



Newsletter



International Society for Folk Narrative Research

In This Issue

- ◆ *A special conversation with Éva Pócs, reflecting on her memories of ISFNR and the scholarly friendships and collaborations that have shaped the community over the years.*
- ◆ *New books and journals to explore – discover the latest publications in folklore and narrative research.*
- ◆ *Calls for papers, conference news, and meeting reports featuring key insights, discussions, and highlights from the past year's activities and achievements.*
- ◆ *Welcoming our newest members – get to know the latest voices joining the ISFNR network.*
- ◆ *Updates on working groups, collaborative projects, and regional contacts to help you stay connected across the international community.*

News, Notes & Narratives



The **International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR)** is a scholarly and professional organisation 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:
isfnrnewsletter@gmail.com

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Cover photo: Detail of Trajan's Column, 113AD, Rome (photo by Triin Laidoner)

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President's Address

Mirjam Mencej

Dear friends, dear colleagues, dear ISFNR members,

By the time you read this message, only a few weeks – or perhaps just a few days – will remain before we gather for the ISFNR interim conference in Reykjavík, Iceland (13–16 June 2026). The conference, *Nature(s) in Narrative*, has generated tremendous interest. At the time of writing, the programme includes 73 panels, with 136 individual sessions, covering a wide and exciting range of topics. In addition to 430 participants who will join us in person, around 80 colleagues will take part online. I'm truly delighted that so many of you will be there, and I very much look forward to seeing you soon!



Alongside reconnecting with old friends, meeting new colleagues, and exploring the latest developments in folkloristic research, I warmly encourage you to take part in the meetings organised by ISFNR during the conference. The main one is the ISFNR Annual Meeting, which will take place on Monday, 14 June, from 14:15 to 15:30. This is a great chance to hear about what we've been working on and what's ahead, as well as to get updates from our three active committees: the Belief Narrative Network Committee; the Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming; and the Committee on Folk Narrative, Literature and the Media. You'll also be introduced to the aims and activities of recently launched working groups: Environmental and Ecological Narratives; French and Francophone Fairy Tales and Fluidities; Heroic Material of Ireland and Scotland; and Short Folklore Forms.

I'm also very happy to share that the Executive Committee has recently approved a new working group, *Emerging Folklorists*, jointly proposed by Malay Bera from India and Simona Kuntarič Zupanc from Slovenia. The group is aimed especially at early-career researchers and their interests, and I hope it will bring together young folklorists from around the world and spark new collaborations – please see the call to join on pages 37–38. Following an agreement on closer collaboration between

ISFNR and YOFO, reached in October 2024, and with the support of Estonian, Lithuanian, Latvian, and Finnish colleagues who originally launched the YOFO conferences—and who have agreed that future conferences can expand their geographical scope—this new working group will also take over the organisation of the Young Folklorists (YOFO) conferences going forward. The next YOFO conference will take place on 1–3 October 2026 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. We are already looking forward to welcoming 70 MA, PhD, and postdoctoral students from 22 countries across Europe, Asia, and the Americas who have confirmed their participation. The organising team of young scholars at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, together with the DEAGENCY project, is working hard to make this a truly memorable event.

The FNLM committee and all five working groups will hold their own meetings during the conference, and you're very welcome to join any that interest you. On the final day, Friday, 16 June 2026, we'll also have informal info points in the registration area—please check the programme for exact times and locations. Representatives of the BNN and FNLM committees, as well as all working groups, will be there to answer your questions—so if you're even a little curious in what they do and what their plans for the future are, do stop by for a chat. You'll be very warmly welcomed!

Finally, I'm delighted to share wonderful news that between January 2025 and March 2026, as many as 120 scholars applied to become members of our society. A very warm welcome to all our new members! You can get to know them on pages 68–81, where short introductions can be found with photos. I very much hope you will all become—and remain—active members of our ever-growing ISFNR community.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the Newsletter, which includes a range of engaging contributions. I'd especially like to draw your attention to the interview by Malay Bera with our distinguished honorary member, Professor emerita Éva Pócs from Hungary, who reflects on her remarkable career and shares her thoughts on ISFNR.

We very much look forward to seeing you in Reykjavík!

On behalf of the ISFNR Executive Committee,
Warm regards,
Mirjam

Looking Ahead to the Next Newsletter

As this issue of the Newsletter has now made its way into the world, it already feels like the right moment to begin gathering new stories, ideas, news, and academic adventures for the next one. One of the nicest things about serving as Managing Editor of the Newsletter has been seeing just how lively and wide-ranging the ISFNR community is – every issue brings new books, reports, calls for conferences, working group updates, unexpected discoveries, and the occasional delightful surprise landing in my inbox.



So, while you are hopefully enjoying this issue with a cup of coffee, tea, or something stronger, do keep the next Newsletter in mind as well! Whether you would like to share a recent publication, announce an event, report on committee or working group activities, or simply let colleagues know what has been happening in your corner of the folklore world, I would be delighted to hear from you.

Contributions for the winter issue of the Newsletter are already warmly welcomed, with the submissions deadline set for **25 November 2026**. Please send your contributions to: isfnrnewsletter@gmail.com.

If possible, please use the templates available on the [ISFNR website](#) – though not to worry, I am happy to help, if you run into trouble.

Many thanks in advance, and I look forward to seeing what finds its way into the next issue.

Greetings from Edinburgh,

Triin Laidoner

Interview with Éva Pócs

The ISFNR in Memories of Its Distinguished Members

Malay Bera, University of Tartu

As Éva Pócs, the celebrated Hungarian folklorist, turns 90 this year, I had the pleasure of interviewing her as the third feature of the ISFNR interview series. Éva has long been associated with the ISFNR and has been an honorary member of the society since 2009. She is one of the founding members of the ISFNR Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming (ChChCh), and continues to inspire scholars of folk narratives, religion, belief, and charms. In this inspiring interview, Éva shares her decades-long professional journey and, from memory, recounts her experiences with the ISFNR's early days, especially regarding its connection to Hungary and Central Europe in consolidating international folk narrative scholarship in the region. Below is a glimpse into the interview. Continue reading for more:



Éva Pócs

"In the 50s and 60s, we only heard about the ISFNR from the news. We did not have the opportunity to travel to the 'capitalist' countries for conferences. However, some key figures of the ISFNR, such as Kurt Ranke and, later, Lauri Honko, sometimes visited Hungary to attend international conferences in Budapest. It was then that we could meet them and exchange ideas. Unofficially, the so-called Finnish-Hungarian scientific conferences were organised within the framework of the ISFNR from the 70s (by Gyula Ortutay and Vilmos Voigt), mainly in Budapest but sometimes in Finland... I myself was the first, along with several others, to attend the 1984 Bergen Congress, during the easing of political restrictions, when you could get a 'service passport' after a minor administrative hassle."

– Éva Pócs

Interview

Malay Bera (MB): Thank you for agreeing to the interview, Éva! It is a delight to welcome you to the ongoing ISFNR interview series, as we also celebrate your 90th birthday this June. To start us off, could you tell us a little about yourself and your journey through folklore research?

Éva Pócs (ÉP): My interest in folklore began in childhood. At the age of 13, I participated in an ethnographic collection competition for 12–14-year-olds. I went to a village in western Hungary with my brother for two weeks, where I drew kitchen, cooking and baking objects and wrote down sayings, funny stories, and folk songs. I also supplemented my knowledge of that region in the library. I won first prize for my essay based on my ethnographic collection there. The prize was three Soviet novels! Although I did not eventually read the novels, with this work, I tasted the excitement of folklore collection and a little of the scientific work involved in processing the collected material. My love for Hungarian folk music is also rooted in my childhood, in the family, and this led me to take a job in the folk music department of the Ethnographic Museum during my last high school summer vacation. At that time, I was preparing to become a musicologist. During my first year at the university, I started studying ethnography at the Faculty of Arts, and music theory and music folklore at the Academy of Music in parallel. The humanities remained; during the completion of the ethnography and Hungarian language and literature majors, folk religion and beliefs came to the fore, as evidenced by my diploma thesis on the “Christmas table”.¹ I wrote my second book – as a museum curator – about the folk beliefs of Zagyvarékas, a village close to the Szolnok Museum, based on my own fieldwork.² During my postgraduate scholarship, I was able to travel abroad for 6 months, strictly within the socialist bloc. I chose East Berlin, where I hoped to have the most contact with European research. The *Institut für Volkskunde* in East Berlin became my workplace, where the most attractive material was a text archive of almost 100,000 verbal charms. This, and the Western literature lent by Dr. Johanna Jaenecke-Nickel, a researcher on verbal charms, determined the topic of my PhD dissertation. The birth of my four children slowed down my professional life, so it took me a long time to finish my dissertation on Hungarian verbal charms (which was published much later in the Hungarian Ethnography handbook).³ This topic has accompanied me to this day: a complete Hungarian text corpus was published in 1985–1986,⁴ then in an expanded edition, together with my former student, Emese Ilyefalvi, in 2012,

¹ Pócs 1965.

² Pócs 1964.

³ Pócs 1988.

⁴ Pócs 1985–1986

and now an English version of it is ready, which we hope will be published in the FFC series. Although I was one of the organisers and am still a member of the ISFNR Charms, Charmers and Charming (ChChCh) committee, after writing a few studies, the topic of incantations receded into the background in favour of other religious and belief topics: such as the cult of the dead, the cult of fairies, the Hungarian religion before the adoption of Christianity, the so-called Hungarian shamanism, witch hunts, the historical dimensions and present day of witchcraft, and the Balkan and Southeastern European connections of Hungarian folk beliefs. My latest topic is a monograph on the folk religion and the world of beliefs of a Catholic village community, based on my intensive fieldwork carried out between 2002 and 2016. Several of these topics were researched together with my colleagues and former students in a research group with historians that still operates today.⁵ And between 1980 and 2012, I taught these topics in folkloristics and folk religion courses at the University of Pécs. To sum up what has been said about my career, I have never been a researcher par excellence of folk narratives, I have always moved on its borderlands. I was interested in narratives not in themselves, only as texts, but as representations of local religion, local society influenced by local traditions.

MB: You have worked on beliefs and religious practices across central Europe and beyond over several decades. You have also been a witness to the various shifts in geopolitical borders across the regions of your research interest. Based on your expertise and experience, how have you treated the complex relationship between belief, folklore, religion, language, and borders in your vast body of works that transcends national borders?

ÉP: I think I answered this question in the previous answer, except that the role of national borders was not discussed. In my research, relations with our linguistic neighbours were always strongly emphasised, even when I did not explicitly conduct comparative-historical analyses. The Hungarian language area was never enclosed by sharp borders, wherever the current, frequently changing political borders were drawn. As for the Hungarian-Hungarian borders, they also caused difficulties, but the fact that a very large percentage of Hungarian speakers lived outside the political borders also taught me how to cross borders. After 1990, the situation changed: relations with researchers outside the borders strengthened and so did the research opportunities for “the mother country”. I myself carried out my last fieldwork in an eastern Romanian-Hungarian border zone of Transylvania. The title of my project, which I received from the European Research Council in 2012, also indicates my interest in religious and linguistic relations and the crossing of borders: “Vernacular

⁵ On the group’s first 15 years, see, Pócs 2001.

religion on the boundary of Eastern and Western Christianity: continuity, changes and interactions.”



ISFNR ChChCh Committee conference, Moscow 2011.

MB: You have spent years working in the field of folk narrative research and have long been associated with the ISFNR. Could you please tell us when and how you first became involved with the ISFNR?

ÉP: In the 50s and 60s, we only heard about the ISFNR from the news. We did not have the opportunity to travel to the “capitalist” countries for conferences. However, some key figures of the ISFNR, such as Kurt Ranke and, later, Lauri Honko, sometimes visited Hungary to attend international conferences in Budapest. It was then that we could meet them and exchange ideas. Unofficially, the so-called Finnish-Hungarian scientific conferences were organised within the framework of the ISFNR from the 70s (by Gyula Ortutay and Vilmos Voigt), which were mainly in Budapest, but sometimes in Finland. We, younger researchers, were also exceptionally able to travel there, because Gyula Ortutay, as a former government member, convinced the official political forums of the necessity of Hungarian researchers’ trips to Finland with the

myth of “Finnish and Hungarian brother nations”. So, it is no coincidence that a larger Hungarian delegation was able to attend the 1974 ISFNR Congress in Helsinki (and later the Finno-Ugric Congress as well). I, myself, was the first, along with several others, to attend the 1984 Bergen Congress, during the easing of political restrictions, when you could get a “service passport” after a minor administrative hassle. We, the people of Budapest, were lucky with the 1989 Budapest Congress. In 1995, a few of us were able to travel to Mysore and Göttingen without any problems (some of my students came with me); we even received a scholarship from the HAS (Hungarian Academy of Sciences). For me, the 2005 Tartu and 2009 Athens congresses were the last ones I was able to travel to; now, the illnesses associated with my advanced age are preventing me from doing so.



Éva Pócs speaking at a conference on fundamental concepts in folkloristics, “Genres, Systems, Databases”. Institute of Ethnology, Research Centre for the Humanities, Budapest 2023.

MB: Could you please share some of your memories of previous ISFNR events that you participated in?

ÉP: The most memorable for me was the Bergen congress (1984), where the whole of Europe, and the world beyond Europe and the USA, opened up to me, thanks to the expansion of international collaborations that took place under the presidency of Galit Hasan-Rokem towards folkloristic research throughout the world. I was able to make many new professional acquaintances while enjoying the phenomenal hospitality of Reimund Kvideland and his Norwegian colleagues. For example, they cooked a special free lunch for those coming from poorer socialist countries and Israel. We were

even offered free accommodation in Reimund and his colleagues' apartments. And on top of that, the beauties of nature, the "white" nights, the trip over the fjords...

New and ever-expanding professional relationships were the hallmark of every congress. The Göttingen congress was memorable for its cheap, modest, no-show nature and its wonderful professional excursions. To me, the most memorable has been the excursion to Blocksberg, which is said to be the site of the witches' sabbaths.

In Mysore, I was enriched by the fantastic cultural experiences of my first and last trip to India. Not only did we see wonderful temples, but we also travelled in a rented taxi with our European and American colleagues, through villages, rice fields and with women working in brickyards, with men chatting all day in teahouses.

The Tartu congress gifted me with the charms of a previously unknown city, the friendship of Ülo Valk, and the introduction to two excellent folklore workshops.

The Athens congress was one of the greatest cultural experiences of my life, which included trips to the Temple of Apollo and the Oracle of Delphi.



ISFNR BNN and ChChCh joint conference, Budapest 2017.

MB: As we know, the ISFNR has established a global presence, led by seven presidents over the past six decades, and is currently under the leadership of its eighth president, Mirjam Mencej.⁶ Unfortunately, little documentation exists from the time of the first four presidents. Could you please share some of your recollections of the ISFNR in its early days?

ÉP: I met Professor Kurt Ranke in the 1960s, during his visits to Budapest, but my youth and the great respect I felt for him prevented me from initiating a more professional conversation with him.

As I mentioned, I had several meetings with Lauri Honko, during the aforementioned Finnish-Hungarian meetings and during my Finnish HAS scholarships. His presence was always very inspiring. It aroused my professional interest in his work. His monograph on belief in spirits in Ingria⁷ had a particular impact on me: it helped me a lot in the contextual interpretation of historical sources.

I am still grateful to Reimund Kvideland for his friendship and humanity.

Unfortunately, I never had a personal relationship with Galit Hasan-Rokem, although I had a sense of her great personality from my colleague Ilona Nagy's enthusiasm for her.

MB: Do you think there have been any shifts in approaches to folk narrative research in the scholarly engagements facilitated by the ISFNR in its various conferences and events?

ÉP: The ISFNR events certainly contributed to the acceleration, emergence, coordination, and transformation of the theoretical and methodological changes that were beginning to take place in folkloristics under the influence of debates; to its internationalisation and to the apparent emergence of differences between local, national, and language-bound qualities.

⁶ The names of the ISFNR presidents listed successively: Kurt Ranke (1962–1974), Lauri Honko (1974–1989), Reimund Kvideland (1989–1998), Galit Hasan-Rokem (1998–2005), Ülo Valk (2005–2009), Ulrich Marzolph (2009–2016), Sadhana Naithani (2016–2024), Mirjam Mencej (2024–Ongoing).

⁷ Honko 1962.



ISFNR BNN and ChChCh joint conference, Budapest 2017.

MB: In the early days of the ISFNR as well as during your early career as a folklorist, what was it like collaborating with folklorists across the world before the internet became accessible, especially coming from what was then a socialist country?

ÉP: Sometimes we could go abroad as well, – mainly from the 1970s onwards, especially to Finland. From that time on, we could receive European scholarships. For example, I could travel to Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, and the Netherlands with an HAS scholarship, to Germany with a DAAD spring scholarship, to France with a CNRS scholarship, to London with a Warburg Institute scholarship. I could establish contacts with ethnographic and folklore departments in universities everywhere. This sometimes led to police interrogation, but it could be played out. On the other hand, we could organise international conferences (Finnish-Hungarian, later Estonian-Hungarian, etc.) and meetings through postal correspondence. At these events, we could come into direct contact with researchers from other countries, because Western researchers were generally allowed to attend them. We were least able to establish normal professional relations with Romanian institutions, like the Hungarian Ethnography Department in Cluj-Napoca.

ÉP: Are there any past ISFNR initiatives you remember that were lost along the way, and/or that still have a strong legacy in the Society's activities today?

MB: I believe that nothing has been lost, at most it has been pushed into the background. The most important initiatives certainly have a strong legacy in the Society's activities today.

MB: In your opinion, what could be considered some of the notable achievements that the ISFNR accomplished in its early years? What do you think has/have been the biggest achievement(s) of the ISFNR so far? Is there anything which, you think, sets the ISFNR apart from other scholarly organisations dealing with folk narratives?

ÉP: Some of the most notable achievements include expanding the boundaries of textual folklore research, geographical expansion of European-North American research, and establishing various networks, committees, subsections, and small professional teams simultaneously with globalisation, thus making research more comprehensive, professional, and intensive. The establishment of the Belief Narrative Network also represents the expansion of boundaries towards religion and the world of beliefs.

MB: How do you envision the future of folk narrative research, given the ongoing challenges in the humanities and social sciences worldwide?

ÉP: I generally see the future in this dehumanising scientific world quite darkly; I fear the complete disappearance of folkloristics: university departments and research institutes are already closing down one after another. On the other hand, it gives me hope that folklore itself does not disappear, it only transforms, appears in new forms, and this always arouses interest in research anew. It also gives me hope that folklore research, which does not bring economic or political benefits per se, is in a difficult situation only in parts of Europe and North America, while in many peripheral areas of Europe and on other continents, “traditional” folklore and research using classical methods live and flourish alongside new forms.

MB: If you were to send a message across to folklorists around the world, what would it be?

ÉP: Don't give up on the humanities, persevere, maybe our grandchildren will live in a more humane era and will need our traditions!

Éva Pócs



Biography

Éva Pócs (born 27 June 1936) is Professor Emerita of European Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Pécs, Hungary. Besides several decades of experience in academia, she has also worked in the museum. Her areas of expertise include folk belief, vernacular religion, witchcraft, demonology, possession, and belief narratives in Central and Eastern Europe. She has collaborated across various large-scale research projects, including the *Magyar Néprajzi Atlasz* [*Atlas of Hungarian Ethnography*], the *Népi Gyógyászati Archívum* [*Archive of Folk Medicine*], the *Magyar Néphit Topográfiaja* [*Topography of Hungarian Folk Belief*], and long-term interdisciplinary projects on early modern Hungarian witchcraft and demonology. Her publications, including *Fairies and Witches at the Boundary of South-Eastern and Central Europe* (1989), *Between the Living and the Dead* (1999), and multiple edited volumes on magic, charms, possession, and vernacular religion, have had a lasting influence on the study of folk religion and belief traditions in Europe. She served as the President (1988–2006) of the Folklore Section of the Hungarian Ethnographical Society. She also headed the Folk Belief Department at HAS Institute of Ethnography

from 1990 until 2002. She is the founder of the yearbook *Studia Ethnologica Hungarica* of the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Pécs, and served as its series editor from 2000 until 2008. She is a founding member of the ISFNR Committee on Charms, Charmers and Charming. In 2004, she received the prestigious Herder Prize. From 2009, she has been an honorary member of the ISFNR. She has served on numerous editorial boards and as editor or co-editor of various collected volumes and special issues. Some of her major publications are listed below.

Major Publications by Éva Pócs

- 1989 *Fairies and Witches at the Boundary of South-Eastern and Central Europe*. FF Communications 243. Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica.
- 1999 *Between the Living and the Dead: A Perspective on Witches and Seers in the Early Modern Age*. Budapest: Central European University Press.
- 2002 *Magyar néphit Közép- és Kelet-Európa határán. (Válogatott tanulmányok I.)* [Hungarian Folk Belief on the Border of Central and Eastern Europe. Selected Studies I.] Budapest: L'Harmattan.
- 2004 "Curse, Maleficium, Divination: Witchcraft on the Borderline of Religion and Magic". In *Beyond the Witch Trials 2. Popular Magic in Modern Europe*. Eds. Willem de Blécourt & Owen Davies. Manchester University Press, 174–190.
- 2004 "Evil Eye in Hungary: Belief, Ritual, Incantation". In *Charms and Charming in Europe*. Ed. Jonathan Roper. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 205–227.
- 2005 "Possession Phenomena, Possession-systems: Some East-Central European Examples". In *Communicating with the Spirits. (Demons, Spirits, Witches I.)*. Eds. Gábor Klaniczay & Éva Pócs. Budapest & New York: CEU Press, 84–154.
- 2005 "Weather Magic in the Early Modern Period as Reflected in the Minutes of Witchcraft Trials". In *The Role of Magic in the Past. Learned and Popular Magic, Popular Beliefs and Diversity of Attitudes*. Ed. Blanka Szeghyová. Bratislava: Pro Historia Society, 86–100.
- 2008 "Szőkefalva/Seuca: ein neuer Wallfahrtsort von neuer Bedeutung". In *Feste, Feiern, Rituale im östlichen Europa. Studien zur sozialistischen und*

- postsozialistischen Festkultur*. Ed. Klaus Roth. *Freiburger Sozialanthropologische Studien* 21. Vienna: LIT Verlag, 311–329.
- 2009 “Miracles and Impossibilities in Magic Folk Poetry”. In *Charms, Charmers and Charming. International Research on Verbal Magic*. Ed. Jonathan Roper. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 327–353.
- 2009 “Tündéres and the Order of St Ilona or, Did the Hungarians Have Fairy magicians?” In *Folk Religion and Folk Belief in Central-Eastern Europe*. Guest ed. Éva Pócs. *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* 54, no. 2: 379–396.
- 2010 “Social Tensions, Political Changes and Divine Intervention: Visions and Apparitions in Eastern Hungarian Communities in Our Age”. In *Religion and Boundaries: Studies from the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Turkey*. Ed. Galia Valtchinova. Istanbul: The Isis press, 195–221.
- 2011 “Nature and Culture – ‘The Raw and the Cooked’: Shape-shifting and Double Beings in Central and Eastern European Folklore.” In *Tierverwandlungen. Codierungen und Diskurse*. Eds. Willem de Blécourt & Christa Agnes Tuczay. Vienna: Francke Verlag, 99–134.
- 2012 “‘We, Too, Have Seen a Great Miracle’: Conversations and Narratives on the Supernatural among Hungarian-speaking Catholics in a Romanian Village”. In *Vernacular Religion in Everyday Life*. Eds. Marion Bowman & Ülo Valk. London: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 246–280.
- 2013 “Church Benedictions and Popular Charms in Hungary”. In *The power of words: Studies on Charms and Charming in Europe*. Eds. James Kapaló, Éva Pócs & William Ryan. Budapest & New York: CEU Press, 165–197.
- 2014 *Ráolvasások B. Gyűjtemény a legújabb korból (1851–2012)* [Verbal Charms B. Collection from the Modern Age (1851–2012)]. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó.
- 2017 “Fairies: Small Gods, Small Demons. Remnants of an Archaic Fairy Cult in Central and South-Eastern Europe”. In *Fairies, Demons, and Nature Spirits: Small Gods at the Margins of Christendom*. Ed. Michael Ostling. Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillans, 255–276.
- 2017 “Shamanism or Witchcraft? The *Táltos* before the Tribunal”. In *Witchcraft and Demonology in Hungary and Transylvania*. Eds. Gábor Klaniczay & Éva

- Pócs. *Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillans, 221–289.
- 2017 *Witchcraft and Demonology in Hungary and Transylvania*. Eds. Gábor Klaniczay & Éva Pócs. *Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic*. Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillans.
- 2018 *Vernacular religion on the Boundary of Eastern and Western Christianity: Continuity, Changes and Interactions*. Special issue. Guest ed. Éva Pócs. *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* 63, no. 1.
- 2019 *Body, Soul, Spirits and Supernatural Communication*. Ed. Éva Pócs. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- 2019 *Népi vallás és mágia Közép-Kelet-Európában (Válogatott tanulmányok II.)* [Vernacular Religion and Magic in Central-Eastern Europe. Selected Studies II.]. Budapest: L'Harmattan.
- 2019 *Present and Past in the Study of Religion and Magic*. Eds. Ágnes Hesz & Éva Pócs. *Religious Anthropological Studies in Central Eastern Europe* 7. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó.
- 2019 *The Magical and Sacred Medical World*. Ed. Éva Pócs. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- 2019 “The Sieve and the Drum in the Labyrinth of Mythological Reconstructions”. In *Present and Past in the Study of Religion and Magic*. Eds. Ágnes Hesz & Éva Pócs. *Religious Anthropological Studies in Central Eastern Europe* 7. Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 197–212.
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- 2023 “The World Tree of the Conquering Hungarians in the Light of Scholarly Illusions: Reconstruction, Construction and Deconstruction”. *Historical Studies on Central Europe* 3, no. 2: 132–176.
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Notes and Acknowledgements

This interview was conducted entirely virtually, through written exchanges, including a questionnaire and email correspondence. The questions for this interview have been prepared by Malay Bera, in consultation with Mirjam Mencej. Many thanks to Éva Pócs for kindly participating in this interview and for generously sharing her memories and photos from previous ISFNR events from her personal collections. The photos will be uploaded to the ISFNR website for archiving.

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Conference

Nature(s) in Narrative

The ISFNR Interim Conference 2026

13-16 June, Reykjavík, Iceland.



The ISFNR Interim conference in 2026 will be held in Reykjavík Iceland, June 13th to 16th. The conference will take place at the main campus of the University of Iceland, a walking distance from the vibrant city centre of Reykjavík. With nearly 24 hours of daylight, and plenty of geothermal pools to soak in, it's the perfect place to recharge on all levels. The conference is hosted by the department of Folkloristics at the University of Iceland, the Icelandic Association of Ethnology and Folklore and The Árni Magnússon

Institute for Icelandic Studies. This will be a hybrid event, so delegates will be able to participate either virtually or in person.

The conference engages broadly with the theme of nature(s) in narrative. We ask how narrative is entangled with nature in its various forms, situated in the micro and macro, the rural and urban, ranging from essentialist notions of the natural, the supernatural to non-binary assemblages of nature-culture. Subjects for discussion might include the following:

- How do notions of nature relate to narrations of identity, heritage, the national and personal, the physical and the spiritual?
- What comprehensions of “the natural” can be gleaned from storytelling, in its various cultural and social contexts, and in folk narrative research itself?
- How has our narrative vocabulary and academic terminology borrowed from and conversed with the discourses of nature?
- Does folk narrative entail a commons of sorts?
- How do environment and disparate nature-cultural assemblages shape narrative, characters, flow, style and storytelling events?
- How are human and non-human entanglements expressed, sensed, performed and reimagined in storytelling events?

- How do narrators delineate “selves” from “the other” in the living world; the natural from the “unnatural” or supernatural; the mundane from the enchanted?
- How are our conceptions of nature shaped and challenged by unusual “natural events” and climate crises, or urbanisation, technology, information disorder (fake news) and artificial intelligence?
- What are the “natures” of archives and how are they shaped by narratives?
- Do natures in narrative reveal aspects of the “natures” of narrative, its forms, functions and practice?



Further information can be found on the conference website [here](#).

We look forward to seeing you in Reykjavík!

Upcoming Conference

International Association for Comparative Mythology

The 19th IACM Annual Conference



1-5 June 2026, Edinburgh, UK

We are pleased to announce that the 19th Annual Conference of the International Association for Comparative Mythology will take place at Edinburgh Napier University from 1-5 June 2026.



The conference is organised in collaboration with School of Arts and Creative Industries of Napier University and with the support of the [Traditional Cosmology Society](#).

Although the call for papers has now closed, [registration remains open](#), and we warmly invite all interested colleagues to attend and participate in the discussions.

This year's theme, **Visualising Mythologies**, explores the role of imagery and visual media in the construction, transmission, and interpretation of myth. The programme also includes:

- A wide range of papers on comparative mythology and related fields
- A special session in memory of **Boris Oguibénine**
- Sessions dedicated to ethnographic video and experimental film
- Screenings of films by Latvian filmmaker **Andris Slapiņš**

A full list of presentations is available on the conference [website](#).

Further details, including registration and payment options, can be found [here](#).

IACM MEMBERSHIP

Finally, those of you who are not yet official members of IACM, please consider joining the association!

We look forward to welcoming you to Edinburgh this June!

Call for Papers

Visualising Mythologies in the Early Medieval North

21st Aarhus Old Norse Mythology Conference

9-10 December 2026, Edinburgh, UK



We are pleased to announce that the *Visualising Mythologies in the Medieval North* Conference will be held at the University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, on **December 9-10, 2026**.

The conference is organised by the University of Edinburgh, with the assistance of the Traditional Cosmology Society. We warmly invite scholars at all career stages to present papers and to participate in discussion.

This conference continues the tradition of the Aarhus Old Norse Mythology Conference series, bringing together interdisciplinary approaches to mythology, religion, and cultural expression in the medieval North, with particular emphasis on Old Norse, explored in relation to wider east-west cultural connections, including Celtic and Baltic contexts.

The conference explores how myth is made visible across media, practices, and environments in Old Norse, Celtic, and related northern traditions. We are interested not only in visual representations of myth, but also in how myth is imagined, enacted, visualised and experienced through objects, texts, landscapes, ritual and performance.



We especially encourage contributions that engage with interdisciplinary methods, including archaeology, anthropology, comparative mythology, manuscript studies, literary analysis, folklore and the history of religions. In-person presentations are strongly preferred. A limited number of virtual presentations may be accommodated in exceptional circumstances.

CONFERENCE TOPICS

1. VISUALISING MYTHOLOGIES

Papers investigating the role of visuality in the construction, transmission, and interpretation of myth. Possible areas of focus include:

- Visualising gods, supernatural beings and places; monsters and mythic ancestors
- Mythological cosmologies, sacred landscapes; otherworlds and their entrances/exits
- Verbal imagery, ekphrasis (e.g. skaldic descriptions of ornamented objects bearing mythological scenes); visuality in Eddic, skaldic, saga, and related textual traditions
- Material expressions of myth: picture stones, rune-stones, crosses, metalwork and textiles
- Ritual spectacle, performance, embodiment, and sensory experience
- The relationship between oral, textual, and visual traditions
- Memory, authority and visualisations of the past
- Manuscripts as visual media: mise-en-page, decoration, illustration and compilation practices

2. NORSE–CELTIC–BALTIC ENTANGLEMENTS

We invite papers exploring connections, exchanges, and comparisons between Old Norse, Celtic, and Baltic traditions, particularly in the Viking Age and early medieval North Atlantic and Baltic regions. We especially encourage contributions that engage with archaeological, material, and landscape-based evidence alongside textual and comparative approaches.

- Shared or adapted mythological motifs and narrative structures
- Visual and material culture across the Irish Sea and the Baltic Sea region
- Archaeological evidence for religious practice, belief, and ritual
- Landscapes of myth and cult: sacred sites, place-names and spatial practices
- Religious interaction, hybridity, and transformation
- Myth, migration and cultural contact zones
- Norse, Gaelic and Insular Christian intersections
- Burial practices, grave goods, depositional contexts and the archaeology of belief

3. CURRENT RESEARCH IN NORTHERN MYTHOLOGY

We welcome papers on any aspect of visual mythology, religion, folklore, archaeology, manuscript culture, and comparative traditions relating to Scandinavia and the medieval North.

4. SPECIAL SESSION / ROUNDTABLE: METHODS AND MEDIA

How do we identify and interpret “myth” in visual and material evidence?

This session invites reflections on methodology, including:

- Interpreting imagery and visual evidence
- Comparative and interdisciplinary approaches

Submissions for this session will be reviewed directly by the panel organisers.

ABSTRACTS

Please submit an abstract of no more than **300 words by June 15, 2026**, to Triin Laidoner at: tradcossoc@gmail.com

CONFERENCE FORMAT

Each speaker will be allotted a **30-minute slot** (20 minutes presentation + 10 minutes discussion). The language of the conference is English.

We look forward to welcoming you in Edinburgh!

Prof. Louise Milne
Dr. Alan Macniven
Dr. Triin Laidoner
Dr. Simon Nygaard
Dr. Frog

Call for Book Proposals

SIEF Series in Ethnology and Folklore

New Directions in the Study of Everyday Life, Past and Present

Anthony Bak Buccitelli

Following its formal launch at the SIEF 2025 Congress in Aberdeen, the SIEF Series in Ethnology and Folklore – *New Directions in the Study of Everyday Life, Past and Present* – is now actively seeking proposals for monographs and coherently edited volumes.

Co-edited by Hande Birkalan-Gedik (Goethe University Frankfurt) and Anthony Bak Buccitelli (Pennsylvania State University) and published by Berghahn Books, the rigorously peer-reviewed series brings together work from ethnology and folklore studies – fields distinct in their historical formations but united by a shared concern with the cultural and historical study of everyday life. The series welcomes scholarship that pushes the intellectual or ethnographic boundaries of contemporary or historical research, broadly defined, as well as work that addresses pressing everyday issues of global concern through exemplary ethnographic study.

The series is supported by an international editorial board: Marcin Brocki (Jagiellonian University), Peter Jan Margry (University of Amsterdam), Solimar Otero (Indiana University), David Shankland (Royal Anthropological Institute), and Ju Xi (Beijing Normal University).

We particularly welcome proposals from across SIEF's working groups and from colleagues whose research engages everyday life in its full breadth – from heritage, ritual, and material culture to digital practice, performance, foodways, community, and beyond. Both single-authored monographs and tightly themed edited volumes are within scope.

Inquiries about the fit of a potential project may be directed to the co-editors:

- Hande Birkalan-Gedik – birkalan-gedik@em.uni-frankfurt.de
- Anthony Bak Buccitelli – abb20@psu.edu

Formal proposals should be sent to Berghahn Books at:

editorialus@berghahnbooks.com

following the publisher's submission guidelines, available at berghahnbooks.com.

If you have a manuscript in development, or know of colleagues whose work would suit the series, we warmly encourage you to be in touch.

Everyday Life in Short Folklore Forms

5-7 May 2026, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Sara Vukotić, ZRC SAZU (Institute of Slovenian Ethnology)

[Conference Program](#)

[Book of Abstracts](#)

From 5 to 7 May 2026, the international conference *Everyday Life in Short Folklore Forms* took place in Ljubljana at the Gosposka Hall. The conference was organised as one of the concluding activities of the project *Language, Culture, and Values: The Economic Image of Everyday Life in Slovenian Folklore Patterns* (ARIS J6-50197), led by Associate Professor Saša Babič and funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency.

Much like the project itself, the conference approached folklore as one of the key cultural codes of everyday life. The diverse and highly engaging contributions explored what folklore can reveal about everyday life from both diachronic and synchronic perspectives, how language and culture intertwine, and how different folklore forms establish connections between the past, present, and future. As theorists of language and culture such as Bakhtin and Kristeva have emphasised, nothing in culture ever truly disappears; rather, it is continuously transformed, layered with new meanings, and re-established through networks of references and interconnections.

The conference was distinctly interdisciplinary and international in character. Researchers approached the expression of different domains of everyday life in folklore forms through a variety of methodological approaches, theoretical frameworks, and interpretative perspectives. Participants came from Slovenia, Lithuania, Croatia, Hungary, Austria, Ireland, Serbia, Finland, Estonia, Greece, and the United States.

Special attention was devoted both to traditional short folklore forms, such as proverbs and riddles, primarily analysed through nineteenth- and twentieth-century folklore collections, and to contemporary folklore forms and their transformations within new socio-cultural contexts. The presentations addressed modern situational sayings, family guestbooks, public inscriptions and signs related to dogs, fire

commands, secret language games, memes, and various processes of the remediation of folklore forms. Particular interest was also dedicated to questions of creativity, the adaptation of traditional forms to contemporary everyday life, and new ways in which these forms circulate and acquire meaning.

Thematically, the conference was exceptionally rich and wide-ranging. Participants addressed various domains of everyday life, including representations of bribery, material well-being, moral values, advertising, time, family relations, gender roles, and different modes of communication between social groups, as well as the influence of foreign languages and expressions on everyday discourse, diligence, self-care, and the emotional and cognitive dimensions of contemporary everyday life, including stress and fear.

We were especially proud to host two plenary lectures. On the first day, Wolfgang Mieder (University of Vermont, USA) delivered a lecture entitled “The Internet Never Forgets”: The Futuristic Worldview of Modern American Proverbs. He emphasised that proverbs are universal, omnipresent, and capable of commenting on all aspects of life. Drawing on material from *The Dictionary of Modern Proverbs* (Mieder, Shapiro, Doyle 2012), he demonstrated how proverbs are important not only for understanding the past and present, but also for conceptualising the future. This was illustrated through examples such as “Children are our future”, “The future is not what it used to be”, “The future is a moving target”, “Dreams can’t come true unless you wake up and go to work”, and “If you can dream it, you can do it”.

On the second day, Dorothy Noyes (Ohio State University, USA) delivered the plenary lecture From “Is” to “Ought” and Back Again: Proverb and Maxim in an Economy of Abundance. Her lecture focused primarily on the position and role of proverbs in contemporary everyday life, highlighting how proverbs today increasingly resemble maxims, signalling an important epistemological shift: from a collective attempt to explain the world toward an emphasis on the role and agency of the individual within it. She also demonstrated how traditional proverbs are being transformed, minimised, and condensed into brief statements such as “It is what it is”.

The first day of the conference concluded with a particularly engaging discussion moderated by Associate Professor Saša Babič with Wolfgang Mieder and Dorothy Noyes. They reflected on their beginnings in folkloristics, the importance of continually asking what folklore forms mean today, why certain patterns keep recurring, and how traditional forms change, transform, and acquire new meanings within contemporary social contexts.

The second day concluded with a guided tour of Ljubljana led by Urban Logar, who introduced participants to many hidden corners of the city centre and the layered traditions and stories that continue to shape the cultural memory of the city.



Epic Geography Symposium

20-21 March 2026, Bloomington, Indiana, USA

Ben Storsved, Indiana University

On Friday, March 20th and Saturday, March 21st, 2026, scholars of epic and saga studies convened in Bloomington, Indiana, USA for the Epic Geography Symposium. Hosted by the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology at Indiana University, the Symposium featured thirty presentations arranged into eight panels held over the course of two days. These presentations brought in a crowd of professors, students, and community members from Bloomington who joined in the lively discussions that followed each panel and continued into the catered lunches and dinners.



Epic Geography Symposium presenters. March 21st.

From left to right: John D. Niles, Carole Newlands, Marie-Luise Theuerkauf, Aida Vidan, Stephen Mitchell, Rebecca Manring, Daniel Prior, Frog, Amalia Rubin, Christopher Atwood, Margaret Beissinger, Dwight Reynolds, Ben Storsved, Dorian Jurić, Connor Toole, Gísli Sigurðsson, Nora Kauffeldt, Jo Ann Cavallo, Jonathan Ready, Mark Bender, and Narges Nematollahi. Photo: Wuerxiya.

Not pictured: Twalha Abbass, Cassidy Croci, John W. Johnson, Emily Lethbridge, Natasha Mikles, Gregory Schrempp, and Nataliya Yanchevskaya.

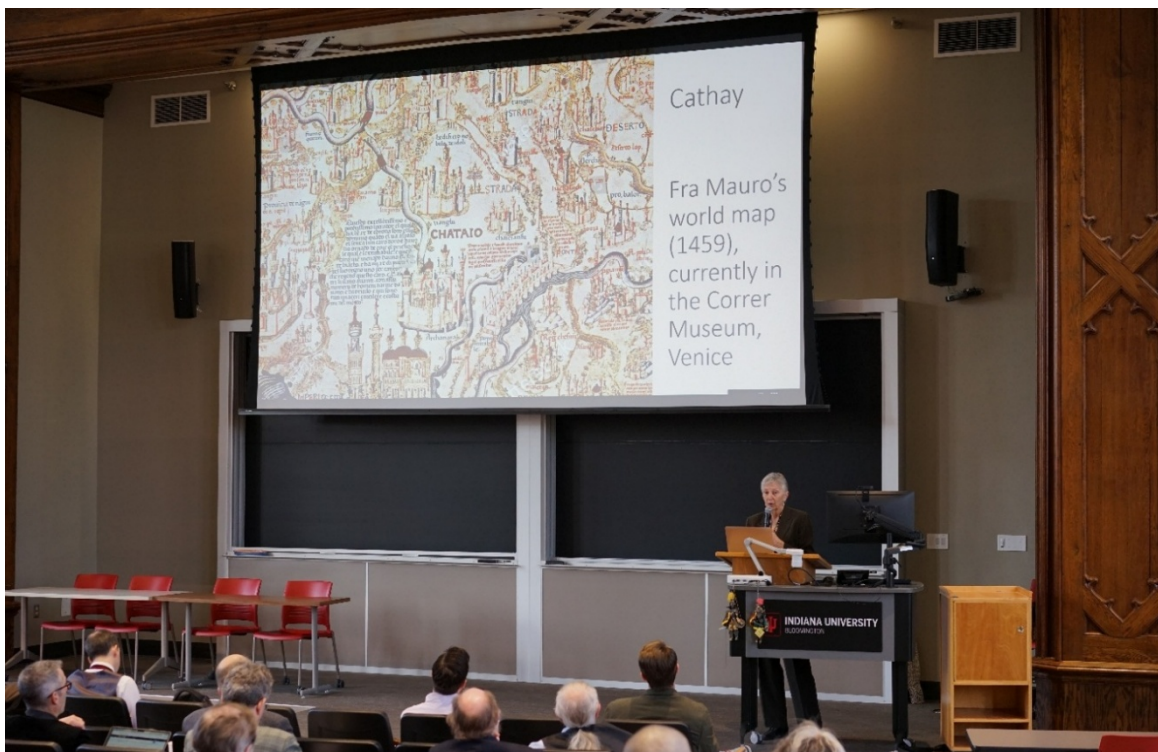
The presenters, including active faculty, emeriti professors, postdoctoral researchers, and PhD students, were invited to participate based on their work on various epic and saga traditions from around the world. Among the topics suggested by the symposium invitation were toponymic practices, factual versus legendary geography, the influence of an epic singer's geographical knowledge, the role of borderlands and other geographical features on performances of epics, ecological and other forms of knowledge transmitted in oral traditions, and the reception of epic geography among traditional, contemporary, and academic audiences.

Presenters covered a wide variety of regions in their presentations on epic and saga traditions throughout history. The region most strongly represented was Scandinavia and the broader Germanic world, with presentations from Dr. Cassidy Croci (University of Tübingen), Dr. Emily Lethbridge, (Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies), Nora Kauffeldt (University of Basel & Humboldt Universität zu Berlin), Dr. Stephen Mitchell (Harvard University), and Dr. Gísli Sigurðsson (Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies). Topics of particular interest in these presentations included issues of reconstructing lived encounters with the landscape through oral and written sources, especially the Icelandic *Landnámabók*, the relationship between memory, oral tradition, and ecology, and issues of visualizing textual data about landscapes with mapping technology.



Audience members watch a presentation from Panel 4, March 20th. Photo: Wuerxiya.

Marie-Louise Theuerkauf (Harvard University) and Connor Toole (Indiana University) both presented on the Irish *Dindshenchas* tradition, describing its intertextual relationship to Irish heroic sagas and other classical texts as well as its reception in contemporary Irish heritage settings. Looking to the large body of oral epics and heroic songs collected in the Balkan region, Dr. Aida Vidan (Tufts University) and Dr. Margaret Beissinger (Princeton University) attended to representations of gendered, racialized, and cultural differences. Dr. Dorian Jurić (Indiana University) presented his early findings on the ways in which the ideolects of South Slavic epic singers can reveal the influence of their geographical knowledge on song composition based on a large number of singer interviews in the Milman Parry Collection. Rounding out presentations on traditions from Southern Europe, Dr. Jo Ann Cavallo (Columbia University) described how far-off locations, from China to the Moon, were represented in multimedia Italian folk epics. Dr. Jonathan Burgess (University of Toronto), Dr. Carole Newlands (University of Colorado), and Dr. Jonathan Ready (University of Michigan) each discussed insights into the poetics of geography in Homeric and other Greek and Latin epic texts, while Dr. John D. Niles (University of California and University of Wisconsin) explored how archaeology can reveal broader cultural connections in *Beowulf* and other Old English epic poetry.



Dr. Jo Ann Cavallo gives her presentation Reimagining the World: Global Geography from Italian Renaissance Epics to Folk Performance Traditions during Panel 5, March 21st. Photo: Wuerxiya.

Another region that received much attention at the Symposium was Tibet. In their presentations on the Tibetan *Gesar* epic tradition, Amalia Rubin (University of Leeds), Dr. Timothy Thurston (University of Leeds), and Dr. Natasha Mikles (Texas State University) discussed how the epic is received and understood within contemporary Tibet, in modern China, and in Western esoteric traditions of the 20th century, respectively. As Dr. Thurston was unable to attend the event due to personal circumstances, his paper was presented by Rubin, his PhD advisee. Dr. Christopher Atwood (University of Pennsylvania), Dr. Narges Nematollahi (Indiana University), and Ben Storsved (Indiana University) also discussed their research on epics from Inner Asia, as they explored the boundaries between earthly and fantastical geographies in Mongolian, Persian, and Kyrgyz traditions, respectively.

Scholars studying texts from Africa included Twalha Abbass (Indiana University), Dr. Dwight Reynolds (University of California, Santa Barbara), and Dr. John W. Johnson (Indiana University). Abbass and Johnson discussed how the natural world and ecological knowledge are viewed and preserved in oral epics from Eastern and Western Africa, respectively, while Reynolds described the geography of a route in the Egyptian epic *Sīrat Banī Hilāl* and its relation to the broader Arabic textual tradition. Dr. Rebecca Manring (Indiana University) and Dr. Nataliya Yanchevskaya (Princeton University) each addressed traditions from the Indian subcontinent, with the former describing the route taken in Rūparāma Cakravartī's *Dharma-maṅgala*, and the latter presenting a geographical survey of the realms of the dead in the *Mahābhārata*.

Along with these regionally-specific presentations, several scholars took a comparative approach to their research on epic geography. Dr. Mark Bender (Ohio State University) utilized approaches from Indigenous Studies in his comparison of ecologies in Yi and Maya epic texts. Frog (University of Helsinki) used texts from northern Europe to introduce new ideas in the study of epic geography, namely “otherworlding” as it relates to linguistic encoding and the narrative entanglement of knowledge. Finally, Dr. Daniel Prior (Miami University) recommended a structural outline for the study of epic geography in a general sense, a framework that expands outward from the realm of subsistence to the ethno-territorial and political realms, to the realm of cosmic concerns in epic poetry. An edited volume based on the symposium proceedings is currently being planned for publication.

The Epic Geography Symposium was conceived of and co-organized by Dr. Dorian Jurić and Ben Storsved. The organizing team also included Indiana University graduate students Madi Becker, Twalha Abbass, and Connor Toole, who helped to plan the symposium, and graduate students Qiaoyun (Jeolin) Hu, Gul E Zahra, and Wuerxiya, along with undergraduate student Thomas Koehline, who assisted in day-of operations. The organizers of the Epic Geography Symposium are grateful for the enthusiastic participation of all presenters and audience members, as well as the

generous support from the faculty and staff of the Indiana University Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology.



Epic Geography Symposium Organizing Team. March 20th.

From left to right: Qiaoyun (Jeolin) Hu, Twalha Abbass, Gul E Zahra, Thomas Koehnline, Dorian Jurić, Ben Storsved, Madi Becker, Connor Toole, and Wuerxiya.

Emerging Folklorists (EF)

Working Group Coordinators:

- Simona Kuntarič Zupanc, University of Ljubljana (simona.kuntariczupanc@ff.uni-lj.si)
- Malay Bera, University of Tartu (malay.bera@ut.ee)

We are pleased to announce the establishment of the ISFNR Working Group, Emerging Folklorists (EF). The group is open to researchers at the early stages of their academic career, including MA students, PhD candidates, postdoctoral researchers, and independent scholars in folklore and related fields.

The EF seeks to encourage collaboration, exchange of ideas, and professional development among emerging folklorists. Through regular meetings, workshops, and informal discussions, the working group will provide opportunities for participants to present ongoing research, receive feedback, and build international scholarly networks. Through its various initiatives, the group will strengthen the visibility and participation of early-career scholars in ISFNR activities.

As part of closer collaboration between the ISFNR and the International Conference of Young Folklorists (YOFO)¹ in the future, the EF will play a key role in organising future YOFO conferences. The YOFO conferences, which have offered a forum for intellectual exchange for young folklorists in the Baltic and Nordic region for over a decade, will now expand in geographical scope under the umbrella of the ISFNR and its Working Group, Emerging Folklorists (EF), with continued support from and in close collaboration with its previous organisers.

The first introductory meeting of the working group will take place at the ISFNR Interim conference in Reykjavík (June 2026), and further meetings will be held online. All interested participants are warmly invited to join. For the exact date, time and venue of the first meeting in Reykjavík, please check the conference programme.

To become a member of the working group and participate in its future activities, please send an expression of interest including your name, email address,

¹ The first YOFO conference was organised by the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu in 2011, and has expanded ever since, being periodically held in Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, and soon to be held in Slovenia.

educational background, designation and current affiliation (if any) to the coordinators. We look forward to welcoming you in Reykjavík and/or future meetings online!

Narrative Culture

Edited by Sheila Bock (University of Nevada, Las Vegas)

Elo-Hanna Seljamaa (University of Tartu, Estonia)

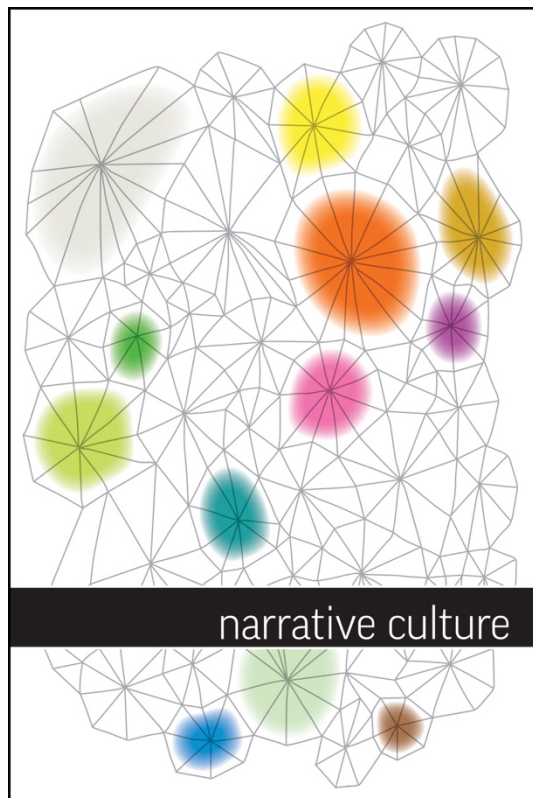
Wayne University Press

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Published 2 times per year

Narrative Culture welcomes submissions



As editors of *Narrative Culture*, we would like to remind all ISFNR members and working groups about this peer-reviewed journal affiliated with the ISFNR.

Established in 2014, the journal is published by Wayne State University Press, home to many important publications in folklore studies and related fields. With an interdisciplinary and international scope, *Narrative Culture* claims narrative and narration as fundamental aspects of the human condition throughout history and across space. We invite contributions that document, discuss and theorise narrative culture as it is lived and manifested in oral and written texts, images, customs, rituals, drama, dance, music, three-dimensional art, and more. Falling outside the scope of this journal

is research focused on authored literary works.

Narrative Culture is published twice a year, in print and online. The journal is indexed by Scopus, MLA International Bibliography (EBSCO), erih+ (European Reference

Index for the Humanities and Social Sciences), Project MUSE, and Web of Science – Emerging Sources Citation Index, among others.

Narrative Culture welcomes article [submissions](#) and proposals for special issues on a rolling basis. Please see the journal website for guidelines and feel free to contact us with any questions you may have: (<https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/narrative/>)

Colleagues attending the 2026 interim ISFNR conference in Reykjavík are invited to a lunchtime event on Sunday 14 June at 13:15-14:15. Drop in if you would like to learn more about the focus and mission of the journal, what to consider when submitting, and what happens after you submit your work. You can also receive feedback on specific ideas for individual articles or special issues. Students, early career scholars, and anyone interested in publishing their work in *Narrative Culture* are encouraged to attend!

NARRATIVE CULTURE IS AFFILIATED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR FOLK NARRATIVE RESEARCH (ISFNR).

ISFNR MEMBERS RECEIVE **40%** OFF SUBSCRIPTIONS TO NARRATIVE CULTURE. PLEASE USE DISCOUNT CODE **ISFNR** TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OFFER.



Narrative Culture is available to institutional subscribers through Project MUSE and JSTOR.

Narrative Culture co-editors

Sheila Bock (sheila.bock@unlv.edu)

Elo-Hanna Seljamaa (elo-hanna.seljamaa@ut.ee)

New Book

Scottish Witchcraft Narratives and Tracts

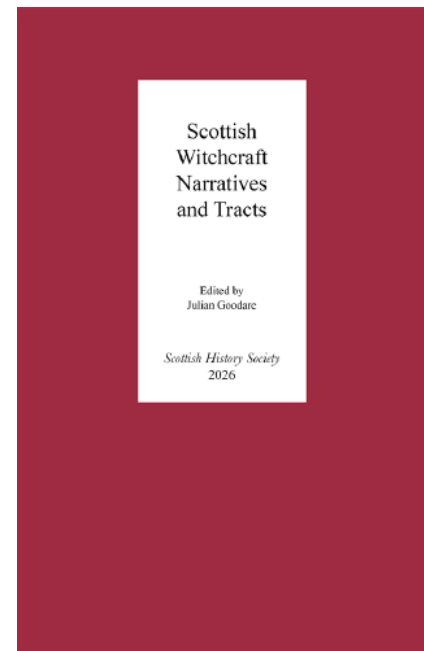
Scottish History Society 6th series, vol. 22. Fife: Scottish History Society (Boydell & Brewer), 2026, 392 pages.

ISBN: 978-0-906245-52-1

Julian Goodare (ed.), Emeritus Professor of History, University of Edinburgh

This book is a scholarly edition of primary sources for witch-hunting and demonic possession in Scotland. It contains narratives of remarkable witchcraft prosecutions, and tracts expounding witchcraft theory.

The narratives provide the intense emotional drama, eye-catching colour and nightmarish horror that made witchcraft such a compelling idea. The accused witches' own voices are sometimes heard, under the harrowing circumstances of interrogation under torture. Meanwhile, educated ministers and lawyers develop their theoretical ideas about witches and the Devil. Not every theorist agrees with the prosecutions, and doubts arise that would eventually lead witch-hunting to lose its credibility. The book's most detailed narrative concerns the Bargarran witches of 1697, in which seven witches were executed for the demonic possession of the 11-year-old Christian Shaw. The book shows how this was connected with the sensational witchcraft panic in 1692 at Salem, Massachusetts.



Julian Goodare is Emeritus Professor of History, University of Edinburgh. His books include *The European With-Hunt* (London, 2016), and he has edited three books about witchcraft in Scotland. He is Director of the online Survey [Scottish Witchcraft](#).

<https://boydellandbrewer.com/book/scottish-witchcraft-narratives-and-tracts-9780906245521/?v=7885444af42e>

New Book

The Exeter Companion to Changeling Lore *The West Eurasian and Mediterranean Tradition*

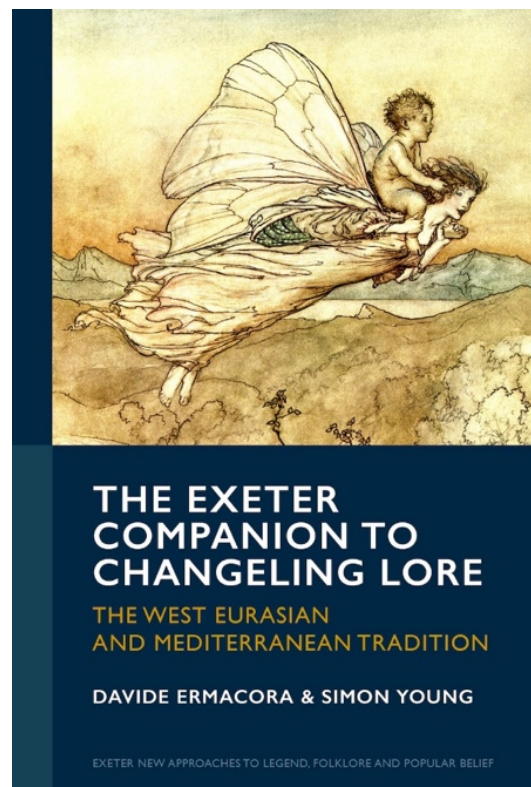
Exeter New Approaches to Legend, Folklore and Popular Belief, Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2026, 320 pages.

Davide Ermacora, University of Turin, and Simon Young, University of Virginia (CET, Siena), eds.

For centuries, people across Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East believed that supernatural beings—fairies, jinn, trolls, or demons—could steal a human child and leave a lookalike in its place. These stories offer fascinating insights into how different cultures made sense of disability, illness, and unexplained transformations.

The Exeter Companion to Changeling Lore is the first multi-author volume dedicated to changelings and the most comprehensive study of these beliefs across West Eurasia and the Mediterranean. Bringing together leading historians, literary scholars, and folklorists, it considers changeling legends from Britain to Armenia and from the Arctic Circle to the Maghreb. Individual chapters uncover new archival material in Hungary, previously undocumented folklore motifs in Ireland, and changeling traditions in countries where they had gone unnoticed—such as Italy and Spain. The book even examines how changeling beliefs have persisted into modern UFO-lore.

Challenging long-held assumptions, this volume overturns the idea that changeling beliefs are to be found in all corners of the globe and that no such tales predate the medieval period. Instead, it reveals that the vast majority of changeling accounts belong to a distinct West Eurasian-Mediterranean tradition, with records



stretching back to ancient Greece and Rome. This book is essential reading for folklorists, historians, anthropologists, disability studies and criminal studies scholars, and anyone fascinated by myths, legends, and the supernatural. It concludes with a revised list of changeling motifs, providing an invaluable resource for future research.

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JEAN-CLAUDE SCHMITT

*** REVIEWS ***

Now the first resort for the changeling lore of western Eurasia and the Mediterranean, this brilliantly fascinating (and handsomely produced) volume transforms the subject with an integrated survey of the constituent regions and their traditions, hitherto studied largely in isolation. Sixteen locally-focused essays are oriented by a lucid, systematic and authoritative introduction.

Daniel Ogden, Professor of Ancient History, University of Exeter

This volume is a major contribution to comparative folkloristics and the study of traditional societies, explored through belief narratives rooted in everyday life. Its depth and scope illuminate changeling lore once disturbingly real, revealing fragile boundaries between humans and the supernatural, and the fears haunting families and childhood across cultures.

Ülo Valk, Professor of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu

The changeling tradition may seem a niche area of scholarly study, but this rich and rewarding collection of essays demonstrates how it provides valuable insights regarding the human condition across time. Expertly edited and packed with original insights, this book sets the agenda for future research on the subject.

Owen Davies, Professor of Social History, University of Hertfordshire

The Exeter Companion to Changeling Lore offers an engaging and wonderfully readable exploration of Changelings. Edited by Davide Ermacora and Simon Young, this anthology of meticulously researched essays traces changeling beliefs, narratives, and practices from medieval Iceland, Scandinavia, Ireland and the British Isles to the Mediterranean, Armenia, Iran, and the Arab world. The contributors, all well-known folklorists and historical researchers, examine everything from changeling-related murders to nineteenth-century baby-swap stories, synthesizing a wide range of

scholarship and providing a much-needed corrective to the otherwise fragmented state of changeling studies.

Timothy R. Tangherlini, Professor of Scandinavian Folklore, University of California, Berkeley

This is the most comprehensive and up-to-date publication to date on one of the most important and celebrated (and often potentially tragic) of folkloric motifs. It covers the whole range of that in both time and space, in seventeen separate contributions of uniformly high standard. Moreover, unlike many collections of work by different authors on a theme, it makes a harmonious and unified whole, a real advance in knowledge.

Ronald Hutton, Professor of History, University of Bristol

New Book

Le Catalogue raisonné du conte populaire français en Amérique du Nord (Canada et États-Unis)

Les contes d'animaux

Jointly published by:

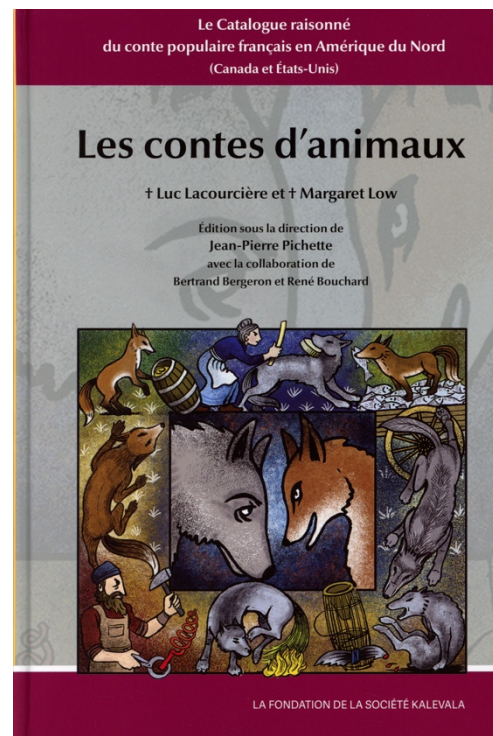
North America: Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2025, 780 pages

Europe: FF Communications 329, Helsinki: Kalevala Society Foundation, 2025, 770 pages

†Luc Lacourcière and †Margaret Low, edited by Jean-Pierre Pichette in collaboration with Bertrand Bergeron and René Bouchard

The Critical Catalogue of French Folk Tales in North America presents a synthesis of a vibrant oral tradition with four hundred years of history, following the Aarne-Thompson-Uther (ATU) international classification system. Luc Lacourcière traced the origin of *Le Catalogue raisonné* to his meeting in Paris with the great master of French folktales, Paul Delarue, whose exchanges and example proved decisive. Adopting his method, Lacourcière presents, for each tale or ATU type, a representative narrative, a general breakdown of the type into its fundamental elements and motifs, a list and detailed analysis of its geographically referenced versions, and a commentary on all versions and their relationships with other traditions, especially those of France.

This volume is devoted to animal tales, which have inspired fabulists for centuries. The volume is based on the analysis of roughly 650 stories collected across Canada from coast to coast and in neighbouring U.S. states as far as Missouri and



Louisiana. Among these, the struggle between the Wolf and the Fox, with its many deceptions, stands out. Striking discoveries in the work include an oral Acadian branch of the medieval animal epic *Roman de Renart* and clear African influence in the Franco-Louisianian tradition. Readers of any background or interest will also find the historical introduction and extensive bibliography of *Le Catalogue raisonné* essential resources for exploring this distinctive Francophone heritage.

With the valuable collaboration of the devoted admirers of Luc Lacourcière's work, ethnologists Bertrand Bergeron and René Bouchard, Jean-Pierre Pichette undertook the crucial work of updating of the original manuscript. They now present the long-awaited posthumous edition of the first volume of *Le Catalogue raisonné du conte populaire français en Amérique du Nord*, the life's work of their mentor and friend.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.pulaval.com/livres/le-catalogue-raisonne-du-conte-populaire-francais-en-amerique-du-nord-canada-et-etats-unis-les-contes-d-animaux>
<https://www.folklorefellows.fi/ffc-329/>

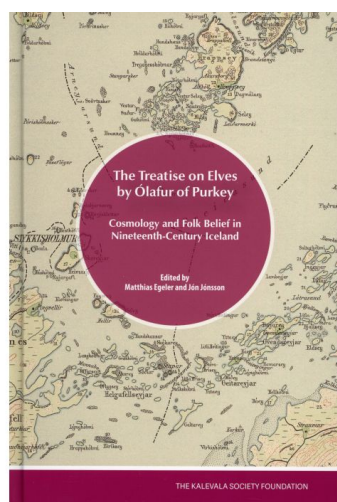
New Book

The Treatise on Elves by Ólafur of Purkey Cosmology and Folk Belief in Nineteenth-Century Iceland

FF Communications 330, Helsinki: The Kalevala Society Foundation, 2026, 323 pages.

ISBN 978-952-9534-14-2

Edited and translated by Matthias Egeler, Goethe-University, Frankfurt am Main, and Jón Jónsson, University of Iceland in Strandir / The Folklore Institute



In the years around 1830, the Icelandic farmer, fisherman, and scribe Ólafur Sveinsson (1761–1845) set out to prove the existence of the ‘hidden people’ (*huldufólk*) or ‘elves’ (*álfar*), which he experienced as an everyday part of his life as a man working the land and the sea. In order to achieve his aim, he collected memorates, traditional tales, poems, and literary references, focusing on his extended family, neighbours, and acquaintances, especially in the fjord of Breiðafjörður in Western Iceland. In doing so, he compiled an ethnography of local traditions about elves, which stands out through its remarkable richness of detail and an attention to context that makes it a testimony not only to Ólafur’s personal beliefs,

but also to attitudes towards the ‘hidden people’ in his wider local community. The resulting *Treatise on Elves* is perhaps the single most detailed account of living folk belief as seen from the inside perspective of a tradition bearer and believer to survive from the whole of pre-industrial Europe.

This book presents the first edition and translation of Ólafur Sveinsson’s treatise on elves that makes its text accessible in the way how it was laid out by Ólafur himself. The text is accompanied by an analysis of its social, literary, and economic context that shows the rich contributions which Ólafur’s unique testimony can make to our understanding of the workings of pre-industrial folk belief in a sparsely settled North Atlantic landscape.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.folklorefellows.fi/ffc-330/>

New Book

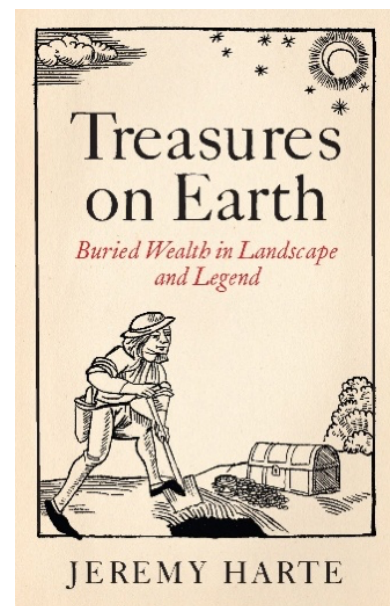
Treasures of Earth

Buried Wealth in Landscape and Legend

London: Reaktion Books, 2026, 296 pages

Jeremy Harte, Independent Writer

From haunted barrows to ruined castles, Britain's landscape is rich with tales of hidden treasure – stories not just of gold, but of ghosts, curses, and forbidden knowledge. *Treasures on Earth* gathers hundreds of these traditions for the first time, showing how folklore, shaped by local memory and longing, has imagined wealth not merely as currency, but as power, danger, and loss. These legends tell of dragons, demons, and seekers armed with spells, but also of real hopes stirred by poverty, war, and the mysteries of place. Through vivid storytelling and careful insight, this book reveals how treasure lore carries the emotional weight of history. In the end, these are stories not just about what is buried, but about why we still yearn to uncover it.



Jeremy Harte is a folklorist inspired by landscape and stories of encounters with other worlds. He is the author of *Cloven Country: The Devil and the English Landscape* and *Travellers through Time: A Gypsy History*, both published by Reaktion Books.

“Harte is one of Britain’s leading folklorists, and probably the most perceptive and humane, as well as erudite. All these virtues are displayed to the full in this book, which is a treat for readers at any level of knowledge.”

– **Ronald Hutton, author of *The Witch***

“*Treasures on Earth*, by Harte, is an evocative portrait of the landscapes inhabited by our forebears. . . . [A] beguiling survey.”

– *The Mail on Sunday*

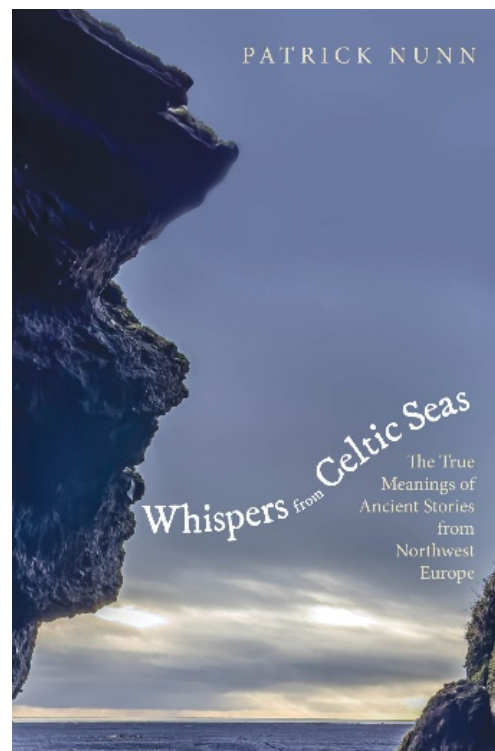
New Book

Whispers from Celtic Seas *The True Meanings of Ancient Stories from Northwest Europe*

London: Reaktion Books, 2026, 320 pages

Patrick Nunn, University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia

What if the legends of submerged cities, land-making witches, and sea-crossing bishops are not mere inventions but echoes of real events? *Whispers from Celtic Seas* revisits coastal traditions from the Celtic fringes of northwest Europe, showing how they preserve memories of dramatic environmental change – floods, land loss, and shifting shorelines – carried forward through oral storytelling for generations. Drawing on cutting-edge geological and archaeological research, this book recasts these tales not as fantasy but as historical testimony grounded in lived experience. With clarity and insight, it also brings to life the tellers and collectors of these stories, tracing how oral knowledge endured even as literacy spread. It is a compelling invitation to listen again to old stories, and to hear what the land and sea remember.



Patrick Nunn is professor of geography at the University of the Sunshine Coast, an honorary professorial fellow at the University of Melbourne, and a visiting fellow at the University of Oxford (2026–2027). His many publications include *The Edge of Memory* and *Worlds in Shadow*.

“Whispers from Celtic Seas is a fascinating and passionate call for the oral traditions and traditional folk stories of Northwest Europe to be granted the respect they deserve for the deep histories they tell. Nunn masterfully reveals the traumatic events that constantly redefined the boundaries between land and sea.”

– Lynne Kelly, author of *The Knowledge Gene* and *The Memory Code*

“Nunn has once again shown how much deeper the well of human memory runs than conventional wisdom holds – and how precious are its contents.”

– Benjamin Strauss, CEO and Chief Scientist, Climate Central

New Book

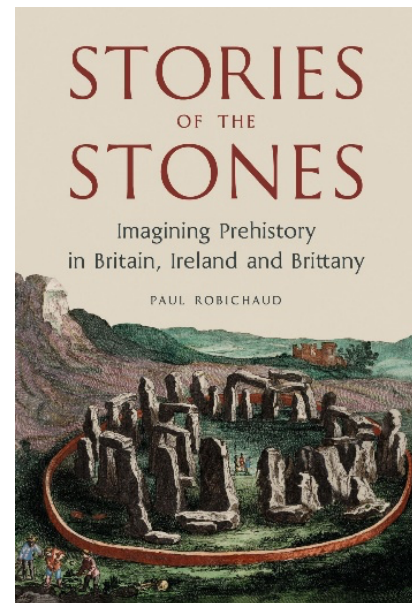
Stories of the Stones

Imagining Prehistory in Britain, Ireland and Brittany

London: Reaktion Books, 2026, 328 pages

Paul Robichaud, Albertus Magnus College, New Haven, Connecticut

Stories of the Stones explores how ancient monuments — standing stones, megaliths, and earthworks — have been reimagined across the centuries in folklore, literature, art, and popular culture. From medieval myths to Romantic fascination and from folk-horror cinema to Julian Cope, these enigmatic sites have inspired powerful stories that reflect the beliefs and anxieties of each era. Spanning Britain, Ireland, and Brittany, the book includes iconic places such as Stonehenge and Newgrange, as well as lesser-known sites steeped in local lore. While their original meanings remain mysterious, our interpretations reveal deep emotional and cultural connections to the ancient landscape. Richly illustrated and wide-ranging, this book is ideal for readers interested in prehistoric monuments, storytelling traditions, and the enduring power of place.



Paul Robichaud is professor of English at Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, Connecticut. His previous books include *Pan: The Great God's Modern Return*, also published by Reaktion Books.

“This book is a fascinating, extremely well-researched investigation into the various ways in which prehistoric stone monuments have been understood and responded to culturally over the many centuries since they were built. It covers a huge range of ground, from the earliest myths and legends through Romantic poetry

to contemporary pop music, revealing just how many wonderful ‘stories of the stones’ there are to tell. A highly rewarding and immensely rich read.”

– **Duncan Garrow**, coauthor of *The World of Stonehenge*

“Many of us have wondered about the prehistoric builders of megalithic monuments, but in *Stories of the Stones* Robichaud compellingly offers an even richer story of our cultural entanglement with these protean markers in the landscape, which did not cease to be significant with the end of their prehistoric ritual life. In a magical yet historically grounded book, Robichaud reveals a new depth to these living stones whose enduring appeal is interwoven with folklore, story, identity, nationhood, and spirituality.”

– **Francis Young**, author of *Silence of the Gods*

New Book

Explorations in the Violence of Traditions and Traditions of Violence

Les contes d'animaux

FF Communications 328, Helsinki: Kalevala Society Foundation, 2025, 382 pages.

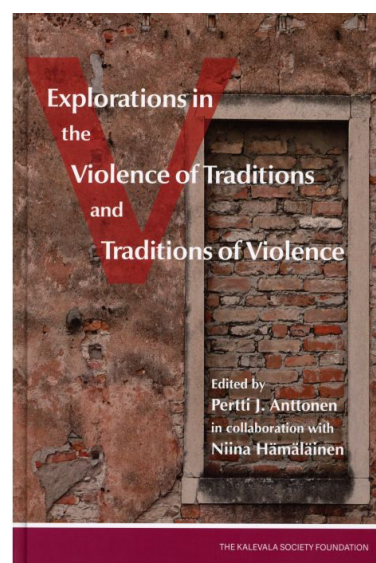
*Edited by Pertti J. Anttonen, University of Eastern Finland, in
collaboration with Niina Hämäläinen, Kalevala Society Foundation*

Authors of chapters: Jesse Barber, Malay Bera, Charles L. Briggs, Ayantika Chakraborty, Terry Gunnell, Niina Hämäläinen & Lotte Tarkka, Fionnán Mac Gabhann, Stein R. Mathisen, Surabhi Jiwrajka Mawandia, Sadhana Naithani, Amelia Mathews-Pett, Nona Shahnazarian, and Pihla Maria Siim.

Violence in culture and society is a widely studied and hotly debated issue. Researchers of vernacular traditions or folklore have a special entry point into studying violence, as many forms of violence are based on traditions and are justified with reference to tradition. Some of these violent traditions are openly supported in their respective communities, but others call for research to explain how they survive when they are not explicitly and intentionally sustained or why they persist while being perceived as negative, oppressive, or degrading. The challenging point in understanding violence is that it is not always clear what counts as violence.

The present volume explores a variety of issues in research into traditions of violence from all over the world and through the ages. The book contains an introduction and thirteen chapters with diverse and complementary perspectives, written by both younger and more established scholars in research into traditions.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.folklorefellows.fi/ffc-328/>



New Project

Boznia and Herzegovina: New Project on Oral Stories of Northwestern Bosnia (2025-2027)

Since October 2025, the Department of Languages and Literature at the Pedagogical Faculty of the University of Bihać has been implementing a two-year research project titled: Oral Stories of Northwestern Bosnia: Collection, Description, Classification, and Digital Archiving (2025-2027). The project holder is the Department of Languages and Literature and is led by Prof. Dr. Amira Dervišević. Students from both undergraduate and graduate study cycles are actively involved in the research process through a mentorship and supervision model.

The project is dedicated to the systematic documentation of the oral prose tradition of Northwestern Bosnia, with a specific focus on the Bosanska Krajina region. Although this area holds exceptional significance for the history of South Slavic oral literature – notably evidenced by the material recorded in the famous Milman Parry Collection at Harvard University – the contemporary forms of oral prose in this region have not undergone comprehensive field research until now.

Based on modern folkloristic methodologies, the project integrates fieldwork and interviews with narrators, audio and video recording, ethnographic recording of storytelling contexts, transcription, classification, and philological analysis of the collected material. A primary research interest is the documentation of living forms of oral prose in everyday communication, as well as the recording of traditional narrative forms, including fairy tales, legends, and novelistic narratives.

One of the most important objectives of the project is the establishment of a digital archive of oral literature of Northwestern Bosnia. This archive will contain original audiovisual recordings, transcripts and field notes, as well as analytical descriptions. This corpus will serve as a valuable resource for future research in folkloristics, oral literature, cultural anthropology, and digital humanities, while significantly contributing to the preservation of the intangible cultural heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Simultaneously, the project carries a strong educational component. By involving students directly in fieldwork and research, it contributes to the development of a new generation of folklorists and oral literature scholars.

More information about the project: amira.dervisevic@unbi.ba

Puglia in fabula

Piero Cappelli, Edizioni di Pagina, Bari (Italy)

Since 2019, the series *Puglia in fabula* has produced sixteen volumes representing the oral narrative traditions of specific areas and towns in Puglia in Southern Italy. Each volume consists of a selection of narratives transcribed in their respective local dialects, supplied with literal translations reproducing features and nuances of orality, in order to preserve the original pronunciation as best as possible.

In the most recent volumes, the focus has shifted toward the collections of individual storytellers, thereby prioritising the performative element over typological or thematic ones. Notably, the last four volumes are based on degree theses from the 1980s, derived from field research and tape recordings. Recently, attention has also been focused on Puglia's linguistic minorities, such as the *Grico* (a Greek dialect spoken in some Salento's towns) of Calimera and the Franco-Provençal of Faeto.

Puglia in fabula aims at documenting and disseminating the regional oral tradition. Each volume includes a brief introduction contextualising the research and its sources, followed by the dialect texts coupled with an Italian translation and a concise set of notes.

These books document a surprising richness and vitality for a region, Puglia, which has not been sufficiently represented in the previously published narrative collections. The methodological approach is based on highlighting research, studies, and documents so far unpublished or unknown to the general public, while avoiding collections undergoing manipulation or adaptation by editors.

Explanatory factsheets can be found on the Edizioni di Pagina website at this link:
<https://www.paginasc.it/articoli.php?collana=42>

Workshop

Mapping Contemporary Spiritual Networks and Hubs Weaving Together Interconnected Worlds

*Workshop 17-18 March 2026, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, 54
bd Raspail*

Convenors: Agnès Kedzierska Manzon & Géraldine Mossière

Unlike many mainstream religious communities, which are typically organized around residential patterns, alternative spiritualities – or the New Age *sensu lato* – often involve local and global networks connecting diverse geographic sites. Assuming that alternative spiritual practices are inherently hybrid, that they always emerge and flourish in spaces of contact and entail the circulation of subjects, concepts and materials along global and local grids, we ambition to study in a comparative perspective such micro and macro-level circulations and the practices that travel – their aesthetics, variations, socio-economic and political underpinning, and ritual mechanisms.



◆

PARTICIPANTS AND ABSTRACTS

Géraldine Mossière

Institut d'Études Religieuses, Département d'anthropologie, Université de Montréal, Canada

Tracing the Landscape of Spiritual Retreats and Holistic Practices in Costa Rica: Ethnographic Reflections from Online and In-person Fieldwork

North and Central America have long been interconnected through historical patterns of economic exchange and physical mobility driven by political, social, and touristic motivations. My ethnographic fieldwork among holistic practitioners and coaches in Quebec (Canada) suggests that, more recently, spiritual pursuits have become an additional vector sustaining these transnational networks. In this context, certain coaches have established themselves as hosts for transient practitioners who travel to participate in short-term retreats.

Drawing on the exploratory fieldwork I have conducted to date in Quebec and Costa Rica—including interviews, participant observation, and netnography—I will begin by mapping the geographic and digital sites through which spiritual practices are organised, and senses of community are cultivated. While “spiritual seekers” are often motivated by a desire to disconnect from everyday life and to immerse themselves in what is perceived as the sublime beauty of Costa Rica’s natural environment, I examine how spiritual centres mobilise this narrative to construct retreat experiences as spiritually restorative and aesthetically refreshing. These are embedded within a spatio-temporal framework that intertwines notions of global spiritual belonging with an imagined, localised authenticity.



Kamila Baraniecka-Olszewska

Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland

Spirituality in Historical Re-enactment of the Early Middle Ages. The Case of the Wolin Temple

In my presentation, I will focus on the so-called Wolin Temple, a reconstructed Slavic temple located in an open-air museum in Wolin, north-western Poland. Over the years, it has become a place where historical re-enactors, who recreate the early Middle Ages, engage in spiritual and religious practices. However, it is also occasionally used by followers of native faiths. For many historical re-enactors, their activity also includes a spiritual component. They are connected within international networks that organise festivals, feasts and honouring of ancestors. Within these networks, they perform spiritual gestures in many places that host re-enactment events, thereby creating a kind of map of places of power animated by prayer and gestures, as well as a connection to the past – often these are places of archaeological excavations. In this way, re-enactors open up new spaces for spiritual practice. Importantly, these geographical networks are the result of cooperation between historical re-enactors and their particular relationship with the past and its material traces in the present.

The Wolin Temple is a notable example of a spiritual place within this network. For many re-enactors, Wolin is not only the cradle of their re-enacting journey, but also of a certain spirituality and religious sensitivity. They come to Wolin to perform rites that are important to them, their re-enactment groups, and their families. They say that they 'come back' to Wolin, not just 'go' there. Although they also perform ritual gestures in other places during re-enactment meetings or festivals, Wolin, an important archaeological site described as a ritual centre in the early Middle Ages, gains particular significance. As the Wolin Temple is part of an open-air museum, observing the rituals performed there, sheds light on how festivals and organised re-enactment events contribute to the creation of spiritual spaces, and how various groups (e.g. re-enactors, followers of native faiths, and audiences) are included or excluded from these practices. *Slavic Religion/ Slavic Native Faith ?? mixes tourists reenactors believers.*



Yael Dansac

Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

What Makes It Sacred? Space Sacralisation as Ritual and Relationality

Taking on ethnographic data collected in France and Belgium, this paper presents practitioners' characterisations of megalithic sites as "Sacred", "Powerful", or "Energetic" places. It centres on how they identify a "sacred" place, how they relate it to others, and how this sacralisation is brought up through global and local discourses and practices.



ONLINE Clara Saraiva

Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon

A Magical Space Becomes an Enchanted Space: Spirituality and Telluric Energies in the Mountain of the Moon

Sintra, near Lisbon, was classified in 1995 by UNESCO as a World Heritage site, in the category of Cultural Landscape. Placed in front of the westmost point of Europe, the Roca Cape, the Mount of the Moon is reputed for its special energy, with a special sacred atmosphere, and has been used over the centuries as a spiritual space. Sintra's **space** perfectly embodies the notion of **place** as "the most fundamental form of

embodied experience – the site of a powerful fusion of self, space and time” (Feld and Baso 1996: 9).



Rosalind Hackett

University of Tennessee, USA/UWC, South Africa

From Sacred Gardens to Spiritual Gardening: Exploring the Rise of the Global Wellness Garden

Compared to the panoply of works on the classic religious gardens inspired by Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Hindu, Zen and Baha’i traditions, the growing synergies between contemporary gardening practices and diverse spiritualities are seriously underresearched. Yet there is no shortage of publications and media resources on how to create one’s own spiritual garden or find such “sacred spaces” on one’s travels. These range from public to private and professional to nonspecialist.

Based on field, literature, and online research conducted in South Africa, the UK and the USA over more than two decades, I will 1) trace the origins and development of this phenomenon to global developments in relation to tourism, consumerism, technology, environmentalism, Covid19, health/wellness, feminism, the democratization of gardening, and declining interest in organized religion. Then 2) using a selection of key actors, gardens, communities, and networks, I will analyse how the design, discourse, symbolism, materiality, sensoriality, corporeal and cultivation practices variously reflect spiritual intentionality in eclectic/inflected (e.g. New Age, Druidic, indigenous, Zen) and/or secular sacred ways (e.g. healing, tranquility, wholeness, peace, etc.).



Camille Guibert

Ph.D. Student, EPHE – IMAf, France

What Does Tourism Do to Vodun? The “Vodun Days” Festival and the Dynamics of Images

For more than a century, beginning with the foundational work of Pierre Verger (1902–1996) the renowned French photographer, Vodun and its transatlantic manifestations have generated an abundant corpus of images. It must be said that

Vodun ritual practices – and especially their spectacular climax in trance – deploy a powerful materiality (costumes, jewellery, dances, sacrifices, etc.) that leaves impression not only on the eyes of spectators but also on the sensors of cameras.

Since 2024, the “Vodun Days” Festival has been held in Ouidah, on the Beninese coast, welcoming tourists from all over the world for three days. Most of these visitors – when not equipped with professional cameras – keep their smartphones constantly in hand, eager to capture as many images as possible of the rituals.

The Festival, a genuine gateway to “vodun culture and spirituality,” selects those elements of these ritual that may be made visible to tourists and to the thousands of followers of the Instagram and TikTok accounts that relay the event. In this paper, I will show how Vodun initiates appropriate this image-saturated context in order to increase their “agency,” both during their performances and beyond them.



Alesahndre Perrocheau

PhD Student, EPHE, France

Reincarnated Being: Identities and Communities Around Past Lives on Internet

In what ways does belief in past lives, whether human or non-human, contribute to the construction of personal identity in contemporary societies increasingly centered around digital and online environment? Social media platforms not only facilitate the rapid circulation of such stories but also provide spaces for identities creation and collective validation by enabling individuals to build polymorphic identities and spiritual communities. Through examining practices associated with reincarnation, past lives and Starseed or Otherkin identities, it becomes clear that online environments foster novel forms of sociability, healing, and meaning-making. Insights drawn from online ethnography on TikTok and Discord, combined with interviews with French online content creators and viewers, reveal how reincarnation narratives intersect with experiences of well-being, self-discovery, and spiritual awakening. These digital spaces thus function not only as arenas for spiritual exploration but also as laboratories for the reconfiguration of identity.



Claude Grin,

GSRL-EPHE-PSL, France

Spiritual Places, High-Energy Sites in Switzerland

In my presentation, I will discuss constellation practices that revolve around “mediumship” and related arts: magnetism, channelling, “waking dreams,” etc. All these constellations share a common goal of acquiring specific sensitive skills through the development of extrasensory perceptions. These spiritual practitioners, whom I have been following for many years, particularly in Switzerland, are grouped around doxas that borrow from various doctrines and representations derived from esoteric currents or popular science. But all these practitioners say they work with energies and forces. This requires them to regularly recharge their batteries and “rebalance” themselves in “spiritual places.” In Switzerland, these are often landscape sites, lakes, caves (Emma Kunz’s cave), mountain peaks (Stanserhorn), or even buildings (the Goetheanum in Dornach, Mario Botta’s Mountain Church in Mogno), traversed by telluric currents with high vibration rates, creating networks and connections between them. Rituals in these “places of power” take many forms.



Michael Houseman, Yael Dansac, Ariane Dumond, Manéli Farahmand, Bertrande Galfré, Sara Le Menestrel, Denise Lombardi, Marie Mazella, Laetititia Merli, Elodie Richardet, Viola Teisenhoffer, Emmanuel Thibault
France, Switzerland, Belgium

A Pilot Study for a Spiritual Sites Survey

This proposed communication will summarize the methodological issues and substantive conclusions of a small-scale survey on what different groups of European-based spiritual practitioners – identifying themselves as alternative therapists, contemporary shamans, Pagans, and so forth – reckon to be the ten most important spiritual sites, and the reasons they give for their choices. The results of this pilot survey, undertaken mainly by Internet with persons with whom the researchers are already familiar, will be compared with a number of spiritual sites maps currently in circulation.

Justin Stein

Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Surrey, BC, Canada

Ancient Mountain, Modern Spiritualities: Mount Kurama as a Site for Contemporary Spiritual Pilgrimage

Mount Kurama, outside of Kyoto, Japan, has been a site of spiritual practice since at least the late eighth century. Since the medieval period has been popularly depicted as a place of magic and mystery, where ascetics could cultivate powers, including the power to heal. Today it is the spiritual centre for several groups, including the local Kurama Kōkyō religious group (that now operates the traditional temples and shrines on the mountain) and the global network of Reiki practitioners, who revere the mountain as the birthplace of their practice. This presentation will outline the varied groups who co-create the sacred spaces on the mountain through ritual practices of pilgrimage, ceremonies, and narrativizing the mountain as a portal to cosmic healing energies.



Denise Lombardi

Chargée de Conférence, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes – PSL, GSRL, France

Mystical Mexico: A Contemporary Spiritual Hub and Transnational Bridge of Neo-shamanism

This paper aims to analyse the case of Mexico as a contemporary spiritual hub within the transnational networks of new spiritualities. Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted with a group of French spiritual tourists accompanied by an Otomi shaman, I show how neo-shamanic practices and reinterpreted indigenous rituals are today part of international circuits that nourish spiritual tourism linked to self-discovery and personal transformation.

Since the 1960s, Mexico has established itself as a symbolic geography of the sacred for Western audiences: the writings of Carlos Castañeda, the experiences with psychotropic plants taught by María Sabina, and the fascination with the Mayan calendar have all contributed to shaping an imaginary in which Mexico becomes a place of renewal and spiritual quest. Collective rituals (such as the Ceremony of the 8,000 Sacred Drums), steam baths (temazcal), and visits to archaeological sites (Teotihuacan, Malinalco) are re-invested with energetic and spiritual meaning.

As is often the case, these practices can reveal tensions: between local logics and global expectations, between cultural claims and the commodification of ritual, between indigenous authority and the Western search for authenticity. The shaman becomes an ambivalent figure, both a cultural mediator and an actor in the global spiritual economy.

This case study invites reflection on the circulation of practices and the hybridization of ritual forms raised by contemporary spiritual hubs. Mexico thus

appears as a liminal space where, through the prism of the sacred, relationships between exoticism, well-being, and the patrimonialisation of traditions are played out.



Amanda Lucia

Department for the Study of Religion, University of California, Riverside, USA

Ephemeral Impacts: Burning Man Networks in the Global Spiritual Scene

This paper considers the shifting spiritual networks of Burning Man, in a post-Covid global spiritual scene. Burning Man is a temporary city built and destroyed annually in the Black Rock Desert, an arid alkaline desert on US federal land abutting the Paiute reservation in rural Nevada. Although now eschewing the term festival, the event serves as a catalyst for the global festival circuit as we know it today. The event began with excess art burned on Baker Beach in San Francisco in 1986, and ever since it has been bound together in the creating and burning of large-scale art installations. This creation-destruction at the centre of the event fosters its artistic, philosophical, and spiritual culture. As Burning Man changes, with less art burned every year and different cultural ethos brought to the playa with new generations of burners, this also impacts the global spiritual networks which it feeds. This paper analyses the various spiritual networks in which burners participate: Burning Man regional events, Burners without Borders, circus, yoga festival circuits, plant medicine tourism, and “ex-pat” hubs, showing how unlikely bedfellows network and overlap through the nexus of burner culture as it operates globally.



Urmila Mohan

Fulbright-Nehru Scholar, India/USA

Building ‘Hindu’ Spiritual Practices into ‘New Age’ Itineraries at ISKCON-Related Places

Hindu spiritual seekers, old and new, seek out certain places in the world, for instance, in India and Bali, Indonesia, for the specificities of landscape – both to commune with the terrain in some way as well as to have certain kinds of experience. What are the (in)formal spiritual, emotional, and cognitive maps they use to understand and access these landscapes as imaginaries, material objects, itineraries, and practices? How are their movements affected by subjective, phenomenological entities as well as biographical trajectories and velocities? What are some of the practices in the terrain

that fit under 'Hindu' and 'New Age' spiritual mobilities? Keeping in mind my previous work in ISKCON India, the sites where this potential fieldwork could take place include locations in India, Bali, Indonesia, and/or South Africa. This short, tentative presentation will include a few images from these countries and is intended to be a first look at this topic.



Sergio González Varela

Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw, Poland

Ritual In Motion: How Afro-Brazilian Capoeira Leaders Travel and Connect Around the World

Capoeira, an Afro-Brazilian art form, encompasses ritual, dance, musical, game, and combat elements. This presentation draws upon my personal experience as a capoeira practitioner for two decades and my extensive fieldwork in Brazil and other European and Mexican cities with leaders of a style called Capoeira Angola. In the twenty-first century, capoeira has undergone an unprecedented global expansion, establishing itself in the most unexpected locations worldwide. This presentation delves into the pivotal role that capoeira leaders play as cultural ambassadors of Afro-Brazilian traditions during this global expansion. The primary objective is to elucidate the mobility of Angolan-style leaders and the methodological and anthropological challenges inherent in ethnographically studying individuals who lead a perpetual semi-nomadic existence. The presentation compiles testimonies from capoeira leaders' global journeys, utilizing face-to-face interviews and social media information. Concurrently, it elucidates the impact of globalization on the contemporary meaning of capoeira Angola and the influence of non-Brazilian participants on its practice. Notably, this dynamic of mobility entails a transformation in the leader-disciple relationship, manifesting in the short, medium, and long term, both within Brazil and beyond. Finally, the presentation addresses the challenges of scale and intelligibility within the anthropology of globalization and the dynamics of flow and movement between the local and global aspects of deterritorialized rituals.



Agnieszka Kedzierska Manzon

Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes – PSL, IMAF, France

In the Shadow of Table Mountain: Micro and Macro Spiritual Networks in South Africa

Magickal Gem, the oldest esoteric shop in Cape Town, South Africa, is viewed by many as a “safe space” for alternatively minded people. Above all, it serves as a hub for numerous activities, whether reiki courses, Tarot sessions, painting and poetry workshops, or energy healing. Owned by Philippa, who is reverently referred to by her friends and staff as “Head Master”, it operates at the intersection of several spiritual networks, both local and global, made up of practitioners defining themselves as Modern Pagans, Wiccans, astrologists, holistic healers, traditional healers, psychics, specialists in lithotherapy, and so on. Located in the Observatory neighbourhood, known for its non-conformist vibe, in the shadow of Table Mountain recognized in South Africa and abroad as one of the Earth’s key chakras or power spots, it is, in fact, a micro hub within a mega hub: namely, South Africa’s Mother City. This is a city where symbolic or energy lines converge with contemporary international travellers’ itineraries, and with historical trade and labour migration routes. I argue that Cape Town’s unique agency has been constructed – and must be understood – in reference not only to current spiritual and economic global dynamics, but also to astro-cartography and older esoteric maps, along with hybrid imaginaries appealing to Zulu, Xhosa or KhoiSan traditions. In this paper I will analyse these hybrid imaginaries and practices while mapping the micro and macro networks and hubs bringing together interconnected worlds in South Africa.



From the notes taken by **Veronique Champion-Vincent** vercv@hotmail.fr who attended the “Mapping” workshop 17-18 March 2026.

See also [HERE](#)

THE NEXT MEETING IS PLANNED IN CANADA IN 2027.

Membership

New Members (accepted March 2026):

Rita Kuzder, Dharma Gate Buddhist College, Budapest, Hungary

INTERESTS: Minor epic genres, proverbs, riddles, folk songs, and cultural memory in Tibetan and Macedonian folk narrative traditions.

Contact: atirku0730@gmail.com



Frederico Benevenuto Alberruche, École pratique des hautes études (EPHE-PSL), Paris, France

INTERESTS: Vernacular forms of the *bardo*, the “intermediate state” between one life and another, and the specificities of the ways in which it is narrated in Tibetan societies.

Contact: f.benvenuto@pm.me



Davood Khazie, Shiraz University Center for Children's Literature Studies (SUCCLS), Iran

INTERESTS: Comparative folktale and fairy-tale studies, children's literature, translation studies, Persian classical literature, and Renaissance literature.

Contact: dkhazaie@hotmail.com



Eliza Marley, University of Illinois, Chicago, USA

INTERESTS: How stories form to explain things hard to articulate or understand; ghost stories and ecological monsters; touristic ghost stories and how they can be used to more deeply explore environmental restoration and city development; how some folkloric monsters mimic environmental disasters and offer guidelines for dealing with crisis.

Contact: elizarosemarley@gmail.com



***James Deutsch, George Washington University,
Washington, USA***

INTERESTS: Parallels between folk narrative and popular culture, particularly narrative film; ethnography of the un-homed and unhoused; legends of wartime and the post-war return of veterans to civilian society; occupational cultures; notions of the monomyth.

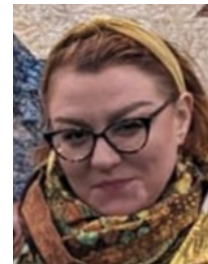
Contact: deutschj@si.edu



***Georgiana Vlahbei, National Museum of the Romanian
Peasant, Bucharest, Romania***

INTERESTS: Heritage-making processes, oral traditions, ritual forms of expression (both in traditional societies and in contemporary creations), dynamics of folk customs, the cultural identity of Aromanians (Vlachs) documented in Romania and the Balkans for the past 10 years; digital folklore; and stitching together ecology, cultural legacies and art.

Contact: georgianavlahbeimtr@gmail.com



***Melissa LaRose, Elphinstone Institute, University of
Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland***

INTERESTS: fairy lore in contemporary society, world fairy lore, fairies as practice for spirituality, fairy shamanism and animism, the supernatural and the paranormal.

Contact: r02ml23@abdn.ac.uk



***Katelin Marit Parsons, University of Iceland,
Reykjavík, Iceland***

INTERESTS: Premodern Icelandic poetry, popular literature and literacy practices, narratives of migration to and from Iceland, and vernacular manuscript culture.

Contact: kmparsons@hi.is



Olha Petrovych, Estonian Folklore Archives, Estonian Literary Museum, Tartu, Estonia

INTERESTS: Combining folklore studies and digital humanities, cross-cultural analysis, computational text analysis, and the visualisation of narrative data.

Contact: olha.petrovych@kirmus.ee



Louise Wigglesworth, University of Kent, Canterbury, UK

INTERESTS: Ecocriticism, Crime fiction, genre, Post-Anthropocentrism, speculative fiction, transgression, justice and Affect.

Contact: lcw46@kent.ac.uk



Carlotta Ottonello, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK

INTERESTS: Neoliberalism and its relation to surveillance, the gamification of work, the dystopian novel, the relations between people and work, the ways it is mythologised and how it creates cultural practice in the modern world.

Contact: cxo342@student.bham.ac.uk



Ailbhe Nic Giolla Chomhaill, University of Galway, Eire

INTERESTS: Irish folklore and Irish language and literature, Irish-language folklore, Irish language folk narrative, the Irish storytelling tradition, storytelling and place.

Contact: ailbhe.nicgiollachomhaill@universityofgalway.ie



Greg Kelley, University of Guelph-Humber, Toronto, Canada

INTERESTS: Folklore, folklore and literary relations, popular culture, humour, and the media.

Contact: greg.kelley@guelphhumber.ca

Amy E. Skillman (retired), Goucher College, Baltimore, USA

INTERESTS: The intersection of culture and tension; how culture can serve to mediate social change and foster cultural equity; personal experience narratives of immigrant and refugee women; cultural collisions with the healthcare system; storm stories of women sea captains; Old-Time fiddlers in Missouri; folk arts as a catalyst for activism in communities throughout Pennsylvania.

Contact: amy.skillman@goucher.edu



Simona K. Zupanc, University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia

INTERESTS: How the dead are experienced, perceived, and engaged with as active presences in everyday life; sensory, emotional, and relational encounters with both known and unknown dead, and how these experiences shape practices of remembrance, placemaking, and vernacular interpretations of death; the anthropology of death; post-socialist rural studies; vernacular religion; questions of agency, presence, and human-dead relations.

Contact: simona.kuntariczupanc@ff.uni-lj.si



Accursio Graffeo, Zurich Center for Religious Studies, Trento, Italy

INTERESTS: Religious studies; how native traditions (and narratives on the relationship between nature and humans) can find points of contact with contemporary narratives related to AI and new technologies

Contact: accursio.graffeo1@gmail.com



Agnes Hesz, University of Pécs, Pécs, Hungary

INTERESTS: The diverse forms of vernacular religion, ranging from death-related beliefs and practices to contemporary discussions of witchcraft and religiosity under communism.

Contact: hesz.agnes@pte.hu



Scarlette-Electra LeBlanc, University of Hull, Hull, UK

INTERESTS: The literary and cultural legacies of British holy wells from the nineteenth century to the present day; changelings, mermaids and nineteenth-century fairy tale retellings.

Contact: secwleblanc@outlook.com



Connor Toole, Indiana University, Bloomington, USA

INTERESTS: The intersections between ethnohistory, folklore, and memory studies, sense of place and place-making, tradition, and legend.

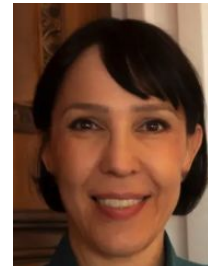
Contact: contoole@iu.edu



Romana Turina, Arts University Bournemouth, Bournemouth, UK

INTERESTS: Archetypal figures, applied to support the development of characters and story in film; the way people look at folklore to translate individual, social and historical experiences of relevance.

Contact: [: rturina@aub.ac.uk](mailto:rturina@aub.ac.uk)



Katja Hrobat Virloget, Humanities University of Primorska, Slovenia

INTERESTS: Time and space in the oral tradition of Karst; oral tradition and archaeology; the anthropology of memory and intangible heritage studies; oral tradition linked to landscape.

Contact: katja.hrobat@fhs.upr.si



Judit Béres, Dharma Gate Buddhist College, Budapest, Hungary

INTERESTS: The textual traditions of Tibetan folklore, Tibetan metaphors, the history of Eastern Tibet, Tibetan folk religion, the Amdo dialect of the Tibetan language; the public dissemination and authentic representation of Tibetan culture.

Contact: juditber@gmail.com



Joshua Lee, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, USA

INTERESTS: Folklore, skaldic poetry, medieval cultural memory, societal belief and practice in the sagas and medieval Scandinavian Latin texts.

Contact: josh.p.lee@berkeley.edu



Emily Bianchi, Department of Comparative Studies at the Ohio State University, USA

INTERESTS: Oral narrative and performance studies; vernacular history, social memory, and commemoration; the intersection of material culture and oral narrative; community-constructed museums and sites of display; and American intentional communities, separatist communities, and religious movements.

Contact: bianchi.61@osu.edu; enb.bianchi@gmail.com



Saša Poljak Istenič, the Institute of Slovenian Ethnology ZRC SAZU; the University of Maribor, Ljubljana, Slovenia

INTERESTS: Tradition, urban life, and climate change; narrative research related to rituals; and storytelling as a participatory practice.

Contact: sasa.poljak@zrc-sazu.si



Suzana Marjanić, the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb, Croatia

INTERESTS: Theories of myth and ritual, cultural and critical animal studies, and performance studies.

Contact: suzana@ief.hr



Mariska van der Velde, University of Groningen, Groningen, Holland

INTERESTS: Intangible heritage, identity, in- and exclusion, regionality, co-creative heritage making, the role of minority language in these heritage narratives, museum studies, the decolonialization of heritage.

Contact: mariska.van.der.velde@rug.nl



Luca Rádler, University of the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design (MOME), Budapest, Hungary

INTERESTS: ritual spaces, the material culture of vernacular traditions, with particular attention to Central European ritual practices of the pre-industrial rural society, how the magically experienced world and nature shapes the spatial practices of festivity, its material culture, and on how these practices can be reinterpreted within contemporary contexts, ritual thresholds and human-non-human relationships through spatial, communal, and performative practices.

Contact: watilunka@gmail.com



Tatiana Bužeková, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia

INTERESTS: Ethnographic research on folk narratives, witchcraft beliefs, alternative spirituality, cognitive and symbolic anthropology, medical anthropology, collective memory and moral emotions in religious context

Contact: tatiana.buzekova@uniba.sk



Ellen Goulding, University of Exeter, Exeter, UK

INTERESTS: How myths, legends, and fairytales be used to promote environmental and cultural heritage protection in Northwest Europe; material culture relating to occult practices across different social classes in 19th and early 20th century Britain; superstition, curses, collective memory, genius loci, and the continuation of folk-beliefs and practices in connection to the natural and historical landscape.

Contact: eg790@exeter.ac.uk; ellengoulding10@yahoo.co.uk



Sarah Darley, University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK

INTERESTS: Fairy tales, adaptation, transcultural exchanges, visual media, speculative fiction, and gender in folklore and mythology.

Contact: sarahjessdarley@gmail.com, s.darley@uea.ac.uk



***Claudia Mayr-Veselinović, Technical University of
Leoben, Leoben, Austria***

INTERESTS: The intersection of culture, politics, and identity in the Western Balkans, with a particular interest in political songs of the Yugoslosphere and their societal impact; (cultural) urban history – including traditions, rituals, and political movements – alongside philological studies and the role of small languages in historical and contemporary contexts; social license to operate in extractivism and CCS context; crisis network analysis, and the quality and forms of support during mass trauma events, and the link between micro-level experiences and macro-level cultural responses.

Contact: claudia.mayr-veselinovic@unileoben.ac.at



***Romina Werth, University of Iceland, Reykjavík,
Iceland***

INTERESTS: Icelandic folk narrative, fairy tales, and medieval Icelandic literature.

Contact: row1@hi.is



Daniela Calvo, Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan

INTERESTS: Afro-Brazilian religions in Japan, with a focus on the relation between migration and religion, transnational processes, healing of humans, spirits and nature, more-than-human relations, relations with local spirits and forms of hybridisation with Japanese culture; Tarantism and Folk revival in South Italy; the images of spirits and their narratives in Maria Lionza, in relation with sociopolitical changes; the images of spirits in Umbanda and their relation with Brazilian history and imaginary; forms of hybridisation between Japanese cultural depth around spirits, ghosts and haunted places and Afro-Brazilian religions.

Contact: dnlclv7@gmail.com



Hajar Taha, University Hassan II, Casablanca, Morocco

INTERESTS: The intersections of environmental humanities, contemporary media, and “Dark Ecology”; how modern narratives, specifically in the Eco-Noir genre, reframe our understanding of folk horror and ecological crisis; the evolution of oral traditions in modern media, indigenous folklore, and environmental dread in remote landscapes.

Contact: hajar.taha93@gmail.com



Essi Katariina Nuutinen, University of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland

INTERESTS: The transmission and adaptation of traditional stories between oral and written contexts; exempla and animal figures in the Icelandic *Physiologus*, with broader interests in allegory and the human-animal boundary; motif and tale-type classification; poetic and ballad traditions across oral and written contexts; human-animal boundary and anthropomorphism; animal representation in traditional narratives; and metaphor and allegory.

Contact: essikatariinan@gmail.com



Goran Đurđević, Beijing Foreign Studies University, China; University of Zadar, Zadar, Croatia

INTERESTS: global antiquities, comparative archaeology, digital humanities, and environmental humanities.

Contact: goran.djurdjevich@gmail.com

Kevin Frank Fernandes, University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany

INTERESTS: Material Culture, Culinary Narratives, Indian literatures (in English and translation), Gender studies, Popular culture, and postcoloniality and its intersection with Christianity and caste, specifically in Mangalore; and Ethnomusicology.

Contact: kev.fernandes91@gmail.com



Lars Kaijser, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden

INTERESTS: Storytelling in various forms, and the meanings of storytelling, partly in connection with popular music, and guided tours; the depictions of plants and animals, partly in representations in public aquariums, and partly in the management of invasive species.



Contact: Lars.kaijser@etnologi.su.se

Linda (Saraswati) Teresa Klausner, University of Tartu, Tartu, Estonia; Åbo Akademi University, Åbo, Finland

INTERESTS: Folk narrative and vernacular genres, material religion, and other-than-human agency in South Asian and Adivasi contexts.



Contact: lindatklausner@gmail.com

Jenna Grace Sciuto, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, North Adams, USA

INTERESTS: Colonialism's lingering impacts on identity, intimacy, and family dynamics; Southern Gothic tropes and themes across Icelandic literature and culture, the modern and the folkloric.



Contact: J.Sciuto@mcla.edu

Lotten Gustafsson Reinius, Stockholm University and the Nordic Museum, Stockholm,

INTERESTS: Walking ethnographies to forested areas; the role of folk narrative and rituals to ward of ghosts and other supernatural beings at particular stones, bogs and other places in the altered landscape; heritage studies and environmental humanities; expressive culture, narrative, ritual, material and visual forms, and the interplay between them.



Contact: Lotten.Gustafsson.Reinius@nordiskamuseet.se

New Members (accepted April 2026):

Elena Emma Sottilotta, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

INTERESTS: Women's and gender studies; the history of folkloristics and fairy-tale studies; wonder tales; fairy-tale studies; women collecting folklore; women's folklore; Italian and Irish folk and fairy-tale traditions; the history of folkloristics from a transnational perspective; adaptation and transmediality; folk narrative in children's literature and media.

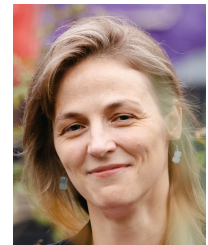
Contact: e.sottilotta@hotmail.it



Jana Kukaine, Riga Stradins University, Riga, Latvia

INTERESTS: Environmental, decolonial, and post-socialist feminisms; witchcraft as a feminist practice; chthonic atmosphere and botanical knowledge as an alternative to Western-centric epistemologies.

Contact: jana.kukaine@rsu.lv



Madi Becker, Indiana University, Bloomington, USA

INTERESTS: Supernatural legends and belief; women's oral genres; the heritagisation of oral storytelling; Gaelic folklore (Scotland and Ireland); the folklore of Southwest China; peripheral and upland communities; critical heritage studies; folk narrative; museum studies; public folklore; and gender and folklore.

Contact: beckermr@iu.edu



Dmytro Yesypenko, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada

INTERESTS: the intersection of literary studies and folklore, with a particular focus on epidemic narratives in Ukrainian and Polish literatures and their connections to vernacular belief systems; cultural memory; and medical humanities.

Contact: yesypenk@ualberta.ca



Alice Bower, University of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland

INTERESTS: Disability in folk legend and medieval narrative, and polar bear encounters in Icelandic oral tradition.

Contact: aeb15@hi.is



Cliona Ó Carroll, University College, Cork, Ireland

INTERESTS: The everyday and the extraordinary in Cork's past and present; oral testimony in the stimulation of public conversations on health, infectious disease and sustainability.

Contact: c.ocarroll@ucc.ie



Agnieszka Matuzewska, University of Szczeciu, Szczecin, Poland

INTERESTS: Memory, narrative, and identity in past societies, particularly in relation to monumental landscapes; megalithic sites in Western Pomerania, integrating archaeological and environmental data.; ritual practices; collective memory; and the interpretation of material culture.

Contact: agnieszka.matuszewska@usz.edu.pl



Jacqueline Smith, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

INTERESTS: Ballet history; fairy tales and folklore; Romanticism in the arts; Victorian novels.

Contact: jacqueline.n9513@gmail.co



Ivan Tacey, University of Plymouth, Plymouth, UK

INTERESTS: Myth and ritual as dynamic, time-resistant forms that shape social life across cultures; folk narrative through a focus on myth, ritual, and storytelling, particularly in relation to Indigenous cosmologies and environmental knowledge.

Contact: ivan.tacey@plymouth.ac.uk



Guro Flinterud, University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

INTERESTS: The transmission of folklore; folk narratives in contemporary digitalised cultures: animal celebrities, digital surveillance and police use of social media; understanding the transmission of folklore on algorithmically governed connective spaces combining Bakhtinian and posthuman perspectives.

Contact: guro.flinterud@uib.no



Cristopher Anderson, Independent Researcher, Minneapolis, USA

INTERESTS: Audience-as-artist engagement theatre for enjoyment, and emotional and social healing.

Contact: anders@bitstream.net



Julia Graf, University of Leoben, Leoben, Austria

INTERESTS: Alpine disaster narratives, from geo-myths to mining folklore, as transgenerational archives of hazard knowledge and forms of vernacular risk communication; the role of storytelling in shaping risk perception, community resilience, and collective preparedness in Alpine hazard contexts.

Contact: julia.graf@unileoben.ac.at



Ming-Yi Shih, University of Leeds, Leeds, UK

INTERESTS: Multicultural themes; museum studies; how narrative practices in literary museums across different cultural contexts shape understandings of multiculturalism and cultural heritage transmission; the preservation of folk traditions across art, literature, history, customs, and the natural environment.

Contact: laurelseeducation@gmail.com



New Members (accepted May 2026):

Lauren Hossack, University of Aberdeen, UK

INTERESTS: Intersections of popular culture and folklore, and concepts of marginality and belonging expressed in narrative and performance.

Contact: lhossack@gmail.com

Ankita Kaushik, University of Delhi, India

INTERESTS: Urban identity, belongingness and rights in/to the city vis-a-vis the River Yamuna, Delhi; contemporary cultural and literary theory, with a special focus on oral history and archives, memory and affect studies, urban/spatial studies, cosmopolitan theory, popular music and nationalism.

Contact: kaushikankita.04@gmail.com



Kikee Doma Bhutia, Ghent University, Belgium

INTERESTS: The intersection of local religious practices, environmental policies, and waste management in Sikkim, with a particular emphasis on the influence of Buddhist rituals and beliefs on the community's approach to sustainability.

Contact: KikeeDoma.Bhutia@UGent.be



ISFNR Regional Contacts

The ISFNR regional contacts act as key links between the ISFNR and folklorists in their respective countries or regions. They help share information both ways: updating local colleagues about ISFNR activities, encouraging contributions to the ISFNR Newsletter, and supporting young folklorists who may be interested in joining the Society. They also serve as first points of contact for early-career researchers seeking guidance or information about folkloristics in their region.

The current list of regional contacts can be found below:

EUROPE

- BELGIUM:** Juan Javier Rivera Andia jjriveraandia@gmail.com
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: Amira Dervišević d.amira.0106@gmail.com
BULGARIA: Angelina Ilieva angelina.ilieva.ph.d@gmail.com
CROATIA: Renata Jambrešić Kirin renata@ief.hr
ENGLAND: David Hopkin david.hopkin@history.ox.ac.uk
ESTONIA: Ülo Valk ulo.valk@ut.ee
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