



Centre for Advanced Study Sofia

newsletter

2018–2019



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Swiss-Bulgarian Memorandum of Understanding launches a new fellowship programme for young Bulgarian scholars

On 8th November 2018, the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding, approved by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria on 15th October 2018. The Memorandum launches a programme for fellowships and academic mobility of young Bulgarian scholars and for research diaspora activities in the humanities and social sciences, to be implemented by the Centre for Advanced Study (CAS) in Sofia.

The Memorandum envisages institutional support for CAS for five years (2019–2024), provided by SERI, and funding for the above fellowship programme for five years (October 2019–June 2024), provided by MES.

MES secures funding for:

- 5 nine-month scholarships per year for Bulgarian scholars (including one month in a foreign institution);

- 2 three-month scholarships per year for representatives of the academic diaspora; or a total of 25 local and 10 diaspora Bulgarian scholars for five years.

CAS administers this program in full compliance with its requirements for independent decision-making with respect to the selection of fellows and research topics and for intellectual freedom.

In motivating the choice of CAS as the executor of the program, the Bulgarian government formally acknowledges the Centre as “the only non-governmental organization in the country with proven, internationally recognized capacity and longstanding successful practice in the management of fellowship programs for young scholars from Bulgaria and abroad.”

Pforzheimer Fellowship Programme, 2019–2022

As of October 2019, this new programme will ensure the continuation of the Advanced Academia fellowships for senior Bulgarian scholars, originally funded by the America for Bulgaria Foundation. The fellowships are named after the American philanthropist and bibliophile Carl H. Pforzheimer III, benefactor to the programme.

Our Director Diana Mishkova

was elected Foreign Corresponding Member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (2018) and awarded honorary doctorate from Södertörn University in Stockholm (2019).

CAS ADVANCED ACADEMIA INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIPS



Bulgarian Module: Fellows and Projects, 2018–2019

supported by America for Bulgaria Foundation



Alexander Panayotov

MA in Ancient History (Sofia University 'St Kliment Ohridski'); PhD in Jewish Studies (University of St Andrews)

Affiliation: Independent Scholar

Field of Study: Jewish Studies

Project Title:

Jews and Samaritans in Early Byzantium

The project aims to investigate the social and economic relations that influenced the structure of the communal life of Jews and Samaritans in the Byzantine Empire. It will recover a neglected area of history, and contribute to the study of minorities within larger political structures. The goal of the current project is to establish the place Jews and Samaritans occupied in the stratigraphy of Byzantine society and how the social and political changes in this society influenced their communal life. This will require a study of Jewish everyday life and the project will focus on the communal organisation and leadership of the Jewish community, the social

status, occupation and cultural concerns of its members.

The scope of the project is defined temporally and spatially. It is proposed to begin in the fourth century and end in the eighth century. This will allow the inclusion of the widest possible selection of epigraphic, literary and archaeological sources. Geographically, the project will include the areas of the Balkans and the Aegean. The proposed end-date of my project takes into account the limitation of evidence on Jews and Samaritans in the areas already mentioned for the period of the ninth century until the

eleventh century. The geographical scope has been defined by the evidence from the areas concerned, which is less studied and requires a new investigation and analysis.

The aims of the project are thus far-reaching and innovative and hopefully it will provide a stimulus to new research in the organisation and social position of minorities in the Roman and Byzantine empires, and a model for further historical studies of minorities and their adaptation to different social, economic and political contexts.



Anastasia Cholakova

MA in Archaeology with History as second subject (Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski";
PhD in Archaeology (Institute of Archaeology, University College London, UK)

Affiliation: Department of Philosophy and Sociology
(New Bulgarian University)

Field of Study: Moral and Political Philosophy; Social Theory, Analytical Philosophy

Project Title:

Reconstructing the Social Context of Technology: Integrated Perspectives on Centralized Metal Production in Late Antiquity

It is well known from written sources that the large-scale metal production in the late Roman Empire was to a great extent administrated by centralized state institutions. Nevertheless, despite the developed archaeological studies, it is accepted that there is hardly any reflection of such a historical narrative in the archaeological record. The present project seeks to call in question this general postulation and to demonstrate that an attentive and integrated research approach to the existing body of facts can be successful in interpreting certain distinct metalworking technologies within the milieu in which they were developed and practiced.

Accordingly, the endeavour is to create a more general narrative of the 'society – technology' system of interaction while combining different categories of evidence (written sources, material evidence, etc.).

The main focus of the project is on an important, but still not fully understood, archaeological assemblage from late Roman *Serdica*, the capital of *Dacia Mediterranea* province. Surprisingly for an urban context, rescue excavations in the centre of the city revealed great amounts of metallurgical debris – slags, clay tuyère fragments, etc., related to copper processing at

a proto-industrial scale. Understanding such a significant assemblage requires a detailed study of the archaeological record and finds, but also includes their reading within the historical and socio-economic context of the late Roman period.

The working hypothesis is that these remains should be interpreted in relation to the centralized late Roman state/military production, thus pointing to a possible diversity and mobility of the *fabricae* organization which has remained unrecorded in the written sources.



Ina Merdjanova

MA in Literature (The Maxim Gorky Literature Institute, Moscow); PhD in Philosophy (Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski")

Affiliation: Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Field of Study: Sociology, Peace Studies, Gender Studies, Religious Studies

Project Title:

The Kurdish Women's Movement and the Struggle for Peace in Turkey

This project analyzes the struggles of Kurdish women for recognition and gender equality at the intersection of two diverse social movements in Turkey: the Kurdish ethno-national movement for equal rights, inclusive citizenship and regional autonomy, on the one hand, and the larger feminist movement, which includes women from all ethnic and religious groups in the country, on the other hand. It argues that the Kurdish women's movement has powerfully challenged the status and traditional roles of women both in the Kurdish community and in the larger Turkish society. Kurdish

female activists have played a major role in the country-wide feminist struggles for peace as well as for women's emancipation and for the legal and cultural redefinition of the category of woman itself.

The research explores the dynamics of the Kurdish women's movement in an environment of growing instability in Turkey, raising social and political polarization and renewed violence in the predominantly Kurdish southeast since the collapse of a recent peace process in Turkey (2013–15). Importantly, women's cross-ethnic

peace activism has continued in the face of the renewed conflict since July 2015. The project argues that recent feminist solidarities in Turkey have been inspired by a strong vision of life without violence and by a conviction that peace cannot be achieved without the equal participation of women from all social groups. It analyzes the sustainability of the emerging new forms of feminist advocacy for peace and their impact on the Kurdish women's movement.



Katherina B. Kokinova

MA in Slavonic studies; PhD in Slavonic literatures (Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski")

Affiliation: Department of Comparative Literature, Institute for Literature, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Field of study: Literature, XX c., Transnational Metafiction

Project Title:

Politics of (Un)Reading

Politics of reading is understood as the specific textual strategies the works impose on their readers. Vladimir Nabokov's dictatorship in the short story *The Vane Sisters* (1951) serves to probe both his theory of reading and the (im)possibilities of the metanarrative. The main objective of the project is to outline a new cognitive reception theory, answering the questions how textual context models metafiction and when reading becomes unreading. Unreading (Herbert Schwaab) differs from non-reading, and is rather "a form of reading that is guided by

experience instead of interpretation". Elaborating on Hamilton and Schneider's suggestion about the roots of cognitive criticism in reception theory, the study aims to find out how the two frameworks could work together. Reception theory deals with the reader-text interaction and the reader as a textual structure and structured act. Cognitive approaches to literature are an intersection of literary criticism and cognitive science and prove to be diverse. Curiously enough, there isn't much done on meeting the perspectives of the implied reader

and the conclusions of cognitive psychology. However, the findings of cognitive science, generally studying the way we think (including perceive), could be enhanced by reception theory, focusing on the way we read. A prospective additional benefit of the study on better readers of narratives is to learn how to be better readers of life.





Neda Deneva

BA in History and Theory of Culture (Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski")
MA and PhD in Sociology and Social Anthropology (Central European University, Budapest)

Affiliation: Department of Sociology, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napocae

Field of Study: Migration Studies, Medical Anthropology, Anthropology of Labour, Anthropology of Citizenship

Project Title:

Return Migration of Health Professionals and the Transformation of Medical Practice in the Field of Maternal and Child Health: the Case of Bulgaria

The project seeks to understand and explain the ways in which return migration of health professionals back to Bulgaria affects the transformations of medical practice at an individual and at a systemic level. The particular focus is on returning medical specialists in the field of prenatal, natal, and neonatal care. Drawing on the concept of medical habitus, the project formulates the hypothesis that return migration creates the potential for transformations in the medical practices by exposing mobile professionals to alternative medical systems and modes of practice. It thus aims to examine the

role of returning health professionals as drivers of change, for the advancement of knowledge transfer and improvement of health systems at home.

Having gained experience from different medical systems and practices, and/or further medical specialization, the return health professionals bring back not only their labour force, but the potential for advancement in knowledge and innovation and to trigger change in their home health systems. Thus, the main hypothesis is that migration creates ruptures in the medical habitus and is a driver for change

in the way medical situations and conditions are perceived and approached. Moreover, this opens up the possibility for further steps into transforming the medical practice at a systemic level through changes in medical standards, hospital regulations, and state policies. In this context, the return health professionals can act as main agents of change both at individual and at systemic level.



Stefan Dechev

MA in History; PhD in History (Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski")

Affiliation: South-West University, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

Field of study: History

Project Title:

Nikolai Genchev (1931–2000) – Between Nationalism and Liberalism, Between Power and Dissidence, Pseudoscience and Science

This presentation will be an attempt to problematize the political and scientific routes of one of the most prominent figures among the Bulgarian intelligentsia in the period of communist rule – Nikolai Genchev (1931–2000). The published commemorative volumes (2002, 2012), memoirs, documentaries (2011) as well as Iv. Znepolski's research (2016) do not cancel the growing need to speak about N. Genchev's heritage critically and analytically, with the tools and horizons of modern

historiographical analysis. That is why in this presentation I will try to answer many questions that were not answered in the mentioned publications, including some important issues that were just sketched in some previous studies.

The first group of questions concerns Genchev's political and intellectual formations in 1950s and 1960s. Special attention will be put to Genchev and his role for the legitimization of a sacred national narrative. One of the main

focuses of the presentation will be the very specific and often self-restrained dissident thinking of Genchev. The last part of the presentation will cover the analysis of highly debatable and contestable N. Genchev's memoirs. His break-up with the Faculty of History and the journey to the Faculty of Philosophy will be the final step in my analysis.



Nikola Venkov

MA in Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology; PhD in Sociology (Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridski");
PhD in Mathematics (University of Nottingham, UK)

Affiliation: Independent Scholar

Field of Study: Urban Anthropology and Sociology

Project Title:

Conviviality or Politics of Urban Coexistence? A Study on Exclusion and Solidarity at a Site of Diversity in the East-European City

The notion of conviviality directs the researcher's focus towards the everyday process of how people live together in contexts of cultural diversity, of how they negotiate their sustained differences in mundane encounters and achieve 'minimal consensuses' in order to avoid conflict and preserve a state of working sociality. A bottom-up practice of conviviality is not necessarily dependent on the elite political discourses that try to promote diversity, yet almost all research has so far taken place in metropolises of the Global North where those discourses are well established.

This project brings to the debate the East-European City. I look at a site where inter-ethnic and inter-class diversity is negotiated from the bottom up: the district around the Women's Market in Sofia, the largest traditional marketplace in the city. It is possibly the only truly diverse locality in Bulgaria and it is not much celebrated for that. Despite an 'anti-diversity hegemony', instances of a bottom-up convivial practice, straddling social and ethnic boundaries, grow and persist here, alongside manifold conflict. My analysis is drawing on four years of ethnographic relationship with the fieldwork site and on a collected material comprising of ethnographic notes, recorded semi-structured

interviews, visual documentation, historical and media archive.

While work on conviviality is in danger of slipping into a post-political perspective, I would like to re-conceptualise the field from looking at techniques of living together to the politics of living together. I will challenge conviviality with a concept that took shape in my own previous work, 'politics of urban coexistence'.



Theodora Dragostinova

MA in History (University of Florida, USA), PhD in History (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA)

Affiliation: The Ohio State University, USA

Field of Study: History

Project Title:

The Cold War from the Margins: Bulgarian Culture and the Global 1970s

This project engages the cold war order of the 1970s through the experiences of a small state, Bulgaria, on the global cultural scene. Using cultural exchange as a lens, I detail Bulgarian policies at home and abroad to explore the importance of cultural diplomacy during a period of profound worldwide reorganization. By studying the unlikely encounters that emerged through culture, I show that the complex transformation of the cold war order in 1970s was not only the result of superpower dynamics.

As contacts between East and West increased

and the developing countries gained prominence, new opportunities arose for small states to interact globally and influence world affairs. Culture provided one successful strategy for shaping the global order through active engagement with a range of actors in the First, Second, and Third Worlds. In an unexpected twist, cold war cultural exchange became an aspect of contemporary cultural globalization.

The far-reaching and extravagant state investment in international cultural outreach

highlights Bulgaria's unique cold war trajectory. Yet, by situating those contacts in a global perspective, the larger objective of this project is to emphasize the importance of "socialist globalization" in the shaping of today's world. These cold war cultural endeavors still resonate in the post-socialist world, reappearing with a new intensity in the contentious memory wars about the legacies of communism in Europe and beyond.

supported by Landis & Gyr Foundation



Photo: Pete Pumell

Krassimir Terziev

MA in Painting, National Academy of the Arts, Sofia ; PhD in Cultural Anthropology (Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski")

Affiliation: Independent Scholar

Field of Study: Cultural Studies, Visual Studies, History and Theory of Visual Arts, Photography Theory

Project Title:

The De-Formation of the Photographic Image in the Post-Media Condition

The project offers a look on the changing techno-scape of photography at the present moment, defined as "the computational turn". The focus of study is one particular photo-based technology – photogrammetry, which transforms the familiar two dimensional surface of a photo in a three-dimensional model.

The usual workflow in photogrammetry is that a single maker takes shots from all angles in 360 degrees in order to cover an object of interest. The experiment this project proposes is the use of photos already made by large group of different people with no connection to each

other, all pointed a camera at certain moment to a shared object of interest: a public monument (the so called "1300 Years of the Bulgarian State" monument built in Sofia in 1982 and demolished in 2017). In such uncontrolled conditions it is assumed that the resulting 3D model would be inevitably imperfect. But that level of imperfection is exactly the point of interest for it would reveal collective patterns of movement and limits of reach. A new virtual object would appear generated by the collective lenses of a multitude of people.

There are numerous theoretical speculations that can be drawn from this experiment that

can contribute to rethinking of classical canons in photography theory in order to take into account the radically new practices of "the computational turn" in picture-making, how these new forms relate to the crystallised theories of photography, and what kind of new visual model is likely to replace the current phase of "fermentation".



CAS ADVANCED ACADEMIA INDIVIDUAL FELLOWSHIPS



International Module: Fellows and Projects, 2018–2019

supported by Porticus and Fritz Thyssen Foundation



Avishek Ray (India)

MA in Comparative Literature (Jadavpur University, India); PhD in Cultural Studies (Trent University, Canada)

Affiliation: Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, National Institute of Technology (India)

Field of study: Intellectual History, Cultural Studies

Project Title:

The Vicissitude of Orientalism: On the Myth(ification) of the Indian Origin of the Romani

Orientalist scholars have often claimed that the (European) Romani community had originated from India. The search for the 'origin', based on a structural analysis of the Romani language, started as early as the 18th century, and was premised on phonetic similarity – sometimes rather flimsy – between the Romani and the Indian languages. The proposed research aims to examine the credibility and ideological implications of such claims, and problematize the methodological apparatuses deployed therein.

The point is to question the Orientalist system of values and beliefs, its interpretive frameworks, prejudices and dispositions that render the narratorial articulation of such arbitrary claims to be 'true'. This project seeks to understand: Is homophony, methodologically, a sufficient proof for the inference the Orientalists made? Better still, is the claim analytically arrived at, or synthetically apriorized in order to commensurate with the Orientalist worldview? Why, when and how did the claim gain currency? Why and

how was the originary myth conceived? Why despite an arguable methodology this claim was (and is still) so widely accepted? Why are linguist scholars since the 18th century and some until very recently obsessed with 're-discovering' the 'primordial' connection between 'India' and the Romani, or more generally speaking, the ethos of wandering?



Kristina Nikolovska (Macedonia)

BA in General and Comparative Literature (Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje); MA in Identity Culture and Power (University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies); PhD in Text and Event in Early Modern Europe (University of Kent & Freie Universität Berlin)

Affiliation: National and University Library “St. Clement of Ohrid”, Skopje

Field of Study: Early Modern History and Literatures, Book History, Manuscript Studies, Philosophy of Historical Writing

Project Title:

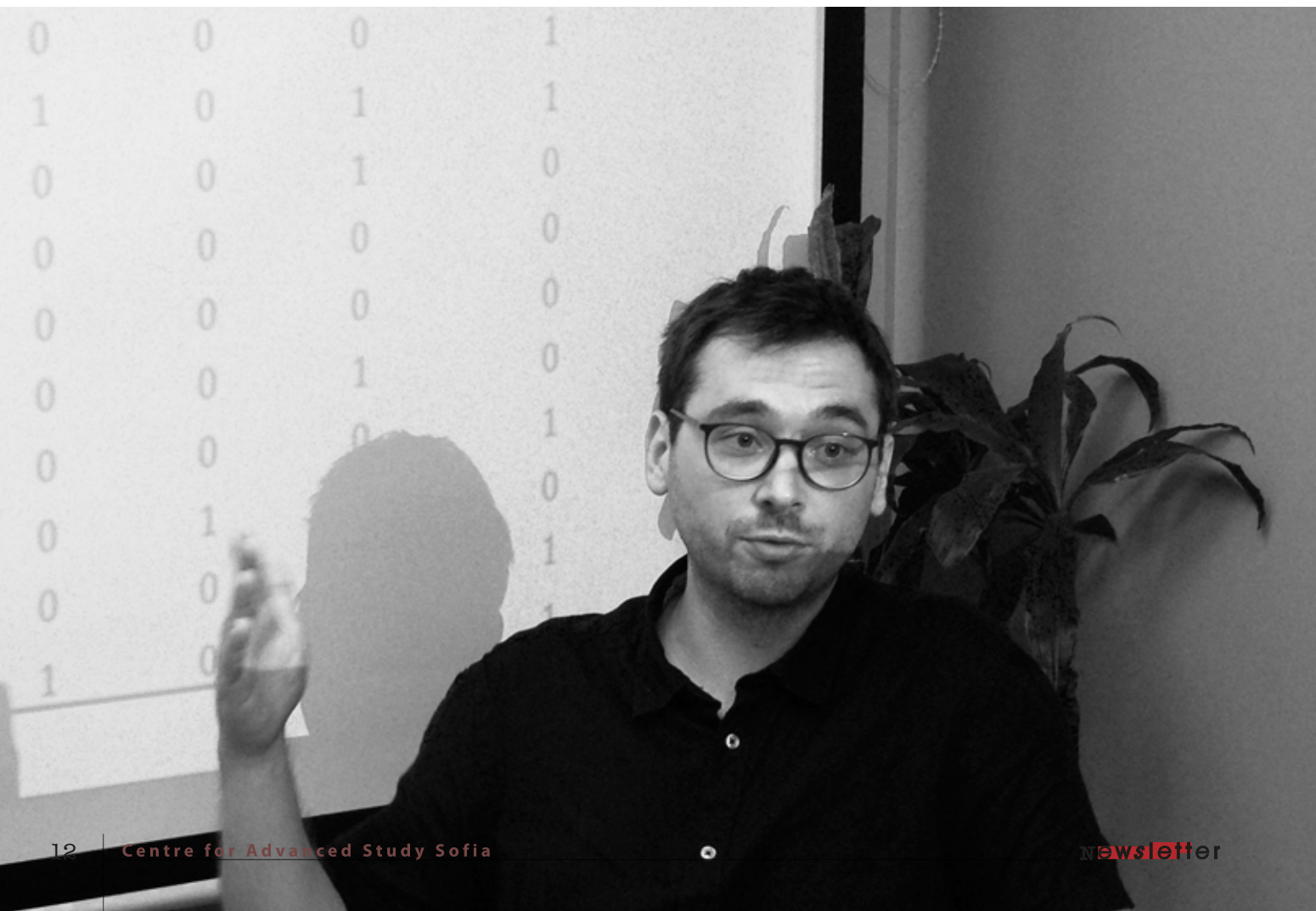
Churchmen on the Move: Early Modern South Slavic Narratives of Exile and Displacement

Recent scholarship has challenged nationalist historical narratives regarding the ‘forced mass migration’ of South Slavic clergymen into East Slavic lands after the expansion of the Ottoman Empire in the late fourteenth century. However, there has been limited engagement with how South Slavs represented narratives of exile. While the modern English term and its derivatives imply involuntary departure sanctioned by a political authority, the early modern usage of the Slavonic term and its derivatives cover a range of experiences, from expulsions to

diplomatic voyages. This project aims to explore the repertoire of rhetorical devices used for depicting South Slavic exile by the representatives of the ‘Euthymian’ school in the last decades of the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth century.

A comparative analysis of the narrative patterns of pre-Metaphrastic and post-Metaphrastic hagiographic texts reveals that the stock of rhetorical devices used by the Patriarch Euthymius of Tarnovo (c. 1325–1404) and his disciples can

be traced back to narratives of sainthood that predate the Ottoman conquests. Although the later texts differ from the hagiographies of the earlier tradition in many ways, the project will argue that their similarities are worth paying attention to especially given that no meaningful causal relation can be posited between the South Slavic employment of exile narratives and the ‘actual’ migration of South Slavic clergymen to neighbouring Orthodox Christian empires or principalities.





Viviana Iacob (Romania)

MA in Theatre History (Illinois State University, USA); PhD in Philology (School of Literary and Cultural Studies, University of Bucharest, Romania)

Affiliation: Centre of Excellence for the Study of Cultural Identity, University of Bucharest

Field of Study: Theatre Studies

Project Title:

Socialist Internationalists: Romanian Theatre Practitioners During Détente (1955–1975)

The project focuses on the history of theatre practice and criticism in the former socialist bloc during the Cold War from a transnational perspective. It outlines several biographies that highlight the circulation of ideas within the larger context of the East-West dynamics in theatre during détente.

The project focuses on trajectories of Romanian theatre practitioners from state socialism (actors, directors, stage designers, dramatists) that defied ideological divides. Socialist theatre internationalists are defined as those experts

coming from state socialist countries who were given the opportunity of professional and cultural mobility and as a result they enriched and shaped their respective fields at home, while also attempting to showcase the regime's policies and practices abroad. The project maps the international career of several Romanian theatre practitioners active in the global arena during détente while also outlining the makeup of the regional theatre community.

The background of the project is the internationalisation of East European cultures through

theatre during the Cold War. It reveals how the theatre landscape behind the Iron Curtain was transformed by the tides of détente (1955–1961 and 1965–1975) as its representatives constantly interacted with their Western peers. In the context of both Cold War cultural history and local theatre history, these biographies become lenses for understanding how politics, national contexts and individual experiences interweaved beyond the East-West divide.



Matthias Duller (Austria)

BA in sociology (University of Graz); MA in Southeast European History (joint degree: University of Graz and Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca); PhD in Sociology (University of Graz)

Affiliation: Department of Sociology, University of Graz

Field of Study: History and Sociology of the Social Sciences, Historical Sociology, History of Socialism in Eastern Europe, Sociological Theory, Set-Theoretic Methods

Project Title:

Tradition and Dissidence in East European Social Science

Social scientists have played important roles in the intellectual opposition movements to the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe. The degree to which social scientists were engaged in the opposition, however, differed strongly between countries. While Poland and Hungary are cases with a particularly strong dissident inclination of social scientists, most social scientists in East Germany, Bulgaria, or Romania behaved conformist or were loyal to the communist party states. This research projects tries to find explanations for these differences by studying the mechanisms leading to dissident vs loyal inclinations among academic social scientists in real socialist societies.

The guiding hypothesis is that the existence of a pre-war social scientific tradition can explain much of this variation. It appears that wherever this tradition was strong and not radically purged in the 1940s, attempts to accommodate the old intellectual elites in the new socialist realities were hindered by mutual resentments between intellectual and political elites. When the political pressure on intellectuals reintensified after 1968, these academics formed a large group of self-confident intellectuals deeply disappointed with the regime and thus formed a broad base for potentially dissidence. In countries where the institutionalization of the social sciences primarily happened during socialist

times, on the other hand, loyalty conflicts were weaker from the outset and never reached the critical mass.

The project explores this hypothesis through comparative histories of the social sciences in several countries on a macro level and interviews with former social scientists with different national and disciplinary backgrounds on a micro level.



Wiktor Marzec (Poland)

MA in sociology, and an MA in philosophy (University of Lodz); PhD in sociology and social anthropology (Central European University in Budapest)

Affiliation: The Robert Zajonc Institute for Social Studies, University of Warsaw, Poland;

Academic year 2018/2019: Center for Historical Research, HSE Saint-Petersburg, Russian Federation

Field of Study: Historical Sociology, History of Concepts, Labour History

Project Title:

Historical Sociology of Democratization and Semantics of Parliamentary Debates. The First Polish Diet, 1919–1922

My research at CAS combines historical sociology in its classic form, interested in revolutions and social unrest, with history of concepts understood as context-sensitive, sequential analysis of keywords changing over time. It investigates the parliamentary debate of the first diet of the modern Polish state (1919–1922) as responding to a rapidly changing geopolitical and social situation. The analysis demonstrates that the internal pressure of labour and peasant unrest contributed to the growing inclusion of those groups in a political, social and economic sense. In contrast, the external threat of war had an opposite effect. Although it stimulated patriotic fervour and allowed the left to argue for more inclusion of workers and peasants because

of the high death toll among them on the battlefields, it was actually the right that capitalized on national unity and easily used arguments about the Bolshevik threat or traitors among the landless masses to block or even withdraw labour rights or land reform implementation.

I ask about the forging of the foundations of the new polity in respect to class. Was the Russian communist state and its expansionist policies a factor triggering the reaction and militarization of the European right (epitomized in the narrative about fascism as a reactive phenomenon)? Or was it a threat forcing the propertied classes to agree to concessions and to build a pan-European welfare project?

I am also interested in how this story fits into the even broader question about the forces and factors of general social democratization in European history and how possible change occurred on the ground, in the rhetorical reality of parliamentary debate and the legislative process. In this way, I also aim at bringing history (of revolution, unrest, war and violence) back into the language-focused study of parliaments in pivotal historical moments.

supported by Gerda Henkel Foundation



Anton Symkovych (Ukraine)

MA in Social Work (California State University-Fresno, USA); PhD in Criminology (University of Cambridge, UK)

Affiliation: Department of Sociology, University of Johannesburg

Field of Study: Criminology/Penology

Project Title:

The Post-Soviet Prison Society and its Normative System: Power, Legitimacy, and Dynamics

Prisons are in constant flux, responding to changes in and outside of prisons. Although the political and economic bankruptcy of the erstwhile Leninist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe has triggered radical societal transformations, the effect on daily prison life remains largely uncharted. As a proponent of cross-national and interdisciplinary research, Dr Symkovych spent time at the Centre for Advanced Study, Sofia analysing and writing up data he collected in the Ukrainian and English prisons. His project aims to develop the

theorisation of prison adaptation and resistance and contribute to the conceptualization of order, power, and legitimacy.

Using Soviet penal and managerial legacies as an example, Dr. Symkovych argues that structure can be both constraining and enabling even within the milieu of the gross power imbalance of which prison is an archetype, thereby attesting to the coherence of agency and structure and the contingency of power. Furthermore, by highlighting that prisoners

may undermine officer power for all sorts of reasons, including opportunistic and selfish ones, this study cautions against romanticizing the 'defences of the weak' and a priori politicization of prisoner resistance.



Oleksandr Polianichev (Ukraine)

MA in History (Zhytomyr State University); PhD in History (European University Institute, Florence)

Affiliation: Independent Scholar

Field of Study: History

Project Title:

Engaging with the Empire: Colonial Uncertainties and the Imperial Rule in the North-West Caucasus, 1792–1870s

In a narrow sense, my project investigates the afterlife of the Zaporozhian Cossack Host. Abolished in 1775 by order of Catherine II, it re-emerged elsewhere—only to play a major part in one of the most successful settler colonial projects of the Russian Empire. The project follows the further fates of tens of thousands of the former Zaporozhian Cossacks, who, treated by the authorities with suspicion “at home,” were used as valuable military colonists in the North Caucasus.

Focusing on the Cossack experiences, I study how the Russian Empire's suspect community became an agent of imperial rule by asserting

and shaping the Russian dominion in the North Caucasus. The project explores how the Cossacks made use of imperialism and their presence as well as what hierarchies of loyalties and identifications they produced through their interactions with the empire, the indigenous tribes, and other settlers.

As the colonization of the North Caucasus was a product of deliberate and orchestrated efforts of the imperial authorities, the project takes a nuanced approach to studying the empire's settler colonial project. Bringing settlers to the region, the regime sought to make the territory Russian. However, tsarist officials and military

administrators repeatedly faced a problem as to which group to consider the conduit of Russification that would exercise “civilizing” influence over the “savage” Caucasus. I intend to show that ideas and experiences about the nature of Russianness, shaped in the colonial Caucasus context, had a profound effect on both the metropole and periphery, most notably—Ukraine.



CAS fellowship for Artists was made possible thanks to the generous support of the Landis & Gyr Foundation (Zug, Switzerland). It targets creative professionals from various artistic fields – writers, musicians, painters, sculptors, actors, film directors, architects, etc. The fellowship aims at encouraging a deeper interaction between theoretical research and the arts, and to stimulate and promote the creative work of the artist. In 2018 the fellowship was awarded to Mr Krassimir Terziev, an independent Bulgarian visual artist.

Krassimir Terziev is an interdisciplinary artist and researcher whose work spans a diversity of media, including video/film, photography, painting/drawing, and text, questioning the boundaries between reality and fiction, while exploring the manifold transitions and tensions between a globalized world, dominated by overwhelming multiplicity of symbolic imagery, and its material groundings in technological, physical and human ‘hardware’. He holds a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology from the Sofia University (2012) and an MA degree in Painting from the National Academy of Arts, Sofia (1997), lecturing in both institutions since 2012. His work is part of the public collections of Centre Pompidou/MNAM; Artest 2000+ Collection, Moderna Galerija Ljubljana; Sofia City Art Gallery; Kunstsammlung Hypovereinsbank among others. Born 1969 in Dobrich, Bulgaria, he lives and works in Sofia.

Today, Photography Has Almost Become Synonymous to Seeing

A Talk with Dr Krassimir Terziev, Fellow of CAS Fellowship Programme for Artists

Dr Terziev, your work at CAS is focusing on computational photography from an experimental and theoretical point of view. What, in particular, are you looking at?

Dr Krassimir Terziev: My interest was provoked by a new software technology called photogrammetry. For long, one of the distinctive qualities of photography has been its two-dimensionality, its surface. However, photogrammetry extracts volumetric data from a pool of two-dimensional surfaces to create



a three-dimensional model. This computer vision methods and software triggered my profound interest since it provides a sort of magical recreation of reality. I decided to examine photogrammetry from a more methodological point of view, relating different categorisations coming from the classical theory of photography to the kind of transformational processes triggered by photogrammetry. At the same time, as a visual artist, I was also looking for a practical component for my research. While on the search, something dramatic happened in Sofia – the demolition of the vastly contested, emblematic for socialist modernism *1300-Years-since-the-Foundation of the Bulgarian State* monument in front of the National Palace of Culture. This became the practical groundwork of my theoretical work. My idea was simple: as the object, i.e. the monument, had been destroyed, I decided to recreate a model of the monument as generated by two-dimensional snapshots taken by people during the long three decades of its existence. And since people do not consciously photograph an object from all possible angles in 360 degree, there are viewpoints and perspectives in those photos that are missing. This, however, gives me the opportunity to draw the form of public attention: What

are the sides and perspectives that caught people's interest when taking the photos? What went missing?

What is the degree of truthfulness between the (once) existing and recreated object then?

K.T.: Well, computational photography is not just about representation of the world anymore, but it is becoming more about projecting worlds through the prism of certain scientific models and theories in mathematics. Photogrammetry have been used in archeology, architecture, and cultural preservation as an objective method for recreation of real world objects and artifacts, and I apply the method to my own research in order to question the nature of that kind of recreation.

There used to be something magical about photographs which tended to feed our fantasy about their context and the people and locations in them. Yet, these days, taking pictures has become such a conventional part of our lives that we may easily delete a photograph the very next second after it was taken. Has technology destroyed the magic of photography today?

K.T.: There is always an aura of the past when something is distant and gone, and this sensation has always been present in photographs. However, because of the profound digital shift in photography nowadays, time seems to have been annihilated in pictures. There is no more distance between the moment of taking, viewing and distributing an image as all these processes are happening momentarily and right now. This is also challenging the way we perceive photography today. With the rise of computation and the interference of computational processes photography is about to disappear as it is everywhere with us, especially in the camera of our smartphones, and has boiled down to the use of a simple gadget. While in the past, there were certain unique qualities attached to photography which we used to describe, analyse and set in solid theory, they are vanishing now. The digital devices are assuming control and destroying photography as we know it. Also, not long ago, a photograph was thought of as a trait of preservation of what used to exist in the world. Now, the software is trying to predict reality, the expectations of the user, and hence, is trying to live up to our expectations by manufacturing the



image. We can't be sure of what is in the photograph anymore.

Does it mean that technology is actively interfering and taking over our role as photographers?

K.T.: Yes, this is what is happening.

Could we become slaves to our own invention in the future then?

K.T.: I would be careful to paint such an apocalyptic picture of the future, but for sure, photography is having its dramatic moment in which the machine is replacing man.

Since the aggressive substitution of the photographic film with digital photography, photography has become an easily accessible part of our daily lives. How has its extreme user-friendliness altered modern culture?

K.T.: Whereas in the past, photography belonged to a limited medium and was deployed for particular reasons, today it is being used by a vast pool of actors and in myriad of cases. Today, photography has almost become synonymous to seeing as the very moment we see something, we also tend to photograph it. On the other hand, in the past, when on holiday, we would take a few pictures to stay in the family album for good. Now, we can't cope with the hundreds of snapshots anymore. It is difficult to orient ourselves in this

gigantic pool of pictures, to keep them, to recall the events in them, to pay them proper attention... Actually, since I got a camera on my smartphone, I stopped taking pictures... Then the selfie appeared and it has stuck with us. My guess is that we have become to feel so pitifully small amongst the billions of people in our globalised world that the selfie has become a means of proving to ourselves that we still exist.

philosopher Vilém Flusser, textolatry, i.e. by image and by greater abstraction, by text. The dynamics of the struggle between these two is taking dramatic shifts today due to the digital technologies and the so-called visual turn. Just as in the preliterate era of human civilisation, images are taking the upper hand and prevailing. This is a fascinating process to observe, follow and analyse.

Interviewed by the Editor





As part of the **Landis & Gyr Foundation** international residency programme for artists and writers, the contracted grant contains a provision allowing Swiss artists to visit Sofia and spend time as part of the CAS community. On this basis, from April through July, 2018 CAS hosted the Swiss-born artist, photographer and visual performer Mr. Thomas Kneubühler.

Born in Solothurn, Switzerland, **Thomas Kneubühler** has been living in Montreal, Canada since 2000. In 2003 he completed a Master's degree in Studio Arts at Concordia University, Montreal. His work has been presented in exhibitions and screenings in both Europe and North America, most recently at the Centre culturel canadien, Paris, at the Centre Pasquart Bienne, at the Videonale.15 at the Kunstmuseum Bonn, at Galerie B-312, Montreal, and at Les Rencontres International in Paris and Berlin. In 2011 he was awarded the Pratt Whitney Canada Prize of the Conseil des arts de Montréal, and in 2012 the Swiss Art Award by the Ministry of Culture Switzerland.

My Work Is About the Idea Behind an Image

A Talk with **Thomas Kneubühler,** photographer and visual performer

What is the driving force that has turned photography into part of your life?

Thomas Kneubühler: I have been fascinated with photography for a long time. When I started out, I was naïve and also excited to take pictures, but soon I felt I wanted to 'dig deeper' and reflect on how images transmit preconceived



ideas, especially in mass media, and how these images influence us. I frequently visit places with restricted access, while also trying to understand who, actually, is in power there – a company, an organisation or the government, and how they exert control over the public image. In my work, I try to investigate things critically, from a different angle, and thus, create another, different image. I am less interested in taking nice, composed or spectacular images. Instead, my projects are more conceptual, they start out with an idea, or I try providing a different perspective on a subject. Let me be more specific: Traditionally, photographers went out into the world to look for dramatic occasions, like wars and famine, or for people on the edge of society, in order to produce a social reportage. Access there is relatively easy as one is going to people who are happy when somebody comes and listens to their story. I am doing the opposite: I am looking at big cooperations or power structures. People

in power do not like open ended research projects, they like to control their image, and pay a lot of money via PR to maintain that. Yet, this is what motivates me to do my work.

You describe yourself as a visual artist. What is the difference between photographers and visual artists?

T. K.: Photographers try represent the world, whereas my work is more about the idea behind an image, and then I think also about the context where I present it. With photographers the presentation and the context is often secondary. In my case, I carefully consider what size I would like the image to be, and how it is contextualize and presented in space. This influences the way the audiences read a photo. The photo is not autonomous; there is a context around it, and this should be taken into consideration.

You are also a socially engaged artist. Several years ago, you went to the far north of Canada to undertake your “Under Currents” project; now, your CAS project focuses on the Bulgarian-Turkish border. How do you choose the locations you would like to explore?

T. K.: There is always a personal story which triggers a project. I was asked to give a photo workshop in Northern Quebec and I discovered a region which is otherwise hard to access. What captured my interest was how the north is exploited for natural resources to support our lifestyle in the south. So my focus was not the ethnographic – the traditional landscape and the people living there. By focusing on the exploitation of the natural resources, it became a project about the people in the cities of Canada.

A frequent problem is that when you go to a remote place and take images of something unfamiliar, you end up with

something exotic. The viewers can't really evaluate and judge these images because they have never been there, and they are unaware of the context behind either. In contrast, my 'Under Currents' project aimed that the viewer makes a connection with their own life, because it had to do with industry, with our modern lifestyle that thrives on natural resources.

My Bulgarian project is not only about that specific border, but also about the implications borders carry and the impact they have on people's lives. At the end of the day, everyone is affected by borders to a bigger or smaller extent. This is precisely what I am looking into; my hope is to find something more general and less specific or exotic, so that when I show the project's results outside of Bulgaria, the audiences can relate to them because similar stories happen everywhere around the world.

Yet, why Bulgaria and its southern border?

T. K.: My partner is Bulgarian; I met her

in Canada and I got interested to spend some time in her country of origin to find out more about her culture and the people who live there. Bulgaria is a former communist state, and in the recent past, people were not allowed to travel abroad. There were borders to keep them inside. However, a few years ago, I came upon an article in the *New York Times* reporting that Bulgaria was about to put up a new wall along the Turkish border – this time to keep people (*refugees from the Middle East and South Africa –the Editor*) out. This became the starting point for my work here. When I came to Bulgaria, I also learned about its history, the Balkan wars in 1912–1913, the subsequent border situation and the resettlement of thousands of people. So my border project became bigger and bigger, embracing different times and different aspects, and the impact the border has exerted on the people.

In my life, I have thought a lot about nations and borders. I come from Switzerland, which is a small country. When I grew up, it had a strong nationalistic agenda,

which is still reflected in the language. *Immigranten* (immigrants) is a rarely used word; instead, *Ausländer* (foreigners) is the preferred term, even when talking about residents who have been born in Switzerland. I find this horrible because what the word literary means is 'people from the outside'. It brings up very strong barriers between the Swiss and the *Ausländer*.

When and where will we be able to see your 'Border' project?

Right now, I am collecting material; when back home, I will go through it, edit it and decide what to use. I also might find out that there are pieces still missing. It takes me always some months or even years for a project to be completed. Once finalised, I hope I will be able to show my CAS work also in Sofia, as I am pleasantly surprised of how many places for contemporary art exist in the city.

Interviewed by the Editor





DOES MONASTIC ECONOMY MATTER? RELIGIOUS PATTERNS OF ECONOMIC BEHAVIOUR

In October 2016 the **Center for Governance and Culture in Europe (CGCE)** at the **School of Humanities and Social Sciences** in the **University of St. Gallen** and the **Centre for Advanced Study Sofia (CAS)** established a research **NETWORK** devoted to the history of the monastic economy in South-Eastern and Western Europe. <https://www.cas.bg/en/cas-current-programmes/research-network-dedicated-to-the-history-of-the-monastic-economy-53.html>

During its two years of existence, the **NETWORK** strived to enhance the contacts, to assist mobility and hence to foster the intellectual debate in the field.

- The two workshops hosted by CAS in November 2017 and November 2018 listed 39 presentations by 28 researchers from Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, France, Romania, Serbia, and UK.

- Two guest-lectures were delivered to a wider audience: by Prof. Victor Roudometof (University of Cyprus, Nicosia) who talked on *The transformations of Orthodox Christianity in the Longue-Durée: A Sociological Analysis* (Cf. interview with him in CAS Newsletter 2016–2017), and by Prof. Elias Kolovos (University of Crete) who gave a speech on *Monasteries, Economy, and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times*.
- The **NETWORK** provides Research allowances in support of studies on the history of the monastic economy. The first two calls for proposals have yielded eight applications out of which five projects (from Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, and Serbia) have been funded.

In the current CAS Newsletter we post an interview with Prof. Elias Kolovos, as well as the opinions of five participants in the Network.

Monasteries, Economy, and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times



On 9th November 2018, the Centre of Advanced Study Sofia welcomed **Professor Elias Kolovos**, University of Crete, Greece, for a keynote lecture on ***Monasteries, Economy, and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times***.

Elias Kolovos is Professor in Ottoman History at the Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Crete, Greece. He studied history at the Department of History and Archaeology of the Aristotle University of Salonica and obtained a PhD degree in Ottoman History with a thesis on *Peasants and Monks in Ottoman Halkidiki (15th – 16th c.)*.

Elias Kolovos is an elected member of the Board of the International Association for Ottoman Economic and Social History. As a visiting scholar, he taught at the *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes*, Paris, France, Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey, and he was a researcher at the Program of Hellenic Studies, Princeton University, USA. He participates in research projects at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies, FORTH, Greece, at the *Ecole Française d' Athènes*, and the *Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History*, Germany. He has written, edited, and coedited ten books and over forty papers in Greek and international publications and journals. His research interests include the Mediterranean economic history, the history of the insular worlds, the history of monasteries, rural and environmental history, as well as the spatial history and legacies of the Ottoman Empire. His latest book, *Across the Aegean: Islands, Monasteries and Rural Societies in the Ottoman Greek Lands* (Istanbul: The Isis Press) appeared on the market in 2018.

From medieval to modern times, monastic institutions, especially in the Orthodox Christian world, have had an impressive historical continuity. Some of the monasteries on Mount Athos, for example, have had a continuous presence for over a millennium now. How can we explain this continuity? Is it only because of the religiousness of both the monks and the faithful across ages?

In his talk, Prof. Kolovos argued that this continuity has to be explained on the basis of continued – albeit different in character under different historical circumstances – relations of the monastic institutions with economic activity and political protection. He focused especially on monastic landholding across the ages as the basis of economic stability in both medieval and modern times, and even today; and then dwelt on the political protection which the monasteries enjoyed in various states and societies, even Islamic ones, by illustrating his point with the case of the Orthodox monasteries under Ottoman rule. Finally, he included into his analysis and discussion the role of the monastic networks – religious, economic and political at the same time. In conclusion, after breaking down the patterns of monastic activities in their cultural, economic, and political aspects, Prof. Kolovos argued that, from the perspective of the medieval and modern monks, all these aspects were combined together and practised as a whole. This unity of behaviour might have contributed and is still contributing today, in our post-industrial age, to the survival, stability, and even success of the monastic institutions. After all, in the midst of economic crises, the world is always in search for stable institutions.

History Has Never Been Either Black or White



An Interview with Professor Elias Kolovos

Professor Kolovos, you are delivering a lecture on *Monasteries, Economy and Politics from Medieval to Modern Times* tonight. What are the most important peculiarities of monasticism that the general public should bear under consideration?

Professor Elias Kolovos: I have a specialisation in medieval, early modern and modern history, and archives are vital for my work. Monasteries have existed for centuries and have been stable institutions over time; therefore they also hold the oldest archival collections in both Western and Eastern Europe. The monasteries of Mount Athos were built far before the period of modern state formation; however, ever since, their monks have been meticulously keeping their archives as they needed them to secure their rights over their monasteries and their lands. These archives have been kept in different languages and in a very organised way, and have thus become a treasure of information about our past.

In addition, monasticism is not just very ancient; it is also marked by continuity. This is a fact that is impressive in itself. When one enters the monastic world to

conduct research, one also needs to be aware of the history of these institutions. Some monasteries like *St Catherine's Monastery* on Mount Sinai in Egypt, or *Mar Saba Monastery* in Palestine, have survived over centuries. What sustained them was their strong economic basis, especially their landholding, as well as the political protection they had.

How has the social role of the monastic institution changed over time?

E. K.: Initially, the holy men in antiquity – the monks – used to be the intermediary between society and God. Both peasants and urban communities respected them, and the monks were frequently approached as arbitrators in conflicts, even in everyday fights. Then, in the sixteenth century, Henry Tudor had the monasteries disbanded in England and appropriated their property and land. Land enclosure followed, capital was accumulated and modern capitalism was born. With the Reformation in the West, the Protestant preacher appeared; rather than an intermediary between the believers and God, he assumed the role of a soldier of Christ working inside society. However,

in the East and in the Balkans, monasticism survived until the twentieth century. Today, it is on the rise again as, for many ideological reasons, young people are entering monasteries.

Nowadays, some monasteries, like those of Mount Athos, are trying to adhere to their traditional role and keep their seclusion; others are developing into centres of monastic tourism. Monastic tourism is becoming a huge business these days, not only in Greece, but all over the Balkans and the Middle East. It is also an example of how traditional monasticism has been incorporated in our postmodern world, due to a general rise of new age religions.

You are also an expert in Ottoman history. How did the monastic institutions survive under the Ottomans?

E. K.: There have been constant changes throughout history and monasticism has been adapting itself to them, even in Islamic states and in the Ottoman Empire for certain. I mentioned the case of Henry VIII and the dissolution of the monasteries in England. A similar attempt was waged by the Ottomans in the 1560s when all monastic property was confiscated by

Sultan Selim II. Soon, however, the powerful monasteries were allowed to retrieve their property by purchasing it back and thus contributed to financing the Empire and its wars. Instead of dissolving the monasteries, the Ottoman Empire struck a compromise with them by offering political protection of their property. The question is why a Muslim state would opt for preserving a Christian institution. The answer is economically justified – the state benefitted from the huge tax gains from the monasteries as well as from any other ecclesiastic institutions.

The Ottoman period in the Balkans has been enduringly taught, at least at a popular Bulgarian textbook level, with a heated nationalistic zeal. What different perspective does your archival research bring to the Balkans' Ottoman past?

K.: Unfortunately, this is a general trend not only in the Balkans, but also in the Arab countries, i.e. in all modern states that were created in confrontation with the Ottoman Empire. Both in the Balkans

and the Arab world, the Ottoman period has been depicted negatively, as a dark age of suffering of the people. However, history is much more complicated than this. The current Balkan nations as well as those in the Middle East used to be inside the Ottoman Empire historically, so modern nationalism in these geographical entities is also part of the Ottoman history. We have to deal with this history, leaving aside stereotypes which, in fact, are a product of internal political games or nationalistic projects in conflict with broader international agendas. We need to study our recent past, no matter how proud we are of our ancient traditions. If we do not know our more recent past well, we will not know our antiquity well either. We need to study our Ottoman past as a less known, yet fascinating period in our history. As a historian, I came upon a very interesting forged Ottoman document in the archives of Mount Athos. It was supposed to be a holy edict issued and signed by Sultan Selim I in person, saying that, during his campaign into Egypt in 1516, the Forty Martyrs – the protectors

of *Xeropotamou* Monastery on Mount Athos – appeared in the Sultan's dream. Those were claimed to have offered the Sultan their aid to accomplish his conquest in exchange of his support to have the monastery's church restored. The latter had been destroyed in a fire. By forging this *hatt-i sherif*, the monks gained permission to *build* – rather than repair – a new church. This was a serious offence against Ottoman law. Yet, the document depicted a Muslim sultan as a benefactor of a Christian monastery... This is an intriguing story informing historians how the Christian Orthodox communities lived and survived under the Ottomans. To avoid problems with the Ottomans, but also to exploit their rule for their own gain, the Christians included the Ottomans in their Christian Orthodox images of the world. By no means was the Ottoman period an easy one for the Christian Orthodox; yet, it was not a period of constant repression either. History has never been either black, or white.

Interviewed by the Editor



Network Participants' Feedback

You have been associated with the activities of the Research Network devoted to the history of monastic economy. How do you assess its outcomes, the potential of this scholarly community and of the research support provided by the project for the advancement of the knowledge in the field?

Phokion Kotzageorgis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

The topic of the Network is truly innovative, especially for the Eastern and South-eastern European scholarly community, and is of great importance for historians. *The Research Network on the History of Monastic Economy* has produced highly academic workshops, where some major topics and problems in the field have been presented and discussed.

There are some drawbacks, however. Firstly, the network is somewhat 'loose', with no close links amongst its members, as the participating scholars meet only once, in November, and they have no other research connections.

The dissemination of the workshop outcomes is another problem as it does not promote a comparative perspective between the East and West. Unambiguously, the research allowances are of crucial importance for both the dissemination and the publicity of the Network.

Overall, the Network is a very good and innovative idea – at least for the East – yet, it needs to be expanded. We, historians, depend on the monastic archives, and suffer from their rather uneasy access since they are private (at least in Greece). However, one may boost the current frame of the field attracting colleagues, mainly younger ones, from the field of sociology,

social anthropology, tourism management, economics, etc.

The publication of the workshops' proceedings, at least, or a collection of articles based on their findings would also be of importance.

The field of monastic economy is a very promising one and needs to be continued and expanded, either in its historical dimension, or in its current trends.

Antoine Roulet, Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS), France

I think that the research network dedicated to monastic economy has proven to be a powerful tool to compare Eastern and southern Europe to western Catholicism, if such distinctions are really pertinent. It is the perfect place to fill in a huge historiographical gap as, regarding the history of monasticism, there are no significant works that explicitly treat orthodox and

latin monasticism on the same level of expertise. These comparisons were especially fruitful because of the various spatial and temporal scales chosen by each contributor to the workshop and because most of the cases that were discussed were able to deal with very technical aspects of monasticism like without forgetting the wide and comparative scope of the

workshop. Discussions were fluid, both in English and in French, and people do begin to organize themselves as a community, share information or develop their own research projects with others members of the network. There is still much to do and to discuss on the matter and I hope the network will go on and proceed to publish its first outcomes.

Lidia Cotovanou,
Institute of History "N. Iorga", Romanian Academy of Sciences

The participation in the Network has been beneficial in many respects for my research. I had the opportunity to integrate a community of scholars researching the monastic economic activities across the Orthodox commonwealth. The two workshops considerably enriched my agenda devoted to the web of dependencies of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the Principalities of Walachia and Moldova during the 16–17th centuries. A general overview of the dependencies which belonged to the major Byzantine and post-Byzantine Orthodox monasteries (Mount Athos, Mount Sinai, Patmos, Meteora, Soumela, Kykkos, those of the Patriarchate

of Jerusalem...) is noticeably missing and the workshops organized by CAS covered to a great extent this historiographical gap. They were also a good possibility to share the results of my own enquiries in the field and I am delighted by the interest in those topics demonstrated by the colleagues. The two grants I obtained in the frame of the Network permitted me to organize research trips to Iași/Moldova (May 2018) and to Greece (September 2018). These research allowances gave me the chance to collect needed data in incomparably shorter terms than if arranged by myself. I would like to emphasize the high professionalism and the accuracy of the

Network's management and financing by the CAS project team.

The next step in the development of the Network should be the dissemination of the research results and of the workshops' proceedings. It could happen through an edited volume or e-publications of papers by the participants. The work accomplished in the frame of the Network covers an important area of the South-Eastern European economic history which has been ignored or underestimated for a long time by the academic community. The very reasons for this omission deserve future attention.



Ivan Biliarsky,
Institute of History,
Bulgarian Academy
of Sciences

Regarding your question, I believe that the launch of such a topic of research is a very inventive and promising initiative, and is already yielding fruitful results. Both workshops have confirmed that their subject provokes the scholarly curiosity of experts from interdisciplinary fields. This approach is both new and creative, and should be supported and continued. It has united a team of similarly-minded scholars and we would appreciate to stay together once the project is completed. An even better option would be if the project could be extended and continued. I am absolutely convinced that our mutual collaboration is already generating considerable positive results.

Aleksandar Fotic,
Department of History, University of Belgrade

Some of us spent years in researching certain types of monastic economy confined in more or less limited chronological periods and more or less wide geographical areas. Sometimes we came to conclusions which are characteristic of certain social and economic context in specific legal

regimes, like that of the Ottoman Empire for example. Exchanging thoughts and ideas with colleagues from different scientific disciplines and with quite different experience, in such workshops, can raise intriguing questions on applying different methodologies and points of view.

This kind of interdisciplinary workshops could enrich us and lead us to see certain unexpected patterns in much wider perspective and historical context. For me, this is a great benefit.

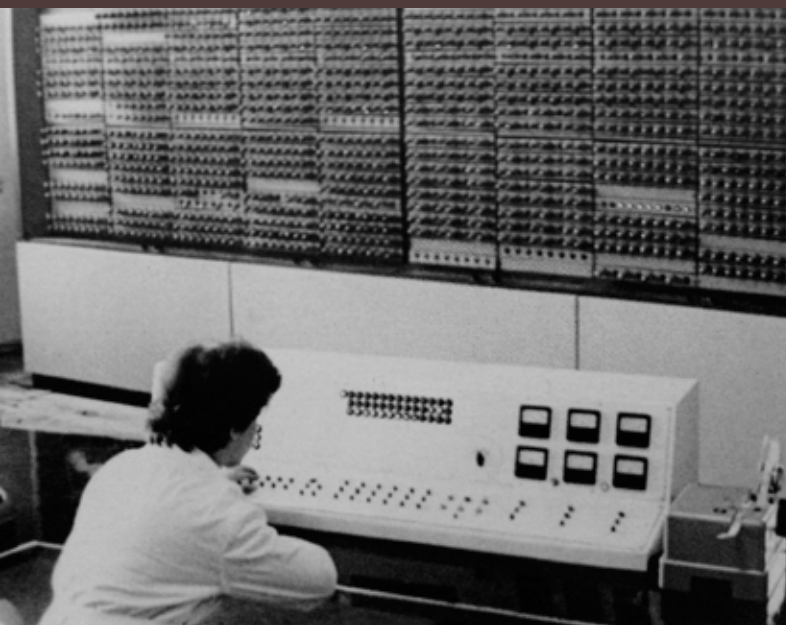
CAS Re-link Seminar

Dr. Elitza Stanoeva



The CAS re-link workshops continue the initiative to host seminars convened by former CAS fellows, who had spent considerable time abroad, offering them the opportunity to present their new research and re-link with the current intellectual life of the Centre and in Sofia. Last year, our former Advanced Academia fellow, Dr. Elitza Stanoeva convened an international workshop on the topic “Bulgaria’s Imperative of “Opening to the West” in the 1960s and 1970s” which took place at the Center for Advanced Study on 14 November of 2018. Elitza Stanoeva holds PhD in History from the Technical University of Berlin (2013). Currently, she is Research Associate at the European University Institute in Florence where she is team member and expert on Bulgaria in ERC-funded project “Looking West: The European Socialist Regimes Facing Pan-European Cooperation and the European Community” (PanEur1970s). She was a CAS fellow from March through July, 2016.





Bulgaria's Imperative of "Opening to the West" in the 1960s and 1970s

At the centre of this presentation was the Bulgarian pursuit of economic cooperation with Western Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, discussed mainly through the examples of Bulgaria's bilateral relations with West Germany, a traditional economic partner and by far its largest in the West, and Denmark, a country of little to none prior contacts. In its cautious but resolute opening to the West, the Bulgarian regime was motivated by both symbolic and pragmatic incentives: on the one hand, aspirations for international prestige and, on the other hand, recognition of astute economic needs.

While all socialist regimes, in this period, were in one way or another torn between fraternal solidarity and mutual competitiveness in their opening to the West (that is, access to Western markets), for Bulgaria this competitiveness came from a position of recognized weakness. And its competitive weakness prompted the Bulgarian regime to cover all bases – on the one hand, to expand and diversify bilateral partnerships in the West and, on the other hand, paradoxically, to maintain its tight bonds with the Soviet Union. Thus, Bulgaria's alignment in the Soviet sphere of influence acted as both a propeller and a brake to its ambitions towards the West. It was the fear of remaining more insulated than the other people's democracies that propelled its engagement with capitalist countries and it was the priorities of Soviet superpower politics that constrained the breadth of its opening.

A key element of the Bulgarian diplomacy towards the West was the extreme predominance of economic interests to the extent that in the aftermath of the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, Bulgarian foreign policy was redefined first and foremost as foreign economic policy. Just like Bulgaria's foreign policy was dominated by economic interests, its opening to the West meant first and foremost economic cooperation and such cooperation

was carried through even when political contacts were severed due to geopolitical pressures. Expanding economic deals with the West retained priority not only on the top party level but also on the managerial level. Here, this imperative was additionally conditioned by a sort of institutional path-dependency: for the operatives in the foreign service and the foreign-trade organizations who fostered contacts with Western partners, expanding such partnerships meant increasing the weight of their organization within the sectoral administration, successfully fulfilling their annual plans, and ultimately protecting their personal positions. Such micro-institutional stakes enhanced bottom-up the regime's commitment to its opening to the West.



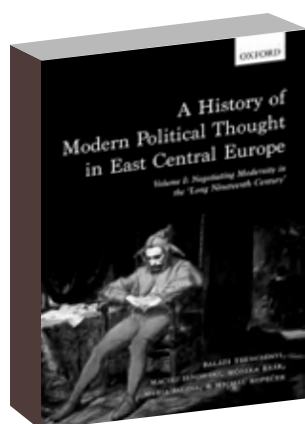
A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe

Balázs Trencsényi
Michal Kopeček
Luka Lisjak Gabrijelčič
Maria Falina
Mónika Baár
Maciej Janowski

Oxford University Press



Book Launch at Central European University, Budapest



Volume I Negotiating Modernity in the 'Long Nineteenth Century'

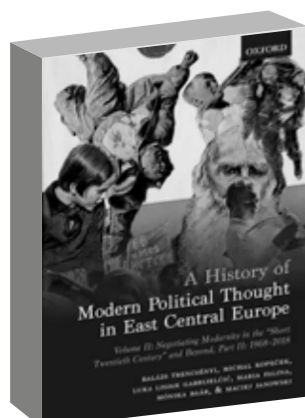
Volume I deals with the period ranging from the Late Enlightenment to the First World War. It is structured along four broader chronological and thematic units: Enlightenment reformism, Romanticism and the national revivals, late nineteenth-century institutionalization of the national and state-building projects, and the new ideologies of the fin-de-siècle facing the rise of mass politics. Along these lines, the authors trace the continuities and ruptures of political discourses. They focus especially on the ways East Central European political thinkers sought to bridge the gap between the idealized Western type of modernity and their own societies challenged by overlapping national projects, social and cultural fragmentation, and the lack of institutional continuity.



Volume II Negotiating Modernity in the 'Short Twentieth Century' and Beyond

Part I: 1918-1968

Part I of Volume II depicts the colorful intellectual landscape of the interwar period and the increasing political and ideological radicalization culminating in the Second World War. Taking the war experience both as a breaking point but also a transmitter of previous intellectual traditions, it maps the intellectual paradigms of the immediate postwar years, marked by a negotiation between the democratic and communist agendas, as well as the subsequent processes of political and cultural Stalinization. Subsequently, the post-Stalinist period is analyzed with a special focus on the various attempts of de-Stalinization and the rise of revisionist Marxism and other critical projects culminating in the carnivalesque but also extremely dramatic year of 1968.



Volume II Negotiating Modernity in the 'Short Twentieth Century' and Beyond

Part II: 1968-2018

Part II starts with the defeat of the vision of "socialism with a human face" in 1968 and the political discourses produced by the various "consolidation" or "normalization" regimes. It continues with mapping the exile communities' and domestic dissidents' critical engagement with the local democratic and anti-democratic traditions as well as with global trends. Rather than achieving the coveted "end of history", however, the liberal democratic order created in East Central Europe after 1989 became increasingly contested from left and right alike. Thus, instead of a comfortable conclusion pointing to the European integration of most of these countries, the book closes with a reflection on the fragility of liberal democracy in this part of the world and beyond.

Beyond Balkanism

The Scholarly Politics of Region Making

By **Diana Mishkova**

Routledge

In recent years, western discourse about the Balkans, or “balkanism,” has risen in prominence. Characteristically, this strand of research sidelines the academic input in the production of western representations and Balkan self-understanding. Looking at the Balkans from the vantage point of “balkanism” has therefore contributed to its further marginalization as an object of research and the evisceration of its agency. This book reverses the perspective and looks at the Balkans primarily inside-out, from within the Balkans towards its “self” and the outside world, where the west is important but not the sole referent.

The book unravels attempts at regional identity-building and construction of regional discourses across various generations and academic subcultures, with the aim of reconstructing the conceptualizations of the Balkans that have emerged from academically embedded discursive practices and political usages. It thus seeks to reinstate the subjectivity of “the Balkans” and the responsibility of the Balkan intellectual elites for the concept and the images it conveys. The book then looks beyond the Balkans, inviting us to rethink the relationship between national and transnational (self-)representation and the communication between local and exogenous – Western, Central and Eastern European – concepts and definitions more generally. It thus contributes to the ongoing debates related to the creation of space and historical regions, which feed into rethinking the premises of the “new area studies.”

*Book Launch, co-organized by
Central European University, Budapest
and Karl Polanyi Center for Global Social Studies,
Hungarian Academy of Sciences*

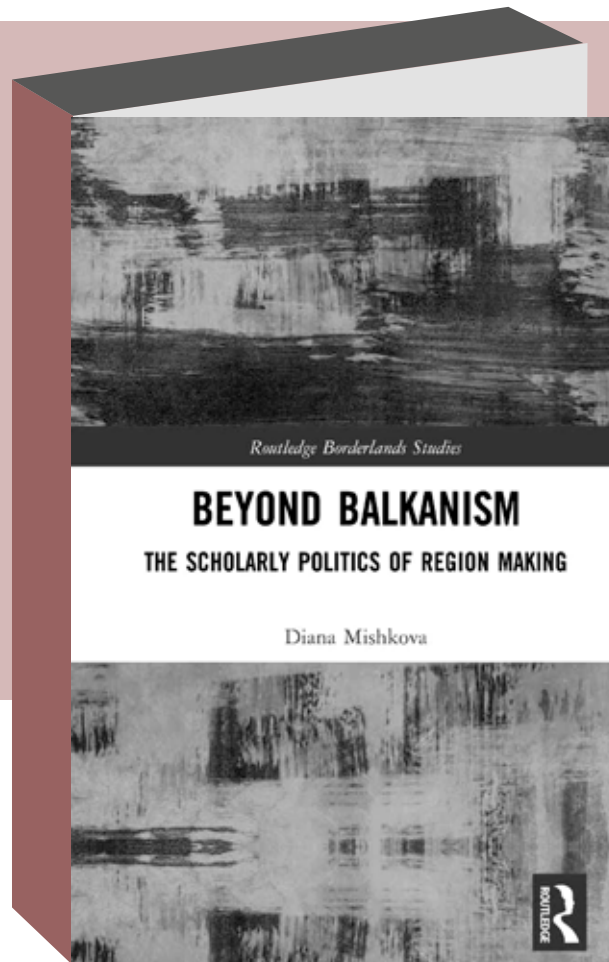


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CAS CALENDAR OF EVENTS January 2018 – January 2019



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11 January 2018

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Dr Iva Manova: History of Philosophy and National Identities During the Communist Regime: Studies on Avicenna and al-Fārābī in the Soviet Union (1950s–1980s)

19 January 2018

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The "Revival Process" in Bulgaria (1984–1989): Looking Back



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A CONCEPTUAL HISTORY

Edited by Diana Mishkova & Balázs Trencsényi



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