

PREFACE

As I sit isolated in my study at home writing this preface to yet another exciting *Proverbium* volume, my thoughts go out to all paremiologists throughout the world. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed our lives for certain, but I hope that you, your families, your colleagues, and your students are coping with the threat of the coronavirus as best as you can. Cicero's proverbial expression "in eadem es navi" fits our situation perfectly well since we really are all "in the same boat." But I am also thinking of the proverb that "Hope springs eternal" and so I sincerely wish that we are all back to our normal lives when I send out *Proverbium* next year.

This year's volume contains a rich assembly of articles, reports, book reviews, and bibliographies from paremiologists working in Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Kenya, Lithuania, Nigeria, Russia, Switzerland, and the United States. This is a clear indication that *Proverbium* deserves the subtitle of *International Yearbook of Proverb Scholarship*. It is always a special joy when I receive an article from far away, giving me as editor the opportunity to represent the excellent paremiological research that is going on in distant lands.

Unfortunately, this volume also includes the sad news that we have lost two of our important colleagues and friends. Both Peter Grzybek (1957-2019) from Austria and John S. Mbiti (1931-2019) from Kenya passed away last year. They were internationally recognized proverb scholars having had a great influence on the advancements in paremiology and paremiography. We shall all remember them fondly as we carry on their important work.

As can be imagined, getting this new *Proverbium* volume ready for publication and mailing has been a tremendous challenge. Here in Vermont as elsewhere, we have lived in isolation for more than two months. The University of Vermont is closed, of course, and

we have been teaching Online and via E-mail. It has been difficult for students and professors alike, but we have all done our best. In fact, as I am writing this, this semester has just come to an end. While these are trying times, it is good to see how people come together, help each other, and comfort each other. The big question now is how our academic work will continue when the fall semester will begin at the end of August. Together we will face this situation in due time, and we shall prevail with engagement, compassion, and empathy.

As I sent my dear graduating students on their way on May 17, 2020 via the Internet, my message included the following statement: “As I thank you for having been such eager and supportive students, several proverbs come to my mind to send you on your life’s journey beyond the University of Vermont. There are three proverbs in particular that have guided me throughout my long life, and I believe that they would also serve you well as responsible citizens of the world: ‘Different strokes for different folks,’ ‘Making a way out of no way,’ and the golden rule ‘Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.’ Adhering to this wisdom will help you on your own path through what I hope will be a fulfilled life.” May these three proverbs also help us as we try together to conquer the coronavirus.

I thank all of you, individuals and libraries, for your continued support of *Proverbium* by sending us your valuable manuscripts, paying for subscriptions, and making financial donations to our yearbook. Special thanks go once again to my associate editor Galit Hasan-Rokem, my managing editor Brian Minier, and my production editor Hope Greenberg who helped to make this volume possible during difficult times. I also wish to thank my friends at Queen City Printers of Burlington, Vermont, for producing yet another handsome volume under difficult working conditions. Special thanks are also due Dean William Falls of the College of Arts and Sciences and our bookstore manager Robert Santry at the University of Vermont as well as my former German and Russian student Dr. Douglas Smith and his wife Stephanie from Seattle, Washington, for their generous support. All of these good friends are playing a big role in keeping our *Proverbium* afloat.

Wolfgang Mieder