

Dear BNN members,

In accordance with the rules of the BNN, it is the duty of the chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, to submit an annual report on the activities of the BNN over the previous year to the other members of the BNN. The following is the report for 2018-2019.

### **1. Membership**

Once again, I am happy to inform you that since my last report in September 2018, the number of BNN members has once again increased, now reaching a total of **131 members**. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to welcome all of our new members!

### **2. Publications**

The conference papers presented at the conference on *Sacrifice and Divination*, organised in cooperation with the BNN by Éva Pócs of the University of Pécs, which took place in Pécs, Hungary, in 2014, and in which many of our members participated, were finally published last year (2018) in Budapest by Balassi Kiadó. See: <https://www.lira.hu/hu/konyv/ismeretterjeszto-1/mitologia-vallas/aldozat-divinacio-istenitelet>

The publication of proceedings from the joint BNN and Charms, Charmers and Charming Committees' conference on *Verbal Charms and Narrative Genres* which took place in Budapest, 8-10 December 2017, is currently in print and will be published in *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* by the end of 2019. The special guest editors of this issue are Éva Pócs and Maria Ines Palleiro. We would like to thank Éva and Maria for their efforts!

Some papers by BNN members, which were presented at the BNN conference on *Human-Animal Relationships in Belief Narratives* (held as part of the ISFNR interim conference in Ragusa, 12-16 June 2018), will be published in a special edition of *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore* (Tartu) (ed. Mare Kõiva; Mirjam Mencej, guest editor) in December 2019.

### **3. Conferences**

Earlier this year, BNN Committee Members were actively involved in organising the BNN conference on *Belief Narratives in Folklore Studies: Narrating the Supernatural*, which was run by the Anundoram Borooah Institute of Language, Art and Culture in Guwahati and the BNN, and held in Guwahati, Assam, India, on 6-8 February 2019. Altogether there were 78 participants, and a total of 53 papers were presented over the course of 18 sessions. During the course of the BNN conference, a BNN meeting and meeting of the BNN Committee also took place. The conference, and the accompanying cultural programme, was a great success and we are very grateful to Dilip Kumar Kalita and his team for all their efforts. 27 papers will be published in a book, which is due in December. A report on the conference written by Palash Kumar Nath, Karuna Kanta Kakati and Dilip Kumar Kalita can be found at:

<http://isfnr.org/files/Report%20on%20BNN%20conference.pdf>

In June, the BNN Committee launched the Call for Papers for the BNN conference on *Fear of the Other*, which will be held within the framework of the 18<sup>th</sup> ISFNR congress in Zagreb, Croatia, on 21-26 June 2020 (see: <http://www.isfnr.org/isfnrcongress/index.html>). The task ahead of us is to evaluate the submitted abstracts and form the programme of this BNN conference. Please do not forget that the deadline for submitting proposals is 14 October 2019! See:

<http://www.isfnr.org/isfnrcongress/call-for-papers.html>

4. **The BNN e-Newsletter** (see no. 3 at: <http://www.isfnr.org/belief-narrative-network.php>)

At the BNN Committee meeting in Guwahati, we have decided to launch a special section of the BNN Newsletter which will be dedicated to belief narrative research in particular countries. In the previous BNN newsletter you were thus able to read about state of belief narrative scholarship in Meghalaya (India), and in forthcoming newsletters you can expect to read about state of belief narratives scholarship in Belarus and Assam. We would like to encourage you all to send in contributions on the state-of-the-art in belief narrative scholarship in your own country. If you are interested, please send me an email at: [mirjam.mencej@guest.arnes.si](mailto:mirjam.mencej@guest.arnes.si)

Once again, we would also like to encourage you all to send us information on your personal research, on new publications, calls for papers, conferences and other events (also local!) related to belief narratives, as well as any other news that might be of interest to belief narrative scholars.

As always, we would also like to thank Kristel Kivari who is kindly taking care of the distribution of the Newsletter, and Nidhi Mathur for promptly uploading it to the ISFNR website! Please, continue to promptly send information to Kristel ([kristel.kivari@ut.ee](mailto:kristel.kivari@ut.ee); [kristelkivari@hotmail.com](mailto:kristelkivari@hotmail.com))

## 5. The Student Award for the Best Paper in the Field of Belief Narratives

In 2018, the Committee decided to make some slight changes to the rules for the next competition for the best student paper award. Every second year (at the ISFNR congress and at the ISFNR interim conference) two awards (rather than one) will be granted: one for the best paper written by a PhD student, and one for the best paper written by an undergraduate (BA) or graduate (MA) student. The next awards will be presented at the next ISFNR congress in Zagreb in 2020. The Call for Applications, along with details about the award (that is regarding the requirements, criteria, profile of the students involved, the nature of the award, and so on) can be found at the ISFNR/BNN website, under no. 4:

(<http://www.isfnr.org/files/beliefnarrativenetwork.html>).

## 6. The BNN Web Site ( <http://www.isfnr.org/belief-narrative-network.php> )

As always, we encourage all of those who still have not yet sent in data to send us their CVs (including names and surnames; degrees; present professional status and affiliations; e-mail addresses and contact details – as long as you are happy for these to be published on the Internet), along with *a list of main research interests* (in the form of key words – please add such information at the end of your CV) and a *personal bibliography*, including works related to belief narratives (that is books written in one of the major languages or with a summary in one of these languages; and papers written in one of the major languages). The information should be sent to Kaarina Koski ([kaakos@utu.fi](mailto:kaakos@utu.fi)) before the end of October for her to send it to the ISFNR admin Nidhi Mathur to put it on the website later this year (see no. 7at: <http://www.isfnr.org/belief-narrative-network.php>). Kaarina up-dates the list of belief narrative scholars' CVs annually.

As usual, we encourage all members to continue to share information about the BNN with their colleagues: Everyone interested in belief narratives of any kind is welcome to join the Network! If you are aware of any scholar who is interested in belief narratives and wishes to become a member of BNN, please remind them that they should contact the chairperson

([mirjam.mencej@ff.uni-lj.si](mailto:mirjam.mencej@ff.uni-lj.si) or [mirjam.mencej@guest.arnes.si](mailto:mirjam.mencej@guest.arnes.si)) in order to receive information about all future BNN activities. Potential members should be informed that they need to join both the ISFNR and the BNN. If any of you has not yet become a member of the ISFNR, please bear in mind that, in accordance with our statute, the BNN forms part of the ISFNR and that official membership is only open and free to those who are members of the ISFNR. If you are not yet a member of ISFNR, you can nonetheless receive information about our activities, and participate in our conferences and meetings. However, you will not have the right to vote for members of the BNN Committee or be able to become a BNN Committee Member yourself. Everyone is therefore encouraged to join the ISFNR (see: <http://www.isfnr.org/becoming-a-member.php>; <http://www.isfnr.org/ISFNR-membership.php>); please contact the Chairperson of the Membership Committee, Prof. Kimberly J. Lau ([lau@ucsc.edu](mailto:lau@ucsc.edu)), if you have any questions regarding the ISFNR membership. Should anyone wish to cease being a BNN member, and receive no further information about our activities, please let us know and we will delete you from our list.

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

We are looking forward to meeting you in Zagreb soon!

Best wishes,

Mirjam,

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

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