is bound up with interests in practice and lived religion, which are brought into focus in a series of chapters relating to magic and ritual. Attention then turns to images that link to mythology and different mythic agents in studies that explore a variety of usage in meaning-making in different forms of cultural expression. The next group of studies spotlights motifs, with perspectives on synchronic usage across genres and different media, cross-cultural exchange and long-term continuities. The volume culminates in discussions of complex stories, variously behind medieval sources and relationships between accounts found in medieval sources and those recorded from more recent traditions.



The book's first section, *Approaches*, is constituted of five chapters. John Lindow opens the section with perspectives on the development of research in "Folklore, Folkloristics, and an 'Old Norse Mythology Method'". Jens Peter Schjødt then engages currently debated topics in "Pre-Christian Religions of the North as Folklore, with Special Reference to the Notion of 'Pantheon'". Sophie Bønding has a strong theoretical emphasis in "Conceptualising Continuity in the Christianisation: Towards a Discursive Approach". Olof Sundqvist illustrates the potential of interdisciplinary approaches in "A 'Turn to Interdisciplinary Methods' in the Study of Old Norse Mythology and Religion, with a Case Study on the Distribution of the Cult of Freyr". The section is closed by Frog's outline of a framework for addressing several current issues in "Mythic Discourse Analysis".

The second section, *Magic and Ritual*, is formed by four chapters. In "*Seiðr* and (Sámi) Shamanism: Definitions, Sources, and Identities", Kendra Willson considers how *seiðr* and its construction in comparative research has been shaped by scholars' contemporary trends and concerns. Stephen A. Mitchell then offers "Notes on *historiolas*, Referentiality, and Time in Nordic Magical Traditions", raising valuable issues related to mythological narratives and their connections to charm texts. Bengt af Klintberg then brings into focus a particular Swedish charm and its potential for continuities from a pre-Christian milieu in "The Dead Mother: An Exceptional Nordic Binding Charm". Clive Tolley completes the section with an extensive and thorough study "*Heimdallr's Charm: The Lost Heimdallargaldr and Symbolism and Allusion in the Myths of Heimdallr*", which first explores the image of the god Heimdallr and then turns to the relationship of the mysterious source to charm traditions.

The third section, *Mythic Images and Agents*, also consists of four chapters. In "Divine Gear? – 'Odinic' Disguise and Its Narrative Contexts in Medieval Icelandic Literature", Joonas Ahola explores the role of images in meaning-making, and how connections of images with the mythological sphere can shape the significance of the same images in other contexts. Leszek Gardeła then turns attention to artefacts in the archaeological record in "Women and Axes in the North: Diversity and Meaning in Viking Age Mortuary Practices", where he argues for axes as ritual objects in these contexts based on a wide range of comparative evidence. In "Wise Men and Half Trolls", Rudolf Simek and Valerie Broustin turn discussion to supernatural agents, bringing into focus the often overlooked position of trolls in the genealogies of significant Icelandic families. Tommy Kuusela brings the section to a close with a return to the history of scholarship in "The Giants and the Critics: A Brief History of Old Norse 'Gigantology'", exploring how views on giants in mythology and folklore have been shaped by scholars' contemporary discussions.

The fourth section, *Motifs and Narratives*, is again comprised of four chapters. In "Mythological Motifs and Other Narrative Elements of *Völsunga* saga in Icelandic Folk- and Fairytales", Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir explores long-term continuities

and transformations of motifs in oral tradition. In “Gotland Picture Stones and Narration”, Laila Kitzler Åhfeldt then presents an approach to carvers’ use of templates in depicting stories, in which she uniquely applies Oral-Formulaic Theory. Kirsi Kanerva follows questions of composition with variation of a topic as it is addressed in different genres in “Genre Matters? – Female Suicide in Mythic, Mytho-Heroic, and Historical Contexts”. Karen Bek-Pedersen closes the section with a discussion of “Bolli Þorleiksson’s Celtic Horses”, with an approach to cross-cultural comparison more concerned with meanings than reconstructing earlier forms or origins.

The final section, *Stories*, is formed by another group of four chapters. Else Mundal opens discussion by raising issues about the value of different types of sources, connecting back to issues of genre, in “Old Norse Myths, Heroic Legends, and Folklore: Sources for Old Norse Religion on the Move”. The problem of distinguishing tradition behind medieval written sources is then taken on by Joseph Hopkins in “Phantoms of the *Edda*: Observations Regarding Eddic Items of Unknown Provenance in the *Prose Edda*”. Eldar Heide illustrates the potential for narrative traditions to endure in the long term and to provide insights into obscure sources in the past in “Magical Fishing in *Historia Norwegie*: Incomprehensible without Late Folklore”. The section and the book are then brought to a close by Terry Gunnell with Tom Muir in “George Marwick’s Account of ‘The Muckle Tree or Igasill’: Folklore or Literature?”, examining a case of potential long-term continuity that might also reflect an oral tradition that emerged around an early written source.

Individually, the chapters variously offer reflexive and historical research criticism, new research frameworks, illustrative studies and exploratory investigations. Collectively, they illustrate the rapidly evolving multidisciplinary discussion at the intersections of folklore and Old Norse mythology, where the transformative impacts were recently described as a paradigm shift. They open new paths for scholarly discussion with the potential to inspire future research.

The book is available from the Finnish Federation of Learned Societies at <https://tiedekirja.fi>.

Doctoral Defence

*Dissertation in Folkloristics*  
*University of Iceland*  
*June 2022*

## *Trapped Within Tradition*

### *Women, Femininity and Gendered Power Relations in Icelandic Folk Legends*

*Dagrún Ósk Jónsdóttir*

Supervisor: Terry Gunnell

Committee: Gýða Margrét Pétursdóttir and Ülo Valk

Opponents: Timothy Tangherlini and Laura Stark

This doctoral research project seeks to examine how women are portrayed in the Icelandic folk legends of the past, works which provide valuable information about the ideology of the people who told them and the social and environmental context of their time. This study focuses on those legends contained in the folktale collections collected in the late 19th and early 20th century, using both qualitative methods and data-grounded thematic content analysis, which is informed by those methods used in both feminist studies and critical discourse analysis. The approach is essentially cross disciplinary, drawing not only on methods used in both folkloristics and gender studies but also those relating to social history. Particular attention is given to those narratives telling of the disobedience, rebellion and resistance of women. This project aims to explore why females appear in the form in which they do, and the messages about femininity passed on by these narratives. The study also considers the interactions and potential conflicts that take place between the various male and female characters in the selected stories. Particular use has been made of Connell's and Schippers's theories relating to hegemonic and pariah femininity.

The thesis is built up around four scholarly articles containing individual case studies, two of which have been published (in *Folklore* and *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*), while the third has been accepted by *Western Folklore* and the fourth submitted to *Ethnologia Europaea*. The first article deals with those women that contest



current hegemonic ideas about femininity, in other words women that carry out tasks or have qualities that are more commonly attributed to men than women; the second with women that are victims of gender-based violence (with a focus on violence in relations between the two genders as understood from the earlier binary standpoint); the third with women that deny their “pre-ordained” role of motherhood; and the fourth with supernatural women that appear to offer a sexual threat to men.

As this dissertation shows, those women who contest the dominating hegemonic ideas concerning femininity in Iceland tend to be presented as threats to the social order, and commonly end up being punished or appear as pariahs. The legends examined for this research can thus be said for the most part to reinforce these hegemonic ideas, passing them on to future generations within the oral tradition.

Doctoral Defence

*Dissertation in Folkloristics*  
*University of Iceland*  
*16 June 2023*

## *In Their Own Voices*

### *Legend Traditions of Icelandic Women in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*

*Júliana Þ. Magnúsdóttir*

Supervisor: Terry Gunnell

Committee: Timothy R. Tangherlini and Þorgerður Einarsdóttir

Opponents: Ulf Palmenfelt and Mirjam Mencej

This doctoral research thesis seeks to examine the legend traditions of Icelandic women living in the Icelandic pre-industrial rural society. The source material of the thesis involves audiotaped interviews that the folklore collector Hallfreður Örn Eiriksson took with 200 women born in the late nineteenth century, interviews which are now preserved in the Folkloric Collection of Árni Magnússon Institute in Icelandic Studies in Reykjavík. Alongside these, the project has also made use of interviews taken with 25 male informants born during the same period, interviews which are drawn on for the basis of comparison in some parts of the research. The research combines quantitative and qualitative approaches as a means of mapping out the main features of women's legend traditions and legend repertoires during this period, simultaneously shedding light on those features of the tradition that seem to be divided on gender lines. The aim of the research was to gain insight into how the spaces, experiences and conditions of Icelandic women in the past influenced their legend traditions and the formation of their legend repertoires. In addition to considering the nature and content of the legends told by women, the thesis considers the roles women played as storytellers, not only in their private households but also in the society at large, underlining among other things the degree to which they were involved and represented in the collection of Icelandic folk narratives in earlier times.

The thesis is built up around four scholarly articles. Three of these have already been published (in the *British Folklore* in 2018, in the *Estonian Folklore* in 2021 and in *Arv* from 2021) and the final one will be published in the *Journal of American Folklore* this spring (2023). The first article examines the representation of women in the different types of folk narrative archives containing material with a background in the pre-industrial rural society of Iceland and considers their usefulness for the reconstruction of women's traditions in the past. The second article considers the spatial aspects of women's storytelling and their legend repertoires, among other things paying attention to their roles in the social landscape of the rural community and the roles they played as storytellers in the central communal space of the *baðstofa*. The third article (that forthcoming in the *Journal of American Folklore*) examines the key differences that can be discerned in the legend traditions of women and men contained in the sound archives, considering how the different experiences, roles and conditions of women may have contributed to some of these differences. The fourth article (that published in *Arv* in 2021) focuses on three women in the sources who have unusually large legend repertoires, something which provides additional insight and individual context with regard to some of the features examined in the other articles, once again highlighting the relationship between the conditions, environments and experiences women knew and the nature of their legend traditions.

As a whole, the thesis reveals that many of the women encountered in the sources were more geographically mobile than expected, while others evidently had a relatively wide range of social contacts, providing them with a valuable role in the oral narrative traditions of their local communities and not least in terms of the transmission of oral stories between different households and even different regions. The research behind the thesis also reveals that certain aspects of the legend tradition seem to have been more common in the repertoires of women than in those of men. These include a more personal approach to the supernatural tradition, greater emphasis on female roles and characters, and particular interest in certain narrative themes, such as dreams, omens and those dealing with the *huldufólk*. As the thesis notes, these are all themes that seem to be emphasised in the earlier printed collections of folk narratives from the second half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, giving us good reason to believe that female storytellers played a much greater role in passing on this source material than their official representation in these collections might suggest.

## Folkloristika

*Folkloristika* [Folkloristics], the journal of the Serbian Folklore Association, is a peer-reviewed scientific journal of folklore and folkloristics. *Folkloristika* publishes essays on all forms of traditional and contemporary folklore, folklife, and ethnomusicology in Serbia and around the world, including traditional folk songs and narratives, music, dance, medicine, arts and crafts, rituals, beliefs and religion, contemporary and digital folklore.

*Folkloristika* invites original and comparative approaches to various folkloric practices and processes, covering the study of folklore history, theory, and methodology, as well as all related fields of interest, including ethnology, ethnomusicology, linguistics, cultural anthropology, social history, cultural studies. The journal publishes archival and field material and field reports, reviews of current books, projects, conferences, relevant folklore events, and bibliographies. The journal is published in print and electronic formats, with open access (<https://folkloristics.org/>).

Since 2016, *Folkloristika* has published several thematic issues: *Folkloric Landscape of the Cemetery*, edited by Biljana Sikimić; *Water-Bulls and Water-Cows in Oral Traditions of the World*, edited by Đorđina Trubarac Matić; *On the Occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Vuk Karadžić's Serbian Dictionary*, edited by Zoja Karanović, and *On the Occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of Tihomir R. Đorđević*; *Folklore of the Borderlands: Field and Cabinet Research*, edited by Andrey B. Moroz; *Macedonian Folklore in Focus: Pictures of the World, Traditional and Contemporary Folklore in an Interdisciplinary Context*, edited by Lidija Stojanovik.

Recent thematic issues include *Folklore and Folk Narratives in Latin American Contexts*, edited by María Inés Palleiro and Ana María Dupey, with articles on different types of disciplinary narratives in Argentina and Chile, folk and belief narratives in the Peruvian Amazonia, folk tales and legends from the indigenous heritage of Mexico and narratives of Pilagá, performances of orality in Brazil, Jewish traditions in a Latin American background, and oral narratives of Slovenes in Argentina. The thematic issue *The Plant World in Traditional Serbian Culture Then and Now*, edited by Zoja Karanović, contains studies of the meaning, role, and symbolism of plants in various folk genres and language, in traditional textile handiwork, and in the literary heritage of Byzantium and medieval Serbia. The articles in the thematic issue *Contemporary Research of Music and Dance Practices in Serbia*, edited by Mirjana

Zakić, address the topics of music and dance as intangible cultural heritage, the history of ethnomusicological research, and modern forms of presenting traditional practices.

## *The Serbian Folklore Association*

The Serbian Folklore Association [*Udruženje folklorista Srbije*] brings together scholars from all fields of folklore studies and related disciplines (oral literature, ethnology, ethnomusicology, ethnolinguistics, anthropology, cultural studies, history, etc.). It operates as a scientific and professional, non-governmental and non-profit organization based in Belgrade. The main goals of the Association are the research of the traditional culture of the Serbian people, the scientific approach to various folkloric phenomena, the collection, systematization and presentation of folkloric material in archival and field research.

The Association was founded in 2014 at the suggestion of prominent Serbian folklorists, especially the late academician Nada Milošević-Đorđević, the Honorary President of the Association, and the first President Boško Suvajdžić (University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology). The Serbian Folklore Association is based in part on the achievements of the society of the same name founded in 1955, which was part of the Union of Folklorists of Yugoslavia (until 1989). Today's Serbian Folklore Association, through its own example, aims to sensitize the social community to the need to create institutional frameworks that provide stable conditions for continuous and systematic work on the development of all areas of folklore studies. The stated goals of the Association are to study the folklore and culture of the Serbian people and the people living in Serbia, to ensure the continuous growth of folklore research, and to safeguard and promote folklore as a cultural heritage.

Since its foundation, the Association has focused on the following activities: publishing the journal *Folkloristika* [*Folkloristics*], organizing and holding national and international scientific conferences (*Contemporary Serbian Folkloristics* I-XII and beyond), publishing collections of essays and monographic editions. The project *Living Folklore of Serbia* was conceived and implemented to raise awareness of the importance of intangible cultural heritage and its preservation. Through the above activities, the Association, among others, connects folklorists in Serbia and around the world with the basic intention that the exchange of knowledge and experience promotes and ensures the continuous development of folklore as a science in the national and international framework.

Other institutions in Serbia join the Association in carrying out basic activities, especially the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia, University Library "Svetozar Marković"

in Belgrade, University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology, the Scientific, Educational and Cultural Center “Vuk Karadžić” in Tršić, the Cultural Center “Vuk Karadžić” in Loznica, etc.

## *Commission on Slavic Folklore*

At the 5th Congress of The International Committee of Slavists in 1963 was established the Commission on Slavic Folklore. The first chairman of the Commission was the Czech folklorist and philologist Karel Horálek (1908–1992), who headed the Commission for 20 years (1963–1983). The Russian and Soviet folklorist Viktor Gusev (1918–2002) headed the Commission for 15 years (1983–1998). The Commission was led for five years by the Polish folklorist and philologist Krzysztof Wrocławski (1937–2022) and the Slovak folklorist Viera Gašparíková (1928–2023). The Serbian philologist and folklorist Liubinko Radenković (b. 1951) was a chairman for two five-year terms (2003–2013). The Russian folklorist Andrey Moroz (b. 1965) headed for five years (2013–2018) and the Serbian philologist and folklorist Dejan Ajdačić (b. 1959) was elected as the current chairman in 2018.

### *Members*

During 60 years (1963–2023), there were 176 members in the commission. In the spring of 2023, there are 72 active folklorists from Slavic countries (Belarus, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech, Macedonia, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine) and non-Slavic countries (Romania, France and Japan). Previously, there were members also from Great Britain (Elisabeth A. Warner), Denmark (Carl Stief, 1914–1998), Hungary (Vilmos Voigt, b. 1940), Montenegro (Novak Kilibarda, b. 1934) and the United States (William E. Harkins, 1921–2014).

### *Site of Commission on Slavic Folklore - <http://slavika.org/folklor/>*

On the site one can find history of the Commission on Slavic Folklore, short biographies of researchers of Slavic folklore, books, articles, and talks about new books, bibliographies and links to periodicals and institutions. The bibliography of folklore papers presented at the congresses held from 1929 to 2013.

### *Groups of the Commission of Slavic Folklore at the ICS*

Traditional names of genres of Slavic oral narration, Visual narration of Slavic folklore, Cats in Slavic traditional cultures.



## *BNN Online Lecture Series*

### *Upcoming Lectures*

#### *The Lilac Lady: The Etiology of a Collective Belief-Legend (A Case Study)*

**Eda Kalmre** (Estonian Literary Museum, Estonia)

Eda Kalmre is senior research fellow at the Department of Folkloristics of the Estonian Literary Museum. Her research interests include Estonian children and youth lore, the types of Estonian folktales, history and methodology of folklore, contemporary media and storytelling, rumours and urban legends. She is the author of several articles, anthologies, and textbooks. She is a member of the editorial boards of important Estonian and international journals and publications. Her monographs are *What a Wonderful World of Legends* (ELM Scholarly Press 2018) and *The Human Sausage Factory: A Study of Post-War Rumour in Tartu* (Rodopi 2013), the latter of which won the International Society of Contemporary Legend Research (ISCLR) Brian McConnell Award for Best Legend and Folklore Research.

The lecture will analyse the emergence and the stages of development of a ghost story, formed about a century years ago, and related to the present-day building of the Literary Museum and its collective. The investigation builds heavily on the theories on the development and elaboration of legends by Lauri Honko, Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi, and Jans Harold Brunwand and Bill Ellis. It also contributes to the achievements of contemporary legend research. Among other things, the talk highlights the extent to which a specific narrator can influence the creation of a story and its persistence in the repertoire. It also dwells on the role of community and media in the formation and preservation of the legend, and how the fiction and reality – persons, locations and (tragic) events – appear side by side in the story. The analysis is based on participant observations over more than two decades, archival materials and almost thirty interviews.

## *Recent Lectures*

### *Non-Medical Disease Causation: Punishment and Sin in Greek and Early Christian Illness Narratives*

**Ildikó Csepregi** (Maria Zambrano Research Fellow at the Department of History, GEAAT, Grupo de Estudios de Arxeoloxia, Antiguidade e Territorio, University of Vigo, in Spain)

I am a historian of religion and a medievalist; after having studied Classics and medieval studies, I earned my PhD from the Central European University and the European Doctorate title from the Università Ca' Foscari, Venice. For several years have been working on the transformation of Greek religious practices, esp. the practice of temple sleep (incubation) and published on various aspects of ritual healing and the formation of the Christian cult of the saints as well as pilgrimage sites. My research fields include: pilgrimages, illness narratives, non-medical healing, miracle accounts, the hagiography of doctor saints, dreams and the formation of healing cults.

**Abstract:** In this lecture I would like to focus on some non-medical causes of illness. Wrongdoing, committing a ritual error, or being cursed or bound were well known features in ancient Greek illness interpretations and together with sin, they persisted in early Christian religious healing stories as well. I would like to highlight a few illness narratives where we have such descriptions with their clear attributions and consequences. They determine the sick persons' attitude to their own illness, to their choice of healing method and healer. They also shed light on surrounding common beliefs regarding purity and pollution. I chose illness narratives that reflect a variegated attitude in attributing illnesses, at the intersecting traditions of Classical Greek and Biblical ideas with those of the emerging Christianity.

The recorded lecture is available at:

<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/833760870>

### *God Gave Me an Immune System and that's Good Enough for Me! Religious Belief, Anti-masking, and Anti-Vaccination Sentiments During COVID-19*

**Andrea Kitta** (East Carolina University, USA)

Andrea Kitta is a folklorist with a specialty in medicine, belief, and the supernatural. She is also interested in Internet folklore, narrative, and contemporary (urban) legend. Her current research includes: vaccines, pandemic illness, contagion and contamination, stigmatized diseases, disability, health information on the Internet and COVID-19. Dr. Kitta is the recipient of the Bertie E. Fearing Award for Excellence in Teaching (2010–2011), received a Teacher/Scholar award from ECU (2015–2016) and the Board of Governors

Distinguished Professor for Teaching Award (2018–2019). Her monograph, *Vaccinations and Public Concern in History: Legend, Rumor, and Risk Perception*, won the Brian McConnell Book Award in 2012. Her monograph *The Kiss of Death: Contagion, Contamination, and Folklore* won the Chicago Folklore Prize and Brian McConnell Book Award in 2020.

**Abstract:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, many outspoken religious groups declared that they didn't need masks or vaccines because they were protected by God and the immune system He designed. This conflict between science and religion is not new, but highlights one area of vaccine hesitancy that is often misunderstood. In this presentation, I'll explore the logic and belief of the intersection of religion, freedom, and the COVID-19 vaccine. In media interviews, when I've been asked about religious vaccine hesitancy, most outlets have assumed that smaller groups, such as the Amish or Jehovah's Witnesses, are the most likely culprits instead of larger group like Catholics and Evangelical Christians. Even though the leaders of these denominations support vaccination, their followers often use otherwise dismissed arguments to justify their personal beliefs, demonstrating themselves as "true believers." Historically, rejecting what church leaders say would have caused rejection from the group, however, in this brave new world, individuals justify their personal belief systems over the official belief systems.

The recorded lecture is available at: <https://vimeo.com/814721140/7743127a43>.

### ***Manufacturing Cryptids***

**Daisy Ahlstone** (Ohio State University, USA)

Daisy Ahlstone is a folklorist and PhD student in comparative studies at the Ohio State University. Their research interests include humanities research methodologies, ecological metaphor, and expanding concepts of community. They also founded WiseFolk Productions, which is an organization that shares the importance of community by drawing the public's attention to the folklore happening around us every day through digital content.

**Abstract:** This lecture describes how animals with "contested existences" (cryptids) come to hold such a title. Using the recently extinct thylacine as a guiding example, Ahlstone walks us through the features, stories, and material culture that help to create cryptids, and rationalize belief in their existence.

The recorded lecture is available at: <https://vimeo.com/804824041/43dc7e4b33>

### ***Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary Conspiracy Theories on Covid-19***

**Kristina Radomirović Maček** (University of Ljubljana, Slovenia)

Kristina Radomirović Maček is PhD student at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Ljubljana (Slovenia). Her thesis titled "Contemporary End

of the World Narratives and Notions in the Area of Former Yugoslavia” introduces Covid-19 conspiracy theories in the digital ecosystem of a post-socialist context. Her research interests include contemporary folklore, digital ethnography, folkloristics, and the anthropology of religion. During the pandemic, she actively participated in public debates about conspiracy theories and cooperated with the major Slovenian media houses. In 2022 she presented a paper at the annual conference of the *Käte Hamburger Centre for Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Studies (CAPAS)* at Heidelberg University.

**Abstract:** The imagination of the end world is grounded on social fears and relies on complex belief systems. Because of their megalomaniac narrative pretensions conspiracy theories are the hotbeds of apocalyptic visions. The perceptions of the upcoming catastrophe can be considered the basis of conspiratorial storytelling, as this talk argues. Predicting becomes revealing as the upcoming catastrophe is interpreted as a sign of a distorted present. Therefore, apocalyptic visions in conspiracy theories are not future phenomena but symbols and hyperboles of our present times. The dystopia of social control is an exaggerated manifestation of fears of being followed and owned in the profit-oriented times of consumerism and contemporary capitalism. After a short overview on the conspiracy theories as the apocalyptic fear generating belief narratives, I will move forward to four visions of the apocalypse that emerged from ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Slovenian social media and among online communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The recorded lecture is available at: <https://vimeo.com/794096306/fd19e8044e>.

### ***Elemental Tradition Tropes in the Folklore of Water Among the Khasis of Northeast India***

**Margaret Lyngdoh** (University of Tartu, Estonia)

Margaret Lyngdoh received her PhD in 2016 from the University of Tartu, Estonia. She has studied at Ohio State University, Columbus, USA and the National University of Ireland-University College Cork, Ireland as a visiting student during her doctoral studies. She was the 2016 Albert Lord Fellow at the Centre for Studies in Oral Tradition, University of Missouri and received the Estonian Research Council Grant postdoctoral fellowship for her project “Tradition and Vernacular Discourses in the Context of Local Christianities in North-eastern India”, 2018-2021. Lyngdoh was the editor of the Journal of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR) 2019 -2022. She is a researcher at the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore and an executive member of the Belief Narrative Network of the ISFNR. Her research interests include indigenous folklore, indigenous ontologies, and the study of religion.

**Abstract:** Water as the median of power in the folklore of the Khasi, an indigenous community in Northeast India, is presented in the multiple manifestations of magic and shapeshifting. *Jhare* name magic and human-animal transformations incorporate

multiple tradition-tropes, one of which is water as divinity. Leaning heavily on empirical material derived from primary fieldwork, this talk will look at the folklore of water as is home of *sanghkini* shapeshifters or ‘hybrid’ persons who transform into were-snakes during the monsoon season. In the second case, water is *Niaring*, as is used in sorcery and rituals in Northern Khasi Hills. Looking at water as an elemental tradition trope allows disparate parts of Khasi community religious expression—gender switching in shapeshifter form; astral travel in dreams; multiple examples of ritual—to be viewed together as articulations of water as mediator, enabling new constellations of understanding. Narratives collected from *Sangkhini* were-snakes and *Jhare* magical ritual practitioners will be analysed in context, to show the prevalence and power of belief narratives to enable transmission and shape local cosmologies among the Khasi.

The recorded lecture is available at: <https://vimeo.com/787899123/6946313713>.

### ***Fairy Belief Narratives, Indigenous Knowledge and Connection to Place*** **Jenny Butler** (University College Cork, Ireland)

Dr Jenny Butler is a Lecturer in the Study of Religions Department at University College Cork and is the President of the Irish Society for the Academic Study of Religions (ISASR). Her research focuses on otherworld traditions, intangible cultural heritage, ritual, and the intersections of religion and folklore. She is currently conducting an ethnographic research project on “Fairy Lore and Landscapes”: <http://fairyloreandlandscapes.com/>

Abstract: This presentation approaches fairy belief narratives as indigenous knowledge, as cultural memory, and meaningful connection to the land and sites upon and within it. On the Irish landscape, there exist so-called “fairy places”, especially “fairy trees” (hawthorn) and “fairy forts” (ringforts). The Irish mythology records the *aos sí*, the mythical “people of the mounds” who inhabit the “hollow hills”, living underground beneath their human neighbours. The term “fairy” came to be used during the colonisation of Ireland when the population was forced to speak English instead of Gaelic and when the placenames were anglicised, thus losing meanings found in the native language. This, alongside many processes of change and modernisation, led to a disconnection of people and place particularly with regard to general awareness of how the otherworldly realm is intertwined with the physical terrain in the traditional worldview. This presentation explores the present-day status of fairy lore and connection to these sites. Based in ethnographic research in Ireland, reference will also be made to comparative research findings in Iceland and in Newfoundland, Canada.

The recorded lecture is available at: <https://vimeo.com/777803094/a18f5ee3e5>.

## *Charms, Charmers and Charming Seminar*

### *Recent Lectures*

*East-European Charms in the Gaelic West? International Narrative Charms in Ireland*

Barbara Hillers

May 15, 2023 [meet.google.com/sqe-hdid-yne](https://meet.google.com/sqe-hdid-yne)

*A Mighty Benefactor and his Changing Functions: The Archangel Michael in Romanian Charms*

Emanuela Timotin

March 27, 2023

*Book Launch: Aigars Lielbārdis, 150. Kolekcija buramvārdi / Collection 150. Charms*

Aigars Lielbardis, Daiva Vaitkevičiene

February 27, 2023

*Alexander the Great's Servants and the Disease Caused by Them: Brief Examination on the 'Stealing Sacred Power' Theme as Expressed by Romanian Legends and Charms about Fairies*

Laura Jiga Iliescu

January 23, 2023

*Charms in Late Antique and the Earliest English Medicine: Transmission and Transformation*

Lea Olsan

28 November, 2022

*Russian Versions of "The Dream of the Virgin Mary." The Social  
Functioning of a Non-Canonical Text*

Andrey Toporkov

31 October, 2022

## *The ISFNR Lecture Series: Voices from Around the Globe*

### *Recent Lectures*

#### ***Discussing Disenchantment / Re-enchantment Argument: Folkloristics*** **Nemanja Radulović & Smiljana Đorđević Belić**

September 2023

Nemanja Radulović is professor of Folk Literature at the Department of Serbian Literature and South Slavic Literatures, Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade. His research is focused on fairy tales and belief narratives, urban folklore, history of folkloristics and esotericism. He is a member of ESSWE board, of BNN board, a member of folklor committee of the International Committee of Slavists, and of the folk literature committee of Serbian Academy of Sciences. Edited volumes: *Esotericism, Literature and Culture in Central and Eastern Europe* (2018), *Study of Eastern Esotericism in Central and Eastern Europe* (2019; with Karolina Maria Hess).

Smiljana Đorđević Belić (b. 1978) is senior research associate at the Institute for Literature and Arts, Belgrade. Her research interests are focused on belief narratives, oral epics, theory and methodology in folkloristic research. Her publications include *The Post-folk Epic Chronicle: A Genre on the Border and the Borders of the Genre* (2016); *The Figure of the Gusle Player: A Heroicized Biography and an Invisible Tradition* (2017). She has been the co-editor (with Sonja Petrović) of *Folkloristika*, journal of the Association of Serbian Folklorists and the volume *Disenchantment, Re-enchantment and Folklore Genres* (with Nemanja Radulović). She is vice president of the Association of Serbian Folklorists, and a member of the Committee for Folkloristics of the International Committee of Slavists (ICS).

Abstract: Max Weber's disenchantment (*Entzauberung*) (1917) proved to be one of the most influential concepts in the 20th-century humanities and social sciences. Weber's idea that the world has come to be viewed as a place from which magic has withdrawn (which is not identical with secularization) and in which the supernatural does not exert influence in everyday life helped in articulating new views not only in sociology but also in anthropology, ethnology, religious studies, political sciences, art history. Common to all of them is the notion of the world of modernity as the world devoid of the supernatural. Disenchantment has been criticized, to be sure, but such criticism is



also part of the concept's history in different fields. Among alternative views is the idea of re-enchantment which, contrary to Weber, claims not only that the world has never become fully disenchanted but, conversely, that it experiences strong revival of modern magical forms, not confined to some closed or alternative groups but precisely in popular culture and mass market. The polemics about disenchantment and re-enchantment has continued up to our days, more than a century after Weber's lecture. Some important recent studies, recognized as defining contemporary fields of anthropology or religious studies, are tackling precisely the disenchantment-re-enchantment relation.

In spite of this far-reaching influence, disenchantment and re-enchantment have not exercised influence on folkloristics. That is striking since the topics folkloristics deals with overlap not only with the abovementioned fields but precisely with the questions addressed in Weberian and post-Weberian ideas. What happens with belief legends in the contemporary world, to what extent are beliefs retained and to what extent lost (or transformed)? Is contemporary legend an example of a rationalized legend where the supernatural disappears, or does this genre interact with the modern forms of supernatural belief, as expressed in New Age or popular occultism? What is the place of disenchantment anxiety at the very birth of the field in Romanticism? These are only some examples. Our aim is to see if the entire polemical dialogue between disenchantment (in various definitions) and re-enchantment can help us, as folklorists, to understand our materials, our methodological tools, and our own intellectual background better.

The recorded lecture is ... *coming soon*.

## ***Argentinian Märchen: From Folktales to Belief Narratives***

**Maria Ines Palleiro**

June 2023

Dr. Maria Ines Palleiro is Professor of Orality and Genetic Criticism at Buenos Aires University, a retired Senior Researcher in Folk Narrative at the National Scientific and Technical Research Council of Argentina (CONICET), and vice-president for South America in the ISFNR Executive Committee.

**Abstract:** Marvelous tales provide a gateway to a magic world that offers an alternative gaze at our daily life, which makes our existence more bearable. This wonderful world is rooted in a historic place and time, which, in the examples I will deal with, corresponds to the Argentinian context of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Real times and places are in tension with this marvelous world, without specific spatial nor temporal location. The tension between fiction and history is the distinctive feature of the narratives that mirror different aspects of Argentinian cultural identity. Beyond the fictional world of kings and princesses, each narrator opens a window to local lifestyles, telling tell us something about who Argentinian

people are and how do they manage to overcome different obstacles in the day-to-day struggle.

In this presentation, I will provide some examples of Argentinian marvelous tales, collected during more than thirty years of field research. The classification criterion is based on the concept of “narrative matrix”, conceived as a set of thematic, structural and rhetoric features, identified through the intertextual comparison of different narratives. Such criterion is aimed to highlight the flexible boundaries between different folklore genres, presented in international catalogues as a priori fixed patterns. This concept adds to the thematic narrative types described in the ATU universal Index, valid for folktales of all times and places, structural and stylistic issues. Such classification tends to underline the influence of social beliefs that erase boundaries between folk narrative genres.

The recorded lecture is available at: <https://vimeo.com/835244301/c5cffb00c4>.

### ***Roots and Contemporary Continuities in Ghanaian Storytelling***

**Esi Sutherland-Addy, Sarah Dorgbadzi, Sela Adjei**

April 2023

Abstract: Assoc. Prof. Esi Sutherland-Addy: “The Structure and Aesthetic of Selected Storytelling Performance Traditions in Ghana”. Dr. Sarah Dorgbadzi: “Neo-Traditional Storytelling Performance for Multi-Ethnic Audiences”. Dr. Sela Adjei: “Dotokpo’ and Soak the Ancestral Logic in Yom the Poet’s ALTER NATIVE EP”.

The recorded lecture is available at: <https://vimeo.com/820238999/3b33366108>.

### ***Wish you were here: Narrating the Holy Land in Postcards***

**Dani Schrire**

February 2023

Dr. Dani Schrire a lecturer at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem affiliated with two graduate programs: the Program for Folklore and Folk-Culture Studies (head) and the Program in Cultural Studies.

Abstract: Postcards are emblematic objects of modernity and although they were invented in Europe in 1869 they spread rapidly across the globe. The “rediscovery” of the Holy Land in the West parallels the emergence of the postcard and various publishers produced full sets of postcards that were distributed also among people who never visited the sacred places. Based on research carried out in the David Pearlman Holy Land postcard collection of ca. 200,000 cards (donated in 2019 to the Folklore Research Center at the Hebrew University), I deliberately focus my talk on postcards from the 1960s and beyond when postcards lost their urgency and became mundane objects with writing conventions and postal practices that were already taken for granted. Narrating the Holy Land in this modern short folk-genre negotiates

Biblical myths, political turmoils and everyday life, often in surprising and peculiar manners

The recorded lecture is available at: <https://vimeo.com/798695872/db0a3b9dce>.

### *Learning and Unlearning Folklore: Questions of Recognition, Transcoding, Genre, and Justice Revisited*

**Cristina Bacchilega**

November 2022

Cristina Bacchilega coedits *Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies* and is Professor Emerita of English at the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa where she taught fairy tales and their adaptations, folklore and literature, and cultural studies. She is the author of *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies* (1997), *Legendary Hawai'i and the Politics of Place: Tradition, Translation, and Tourism* (2007), and *Fairy Tales Transformed? 21st-Century Adaptations and the Politics of Wonder* (2013). And the coeditor of two recent collections, *The Penguin Book of Mermaids* with Marie Alohani Brown (2019) and *Inviting Interruptions: Wonder Tales in the 21st Century* with Jennifer Orme (2021). Her current projects are collaborations that continue to pursue situated understandings of folklore and the fantastic.

**Abstract:** My trajectory as a folklorist and fairy-tale scholar has been shaped by the experience of being a woman and settler of color in Hawai'i for close to forty years, a settler who seeks to be an active ally for Hawaiian sovereignty and social justice. Learning from Hawaiian mo'olelo and Hawaiian scholars has played a role in this trajectory solidifying my recognition of multiple traditions of wonder and why that matters. While raising questions of translation or transcoding, genre, disciplinary boundaries, and justice, this talk explores the relationship between Indigenous wonderworks and the fairy tale as one of several wonder genres.

The recorded lecture is available at: <https://vimeo.com/766513008/9353acc5e7>.

### *Folklore in the Digital Realm: The Case of "The Witcher III: Wild Hunt"*

**Asta Skujytė-Razmienė**

September 2022

Asta Skujytė-Razmienė is a Lithuanian folklorist. In 2014 she started working at The Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, in the Department of Folklore Archives. In 2019 she defended her PhD thesis "Conception of Contagious and Infectious Diseases in Lithuanian Folklore from the 19th to the First Half of the 20th Century". Currently she is working as the head of the Department of Folklore Archives and preparing her monograph on the perception of diseases and illnesses in Lithuanian folklore.

**Abstract:** Choosing folklore material as a source of inspiration for computer games is quite an old practice. Creators decide either to closely follow and recreate various legends and myths in the virtual world or just leave some hints at the material used.

In my lecture I will concentrate on “The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt” from “The Witcher” (2007-2015) game series, created by a Polish video game company “CD Projekt Red”. As the third instalment is often described as “Folkloric RPG” by the fans and the critics alike, my goal is to take a closer look at the game, while attempting to answer the question, what makes this particular game to feel “authentically folkloric”? So, by focusing on “The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt”, I will argue that the creative team of “CD Projekt Red” might found a quite unexpected way to (re)construct and represent the possible mythological worldview of the times past in the virtual surroundings.

The recorded lecture is available at: <https://vimeo.com/757223560/946dc6f87a>.

## ***The payada: An Improvised Oral Poetic Duel in Latin American Contexts***

**Ercilia Moreno Chá**

June 2022

Ercilia Moreno Chá is an Argentine ethnomusicologist. She was a researcher at the Universidad de Chile (University of Chile) and the Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Pensamiento Latinoamericano (National Institute of Anthropology and Latin American Thought ) of Argentina. She served as Director of the Argentine Instituto Nacional de Musicología “Carlos Vega” (National Institute of Musicology “Carlos Vega”) and she collaborated with the Smithsonian Institution and the UNESCO, as advisor for Latin American traditions. Author of books and articles dealing with Latin American improvised oral poetry (payada) , being her most recent book “Aquí me pongo a cantar...” El arte payadoresco de Argentina y Uruguay. (2016) Here I come to sing. The art of the payada (oral poetic duel) in Argentina and Uruguay.

**Abstract:** The improvised poetic duel is an ancient world tradition that is still present today in Latin America where it takes various forms. One of these forms is the “Payada”, which is performed by two minstrels (payadores) singing and playing guitar. It has become a ritual performance with a special structure and inherent symbolism. Both of these aspects are drawn on in both the private context and during shows, festivities and Cultural Performances (Singer 1972).

The Payada phenomenon is performed with firm respect for traditional gender conventions. Its main objective is to compete by means of drawing on a variety of resources and types of poetic license, in order to prove which performer has the best skills in the art of poetic improvisation within the musical genres of each region. Expression varies in accordance with the audience and the context in which the performance takes place. Generally, it involves not only poetic art but also rhetorical and argumentative skill. The Payada has a three-part structure: the beginning in which the payador introduces himself and/or greets the audience; the confrontation of ideas itself, and then finally a farewell. In performative terms, the art of Payada echoes the various phases of performance described by Richard Schechner (1994) in his studies of theatrical performances from the East and West: training, workshops,

rehearsals, warm-ups, performance, relaxation and consequences. Improvised duels of this kind involving contests by two or more poets are a widely accepted global phenomenon. Payada as a particular kind of musical poetic confrontation is nonetheless an important part of an Iberoamerican tradition and involves a very unique genre of discourse. Case studies of the art from Argentina, Chile and Uruguay will be presented.

The recorded lecture is available at: <https://youtu.be/fXoPUtnU64E>.

### ***Wildly Ours 4.0: Colonial Narratives of Non-Human Animals***

**Sadhana Naithani**

April 2022

Sadhana Naithani is professor at Centre of German Studies and Coordinator of Folklore Unit, SLL&CS, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She is the current president of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research and Honorary Fellow of the American Folklore Society. Her research interests span European and Indian, folklore and folkloristics. She has written on the disciplinary history of folkloristics in the contexts of British colonialism, on German folklore theory after WWII and on folkloristics in the Baltic countries under Soviet rule. Currently she is documenting narratives of time in German villages and researching folklore about wild life in colonial India.

**Abstract:** Non-human animals have been conceptualized in human mind through narratives. Arguably, the oldest genre of folk narrative – the fable – resolved conundrums of human life and society through tales of non-human animals. Its impact was such that the fictional images of certain animals determined their real identity, for better or worse. Human beings construct their world narratively, but the narratives grow, change, renew and experience the displacement of old and emplacement of new narratives.

Colonial history is one such period of large-scale narrative change. In the postcolonial discourse on colonialism the focus has remained on human-human conflict/relationship for a long time, yet research on the exploitation of the wild life in colonies has been gaining ground.

The focus of this paper will be on the narratives about wild life generated and circulated in colonial contexts that determined the fate of several species who lived in the wild.

The recorded lecture is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYc-GK-YMV4>.

Call for Papers

# *The 19th Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research*

## *Folk Narratives in the Changing World*

17–21 June 2024, Riga, Latvia

The International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR) and Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia (ILFA) are delighted to announce the call for papers for the 19th ISFNR Congress “Folk Narratives in the Changing World” to be held from June 17 to 21, 2024 in Riga, Latvia.

Over the past decade, the world has undergone constant transformation due to a multitude of social, economic, geopolitical, technological, and environmental processes. The COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian-induced war in Ukraine, the revolution of artificial intelligence, and the increasingly noticeable impact of climate change are some of the factors that have significantly changed our lifestyle, daily behaviour, thoughts and communication in recent years. These profound changes have influenced society, encompassing migration and urbanisation, polarisation and radicalisation, digitalisation and virtualisation, and much more. The impact of these processes has reverberated through folk narratives, leaving a discernible imprint on their form, content, functions, performance, circulation, and beyond. Both historically and in the present day, the approaches to documenting, archiving, and studying folk narratives have evolved in response to these shifts, underscoring the pivotal theme of change at the upcoming ISFNR Riga Congress. Throughout its century-long existence, these changes have also affected the Archives of Latvian Folklore, which will celebrate its centennial anniversary in 2024.

In this congress, our aim is to foster a dynamic exchange of ideas, insights, and scholarly research that illuminates the intricate tapestry of folk narratives within diverse changing contexts. Therefore, for the 19th ISFNR Congress, we invite participants to consider the following topics:

- *Shifting Theoretical Paradigms in Narrative Research: Past and Present*
- *Digital Approaches in Narrative Research: Opportunities and Challenges*
- *Oral vs Online: Narratives in the Digital Age and Social Media*
- *Narratives of Crisis and Change*
- *Narratives in (and, of) Changing Environment*

Alongside the congress events, participants will have the chance to immerse themselves in the enchanting atmosphere of the Latvian Summer Solstice traditions. In Northern European traditional culture, the longest day and shortest night of the year have immense significance. While originally celebrated as a pivotal moment in the rural ritual calendar, the Summer Solstice has also seamlessly adapted to the urban environment of Riga, offering a captivating experience for attendees.

### *ISFNR Committee Panels*

The Committees of the ISFNR will be holding their sessions within the congress.

The **ISFNR Folk Narrative, Literature, and Media Committee (FNLM)** will be holding its panels around the congress theme and pay particular attention to oral and literary tales as well as wonder tales across media forms, from graphic novels and film to painting and fashion. Themes may include how various types of wonder texts engage with crises and change, past and present, including climate change, pandemics, political crises, and the rise of dictatorial regimes, among other possible topics.

*About the FNLM.* The ISFNR Committee on Folk Narrative, Literature, and Media supports, recognises, and extends the work and achievements of scholars and practitioners who create, perform, and study folk narrative in relation to literature and media, widely conceived. This committee gathers scholars and practitioners to encourage the study of folk narrative including wonder tales, folktales, fairy tales, legends, and myths as they are performed, transmitted, and transformed through different media forms, including: oral tales and their transcription, literary texts, graphic novels, film, radio, television, painting, illustration, photography, design, fashion, sculpture, architecture, music, choreography, theater, video, gaming, fandoms, podcasting, and all varieties of social media and digital culture. Some related scholarly fields include, but are not limited to, adaptation, comparative, critical race, decolonial, disability, ecocritical, gender, intermedial, intersectional, labour, queer, reception, and translation studies.

The **ISFNR Belief Narrative Network (BNN)** will be holding its panels in line with the congress theme and with particular focus on recent scholarly debates about the content and use of the concept of belief narrative. We invite proposals covering how belief narrative is applied either as a genre category or as an analytic tool to explore non-religious (secular, disenchanting) traditions, non-Western contexts, or realistic (non-supernatural) stories. We also welcome theoretical or empirical inquiries on the “belief”-content of belief narratives, on the changing belief traditions, about the performative practices and social interactions related to belief narratives, and on any related topics.

*About the BNN.* The ISFNR Belief Narrative Network was established in 2009 at the 15th congress of the ISFNR. As a voluntary association (working group) of the ISFNR it facilitates creative cooperation within folk narrative scholarship focusing on the genres of belief. Since its foundation it has held twelve symposia from St. Petersburg (2010) to London (2022), and as of 2023 September it has 146 members worldwide. During the pandemic (in 2020) the series of BNN Online Lectures was initiated to keep our members connected and updated on the newest achievements of belief narrative scholarship. Since 2020 September there have been 25 talks delivered and the series is to be continued. For more information on the lecture series and the upcoming talks please see elsewhere in this issue of *ISFNR Newsletter* and check the website: <http://isfnr.org/online-lectures/>.

### *Local Organiser*

The ILFA is a research institution focusing on the historical and contemporary processes of Latvian traditional culture as well as literature, theatre and music. Recently the ILFA's expertise has considerably expanded to include the innovative, interdisciplinary fields of digital and environmental humanities, gender and queer studies, and autobiographical memory studies. Concurrently, the ILFA's research is strongly oriented towards societal impact.

As the host of the Archives of Latvian Folklore (ALF), the ILFA is also a cultural memory institution, specialising in heritage studies. The 19th ISFNR congress will be one of the events of the centenary celebrations of ALF, tracing its roots back to 1924.

### *Conference Venue*

The old Hanseatic League city of Riga displays a wild array of historical changes that have occurred over the course of eight centuries. The cobblestone streets whisper tales of its medieval origins, while the large suburbs testify to the recent legacy of Soviet modernism. The majestic flow of the Daugava River separates the green vistas of the serene fin de siècle wooden housing quarters and the famous Art Nouveau district, remembering the city's pioneering role in the industrialisation of Baltic Sea littoral and the revolutionary storms that brought about the country's independence in 1918. More recent changes have led to a plenitude of dining options ranging from global street food to Nordic haute cuisine, a rich musical life and a diverse artscape.

### *Applications for Participation in the Congress*

**Deadline: December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

To apply for participation in the 19<sup>th</sup> ISFNR Congress, please fill out the form available at this link: <https://en.lfk.lv/isfnr2024-application> Participants are kindly asked to submit an abstract for their planned presentation (length up to 300 words or 2500 characters) and to its relation to indicate one of the above sub-topics. Congress sessions and panels will be structured



according to topics (with a maximum of four participants per session). Presentations should not exceed 20 minutes followed by 10 minutes of discussion. You will be notified about approval of your submitted abstract by December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023.

### ***Registration for the Congress and Participation Fee***

Regular registration until January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024:

- ISFNR members: 280 EUR
- ISFNR non-members: 330 EUR
- Reduced fee for students and accompanying persons: 200 EUR

Late registration after January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024 or on-site registration:

- ISFNR members: 330 EUR
- ISFNR non-members: 380 EUR
- Reduced fee for students and accompanying persons: 230 EUR

Researchers residing and working in Ukraine are eligible for free participation in the Congress. For more information about this opportunity, please contact us: [isfnr.congress.2024@lulfmi.lv](mailto:isfnr.congress.2024@lulfmi.lv).

Before registering, ISFNR members should verify their membership status. In case of doubt, please contact the ISFNR treasurer Ave Goršič: [avegorsic@folklore.ee](mailto:avegorsic@folklore.ee).

### ***The Local Organising Committee***

**Chair:** Sandis Laime, ILFA leading researcher and Head of the ILFA Digital Archive.

**Members:** Dace Bula, ILFA leading researcher; Eva Eglāja-Kristsons, ILFA director and leading researcher; Ieva Garda-Rozenberga, ILFA leading researcher; Rita Grīnvalde, ILFA leading researcher and Head of Archives of Latvian Folklore; Toms Kencis, ILFA leading researcher and Head of the ILFA Scientific Council; Aigars Lielbārdis, ILFA researcher; Guntis Pakalns, ILFA researcher.

### ***Further Information***

Regularly updated information regarding the Congress, the next circulars, registration procedures, etc., can be found on the following website: <https://en.lfk.lv/isfnr2024>.

More information about Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art and the Archives of Latvian Folklore can be found on the respective websites: <https://lulfmi.lv/en/news> and <https://en.lfk.lv/news>.

Should you have any questions, please e-mail: [isfnr.congress.2024@lulfmi.lv](mailto:isfnr.congress.2024@lulfmi.lv).

Call for Papers

## *Folk Narrative, Literature, and Media (FNLM) Committee*

### *19th Congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR)*

17–21 June 2024, Riga, Latvia

If you wish to submit an abstract to the FNLM Committee, please include above your proposed paper title:

#### **Abstract for the Folk Narrative, Literature, and Media (FNLM) Committee**

The FNLM Committee hopes to sponsor several panels around the conference theme that pay particular attention to oral and literary tales as well as wonder tales across media forms, from graphic novels and film to painting and fashion.

Themes may include how various types of wonder texts engage with crises and change, past and present, including climate change, pandemics, political crises, and the rise of dictatorial regimes, among other possible topics. See the ISECS Call for Papers for more details.

**Remember: if you wish to submit an abstract to the FNLM Committee, who would then organize the panels, please include “Abstract for the Folk Narrative, Literature, and Media (FNLM) Committee” above your proposed paper title.**

#### *About the FNLM*

The ISFNR committee on Folk Narrative, Literature, and Media (FNLM) supports, recognizes, and extends the work and achievements of scholars and practitioners who create, perform, and study folk narrative in relation to literature and media, widely conceived. This committee gathers scholars and practitioners to encourage the study of folk narrative including wonder tales, folktales, fairy tales, legends, and myths as they are performed, transmitted, and transformed through different media forms, including: oral tales and their transcription, literary texts, graphic novels, film, radio, television, painting, illustration, photography, design, fashion, sculpture, architecture, music, choreography, theater, video, gaming, fandoms, podcasting, and all varieties of social media and digital culture. Some related scholarly fields include, but are not

limited to, adaptation, comparative, critical race, decolonial, disability, ecocritical, gender, intermedial, intersectional, labor, queer, reception, and translation studies.

***FNLM contacts***

Anne E. Duggan: [a.duggan@wayne.edu](mailto:a.duggan@wayne.edu)

Mayako Murai: [mayakomurai@me.com](mailto:mayakomurai@me.com)

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Call for Papers

## *Conflicts and Catastrophes*

### *The 2024 Conference of the ISFNR Committee on Charms, Charmers, and Charming*

12–15 June 2024, Helsinki, Finland

The International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR) Committee on Charms, Charmers, and Charming invites submissions for its 2024 conference, which will be held at the Finnish Literature Society in Helsinki, Finland, with paper presentations from 12–14 June and an excursion on 15 June.

Submissions are due by **15 January 2024**.

The conference will explore verbal rituals, whether written or spoken, that aim to change reality. Papers discussing this topic from any discipline, dealing with any region or historical period, are welcome.

Over the recent years, people all around the world have sadly suffered from a variety of crises and changes that have affected their daily lives, such as pandemics and epidemics, wars, the revolution of artificial intelligence, and the environmental crisis.

However, social and individual conflicts and crises have always been present in human life, and people have invented various ways to respond to them. Ritual behaviour and charms have traditionally been part of crisis management.

We therefore would like to welcome scholars to discuss this theme in a friendly, non-conflictual environment. Topics might include but are not limited to:

- Transmission and circulation of charms during crises
- Re-use of old charms and invention of new charms during crises
- Changes in the performance of charms during crises
- Conflicts and communication with supernatural agents
- Conflicts within the community, between charmers and their environment
- Changes in the media of charms: oral, written, digital, and other forms
- Conflicting ideologies in the collecting and archiving of charms
- Conflicts and debates within scholarship and changes of paradigms
- Creating conflicts: witchcraft and maleficent charming

Proposals for 20-minute papers should be sent to [chachacha2024@protonmail.com](mailto:chachacha2024@protonmail.com) including a title, 200-word abstract, and brief biography of the presenter. The language of the conference is English.

The conference will take place at the Finnish Literature Society. There will be no registration fee for the conference, but the conference dinner and the excursion will be chargeable.

More information will be provided on: <https://blogs.helsinki.fi/chachacha2024>.