

## Belief Narrative Network of the ISFNR

### Activities 2009 – 2013

ISFNR Newsletter No 3 (March 2008) published the call for cooperation among scholars of belief tales. The initiative came from Heda Jason, the call was signed by 13 folklorists from 12 countries. During the 15<sup>th</sup> ISFNR congress in Athens the first Belief Tales Symposium was held from June 23 – June 25, 2009.

Belief Narrative Network (BNN) was established on June 25, 2009 during the 15<sup>th</sup> ISFNR congress in Athens. The meeting of 32 people adopted the rules of BNN and elected the committee, consisting of Ezekiel Alembi (Kenya), Willem de Blécourt (Netherlands/ UK), Terry Gunnell (Iceland), Heda Jason (Israel), Desmond Kharmawphlang (India), Mare Kõiva (Estonia), María Inés Palleiro (Argentina), Timothy Tangherlini (USA) and Ülo Valk (Estonia). Later Willem de Blécourt was chosen as the chairperson and Irma-Riitta Järvinen (Finland) was invited to join the committee.

The first BNN conference “Interpreting Belief Narrative” was organized by Alexander Panchenko and held in St Petersburg (May 17-19, 2010). Papers were delivered by folklorists from Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, France, India, Iceland, Iran, Japan, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Sweden, and USA. Historically, the conference was important not only as a successful scholarly event but also as the first ISFNR meeting that has been held in Russia. During the closing discussion of the conference Alexander Panchenko was elected as additional member of the BNN committee.

The next BNN meeting was held during the ISFNR interim conference “Telling Identities: Individuals and Communities in Folk Narratives” (Feb 22-25, 2011) at the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, India (main organizer: Desmond Kharmawphlang). In addition to many participants from different states of India speakers of the BNN symposium “Belief Narratives and Social Realities” came from Argentina, Estonia, Serbia, Sweden and USA. On Feb 24, 2011 BNN held a meeting in Shillong where two conference proposals were made: Zoja Karanovic offered to host the next conference in Novi Sad, Serbia (late summer 2012), Jawaharlal Handoo proposed to hold a conference in Imphal, India.

During Feb 6-8, 2012 Mani Meitei and S. Sanatombi organized the Belief Narratives International Symposium “Local Legends in the Global Context” at Manipur University, Imphal, India. The symposium was organized in co-operation with the ISFNR and it is worth mentioning here as a successful international forum of belief narrative research. The next symposium of BNN “Belief Narrative Genres” was organized by Zoja Karanovic at the University of Novi Sad, Serbia (Aug 28-30, 2012). Speakers came from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Estonia, India, Israel, Latvia, Macedonia, Netherlands, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Slovenia. This well-organized meeting expanded the geographical and cultural scope of research in belief narratives towards Balkan countries. The proceedings of the symposium have been published (ed. by Zoja Karanovic and Willem de Blécourt (see [http://www.ff.uns.ac.rs/vesti/aktuelno/2011/BNN\\_zbornik\\_konacna.pdf](http://www.ff.uns.ac.rs/vesti/aktuelno/2011/BNN_zbornik_konacna.pdf)).

The next BNN symposium “Boundaries of Belief Narratives” will be held at the 16<sup>th</sup> ISFNR congress in Vilnius (June 25-29, 2013), the BNN meeting will be held in Vilnius on June 26, 2013.

Ülo Valk, BNN committee

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Appendices: BNN rules, minutes of the BNN meetings from Athens (2009) and Shillong (2011)