

Each to his time

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The Folklore Fellows' Communications series has an editor-in-chief appointed by the Finnish Academy of Sciences; there is no defined period of office. Hence the FFC's editors-in-chief have served for varying lengths of time. Among the shortest may have been the comparative religionist Uno Harva, who held the office for just a few years in the 1940s. The editorial career of my three predecessors added up to over half a century: Martti Haavio edited the FFC series up to the start of the 1970s, and his successor, Lauri Honko, from 1971 until his sudden death in 2002. Anna-Leena Siikala then took the reins, and she called upon me to become her successor as editor in 2009.

Now I in my turn am entrusting the editorship to my successor, docent Frog, of Helsinki University. He has a multifarious experience of editing academic publications, apart from his own impressive academic output. Frog is known particularly for his grasp of mythology and the language in which it is expressed.

It is good that the editor of an academic publications' series should change reasonably often, or at least that his or her career takes a break while doing it. Every researcher has their own idea of what is significant in their field and of what research deserves publication, and if the editor of an academic series has a powerful view and plenty of choice in the manuscripts offered for publication, the publications series may take on too much of the editor's own appearance. I do not believe FFC has become subject to this sort of pressure, but there are other reasons why it is good for the editor-in-chief to change. I realise that it is good for FFC to gain a fresh academic perspective and a readiness for change. The content of the publications has already developed to become something many-sided, in line with how the field of folkloristics has broadened. Structurally speaking, thematic article collections have become general, even though FFC is still typically a series for monographs.

In earlier decades, changes in editorial practice and academe came at a quieter pace, and hence the editor's experience, gained over the course of decades, had greater significance. Nowadays various challenges and opportunities present themselves apace, and it is good that the FFC editor should not be too bound by how the office has been carried out hitherto.

At present, one great and for the moment unresolved question is the move of FFC to Open Access publication. There is mounting pressure for this from the direction of academic administration, and in principle everyone is in favour of it, but many practical and some principled questions are at present lacking a solution. Open internet access to the publications would certainly bring in more readers and visibility for the series. The sales of publications may well diminish, although in this respect the experiences of publishers are mixed – there are examples of sales increasing alongside open access.

It is also a symptom of change that this publication, FF Network, appeared last decade printed on paper, but a few years ago it became partially digital, and now the second purely digital issue is being published. Since the beginning of 2018 the newsletter has been accessible, in pdf form,

on the Folklore Fellows' website, and all older issues have been archived and made available there too. Moving over to purely digital output has been necessitated by the limited resources of Folklore Fellows.

The editor's star moments are of course the appearances of the publications, important for their content and fine in appearance. At the same time, worries may gnaw at the editor over the responsibility, about whether good, exclusive publications will come to the series, how the dialogue with the author will progress over the printing quality, will the agreed timetable be adhered to, whether the basic requirements of the series will be maintained, such as the submission of high-quality manuscripts, professionalism in production and ongoing availability of sufficient funds from year to year.

I wish my successor, Frog, good luck and success in the responsibility of the office, and thank all our readers for their interest in the newsletter.