



# BETH

Bibliothèques Européennes de Théologie

# BETH Bulletin 2024

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Hannie Riley and Jussi Hyvärinen

## Outgoing From the Departing Secretary

**Matina Ćurić**

2018-2023

Librarian, Pontifical Mission Society, Aachen, Germany

After five years, seven conferences, and taking 54 meeting minutes, the time has come for me to pass on the noble feather of *secretarius* of BETH. It has been an unforgettable journey to serve all of you and the BETH Board. When, in 2017, I was invited by the Board to take the role of the next Secretary, I had no previous experience of serving on any Board or association. Although I



had known BETH for a few years before my appointment, much of the work of BETH was new to me and I went in intending to give all I could, all the time thinking about not disappointing the three fathers who started this good work in the 1950s and further advancing the 'apostolic' mission of BETH they left us with.

The new role of the BETH Secretary came at the same time as my move from Croatia to Germany, so not only was I embarking on a new field of association work, but I was also immersed in a new language, culture, and context. In the last seven years, I have been stretched out of my comfort zone personally and professionally on so many occasions and levels that I can think of, but at the same time, all this new experience on the ground was the best tool and environment to help me grow (up). Working on different projects and events, and being in correspondence with colleagues from different European countries and the world, opened the field of

theological librarianship to me in a way no other role would have done. I have learned immense amounts about the social, cultural, and political contexts in which our libraries are found, and have been able to appreciate and contemplate on a new level the rich heritage, complexity, and challenges of our service to churches, religious communities, academia, and humanity in general.

At the same time, this creative and versatile work, where I had much freedom to explore and implement ideas, helped me to learn a lot about myself, my strengths, and my weaknesses. Thank you all for supporting me during my entire term, in all the ups and downs, and please accept my apologies and my deepest regret if I might deliberately and unintentionally have done or said something wrong to any of you. Specially, I want to thank the capable and talented members of the Board, for their guidance, commitment, and creativity. It was a pleasure working, planning, and discussing with you. Many thanks to our financial administrator, Marjolijn Palma, and IT administrator, Jan Verkoyen, for their support and wonderful cooperation, as well as all the conference hosts, associations, and project partners. All of you have greatly contributed to my professional growth and enriched me as a person.

As I reflect on the work and journey of BETH in the past five years, I recognize many significant moments and achievements, all of which make me incredibly grateful that I had the opportunity to serve on the Board during this time. Our Board, membership, and network grew and our conferences – which get better and more interesting, year on year – almost doubled in attendance. Increasingly, European and international librarians, scholars, projects, and other associations know about our work and are partnering with us. We have given BETH a new visual identity, professionalized its work, and set up many new regulations and processes. For two successive years we tried to host the annual conference in Lviv and spread our network in other Eastern European countries, only to be stopped in our plans by the pandemic. But the relationships with our Ukrainian colleagues stayed and grew, and now amid war, we are trying to support them as much as we can. In 2022, we celebrated our fiftieth anniversary, published a grand work on our history, and launched a Bulletin.

As I make my exit from the Board, I will not say I will miss you, because I hope to continue staying involved in this excellent work. Rather, I invite you all to give your contribution to BETH as it engages more and more in its own projects and initiatives in the future and support them in any way you can.