

**MINUTES of the Meeting of the SIEF Ethnology of Religion Working Group held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 in Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu during the 11<sup>th</sup> SIEF Congress**

Present:

members of the board (Peter Jan Margry (chair), Marion Bowman, Clara Saraiva, Anna Niedźwiedz (secretary/minutes)) and around 15 other members and sympathizers of the group.

1. Opening and welcome by the Chair of the Working Group, Peter Jan Margry.
1. The agenda of the meeting as well as the minutes from the previous meeting (held in Szeged in 2012) were approved.
2. Discussion and evaluation of organizing conferences and congress panels by WG, disciplinarity of WG.

An issue of financial burden - related to the fact that SIEF Congresses are being organized every second year and WG Conferences are being held in between - is discussed. Some members of the WG point that attending WG and SIEF conferences and finding funds every year has become more problematic. However, finally it is agreed to continue already established pattern with WG Conferences being organized every second year in between SIEF Congresses.

Due to SIEF Congresses' policy to accept only small panels (up to 9 participants) a WG panel format for SIEF Congresses was discussed. Organizing one big WG panel (as it happened during the SIEF Congress in Lisbon in 2011) is not going to be possible anymore. Splitting the panels – as it happened in Tartu – is the only way to fit papers fitting to WG panel's interests.

There was an emphasis put on a disciplinarity of the WG members and two-directional need to keep old members involved while opening to new interests and getting new members.

3. Recruiting new members, expansion of WG

WG Warsaw Conference in 2010 was mentioned as an event which opened WG to new members. It was said that due to its interdisciplinary character the event was very stimulating. It was however mentioned that too diversified approach might also cause problems.

It was also recalled that lately the historical approach has been visibly lacking from WG Conferences and panels. It was suggested by Marion Bowman that the WG should make it clear that historical topics are part of its interests and they are welcome to be part of WG Conferences and panels.

It was stated that the WG should stay open and embracing various approaches and topics related to “Ethnology of Religion” in its broadest sense.

Also the term “ethnology” was briefly discussed. Issues related to the absence of terms like “folklore” and “folklorism” were pointed. However, it was agreed that the term “ethnology” is a suitable umbrella including also folklore studies.

Idea of starting a cooperation with other big societies and maybe even an organizing a WG panel within a big congress of other international organization was released. As one of the possibilities ISFNR was mentioned. It was suggested that the easiest way to promote WG is to make contacts and advertise WG events and activities being enlisted on ISFNR mailing list.

Summing up, it was accepted to keep the WG name as it is (“Ethnology of Religion”), expand various contacts, do intense missionary work to gain new members (also *via* social media e.g. Facebook), embrace various approaches (not forgetting about historical and folkloristic perspectives), check the mission statement and if needed make some changes to it to make it more embracing and encouraging various approaches.

#### 4. Next WG EofR Conferences: where, when and which topic?

It was agreed that WG will organize its Conference in 2014. Peter Jan Margry suggested that there is a possibility to organize the conference in Amsterdam in October 2014. After discussion Clara Saraiva’s proposal to organize the conference in Lisbon was approved. Preliminary it was scheduled for May 2014. As a working topic “alternative healing” was suggested being a subject embracing religion, medical anthropology and numerous other research areas.

#### 5. Publications.

Lengthy discussion was being held concerning publications of the WG on Ethnology of Religion.

Clara Saraiva spoke on behalf of the Publishing Committee. Its members (Clara Saraiva, Kinga Povedák, Lionel Obadia, José Mapril) are editors of the volume based on papers from the Warsaw 2010 Conference. Saraiva informed that editing work on all papers has been already finished. There is still an introduction to be completed and it seems that LitVerlag is going to publish the volume this year (2013). However, amount of work involved, the quality of papers and general consistency of the volume were sources of few concerns. The Warsaw volume involves around 20 papers which are of very diverse quality. Preparing a volume meant a huge amount of work by editors. It also happened that weak papers finally got accepted. As in such a volume no peer reviewing process is included it makes it very difficult for editors to make a coherent entity out of papers of very diverse quality.

Peter Jan Margry reminded that a proposal to publish chosen articles in journal “Ethnologia Europea” did not work out and that WG decided to follow much open formula of “Year Book” or volumes composed out of papers presented during WG Conferences and Panels.

During discussion it was suggested that WG should stick to the idea of publishing post-conferences (and post-panels) volumes. However, it was said that it would be important to involve convenors into Publishing Committee when editing volumes based on their panels. As Marion Bowman and Gabor Barna were convenors of WG of EofR panel during the Lisbon SIEF Congress in 2011, Bowman volunteered to contact panellists and inquire if they are able and wishing to publish their papers in WG volume (Gabor Barna was not present in Tartu but Bowman declared to contact him about the issue). Saraiva suggested that papers from Szeged Conference and Tartu Congress might appear in one volume as the topics range was close enough to create a coherent volume.

Finally, closing the discussion, it was accepted that:

- it might be a good idea to recompose the Publishing Committee in such a way that it comprises of two permanent members and two shifting members. The shifting members should be panel convenors/conference organizers involved in editing a post-conference volume sustaining of papers presented during panel/conference they organized;
- convenors of the Lisbon conference panel will contact presenters;
- it is important to finalize publishing of the post-Warsaw volume and evaluate the final outcome. Generally it was accepted that Publishing Committee should be treated as a peer reviewing body caring about quality of accepted papers.

#### 6. Composition of the board.

Peter Jan Margry informed that due to his various new obligations within SIEF as well as at his work place he is not able to continue being a chair of WG of Ethnology of Religion. The composition of the board was discussed and István Povedák was suggested as a new WG chair. This was approved alongside with a decision to keep other board members in their positions (Marion Bowman, Clara Saraiva, Anna Niedźwiedz – secretary)

7. On behalf of all members of WG István Povedák expressed thanks to Peter Jan Margry for his involvement in development of WG. It was applauded by all present in the room.
8. Closure of the meeting and... a very nice banquet followed with various refreshments (delicious strawberries!!) served in a courtyard of Estonian Literary Museum for members of various SIEF Working Groups who were having their meetings within the building.