



# SEMESTRIAL REPORT SPRING – SUMMER 2021

**New Europe College –  
Institute for Advanced Study**

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## A Word to Our Readers: (Re)discovering Normality

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An Institute for Advanced Study is an exceptional institution, a place where exceptional researchers meet, where ideas are being discussed and questions asked. Sometimes old answers find new perspectives, meeting curiosity, ingenuity and joy. That pure joy of being passionate about a certain topic and of being granted the time and the resources to follow that passion. The joy of discovering and of sharing. Especially in Romania this kind of institution has been surrounded by debates about the role of elites in our society. Some voices might have argued that an “elite institute” could overlook the reality of everyday life of the local academic milieu. Over the past almost three decades (!) New Europe College has proved that its community of fellows and alumni is not part of an intangible elite, but very much an active part of the national and international academia, shaping and supporting research at a highest level. New Europe College has always strived to be a place of excellence and normality. Reliability, trust, knowledge, as many other exceptional qualities and values, shouldn't be extraordinary traits, they should rather shape normality and have a positive impact on societies and communities all around the world.

In the context of a global pandemic however, what used to define normality has been challenged. The institute's reports during this different and thought-provoking academic year show how NEC successfully adapted to this crisis situation, how the online tools made it possible for fellows, researchers and alumni to meet, discuss and even conduct research in a different way and in a “new space”. For more than a year, connecting to online communication platforms, working remotely and downloading online research materials has become almost a routine. Despite the major and obvious downsides, benefits were also a part of this experience. And the values and qualities have not been altered. Almost at the end of this academic year, we reflect on the major changes the institution went through, we acknowledge the fact that all fellowship and research programs have been successfully continued (or conducted to a successful end), and we appreciate how the safety of all fellows, researchers and staff members has always been a priority. We also reflect on what awaits us once the new academic year starts. How will academic events look like in future? Will the online still define the way we interact and conduct research? How do we reshape the old and good habits without losing what is good, or even essential?



during the second half of the 2020-21 academic year.

All these questions may lead to reflections on how “normality” for an Institute for Advanced Study can actually be defined. Exceptional qualities. A routine that is open to changes. Optimal procedures. Adaptability. Offering researchers optimal working conditions. Observing and encouraging that “good chemistry” between fellows. But otherwise as in chemistry, where “normality” (or the “equivalent concentration”) can actually be calculated, finding answers may take some time and effort. Meanwhile, this report should offer a short overview of the institute's activities

# Current Fellowship Programs and Research Projects

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## Fellowship Programs

### NEC Fellowships (since 1994)

At its foundation in 1994 NEC was offering up to ten fellowships to young Romanian scholars. This program represented its core and still does, while developing in time two branches, which have distinct sources of funding: The **International Fellowships**, enjoying the financial support of NEC's institutional sponsors, complemented through funds resulting from an award granted for the first time in 2016 by the Romanian *Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation*, the **UEFISCDI Award Program**; and the **Ștefan Odobleja Fellowships** (since 2008), targeting young Romanian researchers, supported also by UEFISCDI. The fellows are chosen by the NEC international Academic Advisory Board for the duration of one academic year or one term. They gather for weekly seminars to discuss the progress of their research and participate in all the scientific events organised by NEC. The fellows receive a monthly stipend and are given the opportunity of a research trip abroad, at a university or research institute of their choice. At the end of their stay, the fellows submit papers representing the results of their research, to be published in the New Europe College Yearbooks.

### Pontica Magna Fellowships (since 2015)

This program, supported by the VolkswagenStiftung (Germany), invites young researchers, media professionals, writers and artists from the countries around the Black Sea, but also beyond it (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine), for a stay of one or two terms at the New Europe College. Besides hosting fellows, NEC organizes within this program workshops and symposia on topics relevant to the history, present, and prospects of this region. In the framework of this program, NEC offers Alumni of the *Black Sea Link* and *Pontica Magna* Fellowship programs the opportunity to apply for a research stay of one or two months in Bucharest: **Pontica Magna Returning Fellowships (since 2016)**. The stay should enable successful applicants to refresh their research experience at NEC, to reconnect with former contacts, and to establish new connections with current fellows.

### Gerda Henkel Fellowships (since 2017)

This program, developed with the support of Gerda Henkel Stiftung (Germany), invites young researchers and academics working in the fields of humanities and social sciences (in particular archaeology, art history, historical islamic studies, history, history of law, history of science, prehistory and early history) from Afghanistan, Belarus, China (only Tibet and Xinjiang Autonomous Regions), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan, for a stay of one or two terms at the New Europe College, during which they have the opportunity to work on projects of their choice.

### Lapedatu Fellowships (since 2018)

This program is supported by the Lapedatu Foundation, which supports research activities on 'the life and work of Lapedatu family members and the socio-cultural and political context' during which they lived. Thanks to its generous financial contribution, NEC invites to Bucharest scholars who present scientific papers and initiate debates on Romanian and Southeastern European history in modern and contemporary epochs. The contribution of the Lapedatu family members to the development of Romania is particularly taken into consideration. During the Academic Year 2020-21 NEC invited to Bucharest a foreign researcher specialized in the field of Romanian Studies, who is currently conducting research in one of the world's top universities. On this occasion, he will spend a month in Romania and work with a young Romanian researcher to organize an academic event hosted by NEC.

### ***Porticus N+N Fellowships (since 2020)***

The *Nations and Nationalisms* (N+N) program, developed with financial support from the Porticus Foundation, aims to approach one of the main challenges faced by societies around the globe, but mostly in Central and Eastern Europe: a growing tension between nationalizing and globalizing forces in a world dominated by migration, entanglement, digitization and automation. The *Porticus N+N* Fellowships are open to international researchers working in all fields of the humanities and social sciences with an interest in the study of nations, varieties of nationalism and/or populism, and the effects of globalization on national identities. Fellowship criteria are aligned with those in the other programs hosted by the institute. NEC aims to use the expertise of the *Porticus N+N* fellows to encourage scholarship and critical thinking among targeted groups of students in Romania and the region.

### ***AMEROPA Fellowships (since 2020)***

Organized with financial support from Ameropa and its subsidiaries in Romania, and with academic support from the Centre for Government and Culture at the University of St. Gallen, this program aims to investigate the conditions and prerequisites for democratic stability and economic prosperity in Romania and the neighbouring region. The *Ameropa* Fellowship Program is open to early career Romanian researchers in history, anthropology, political science, economics or sociology. Their projects should focus on aspects relevant for the challenges to democratic consolidation, economic development and strengthening of civil society in Romania and the region. Each year, an annual workshop will be organized in the framework of the *Ameropa* Program.

### ***Landis & Gyr Fellowships (since 2000)***

These fellowships are awarded under the umbrella of the studio program for artists, writers and cultural critics in London, Zug, Budapest, Bucharest and Sofia, offered by Landis & Gyr Stiftung, Zug (Switzerland). Landis & Gyr Foundation (one of the main supporters of NEC since its inception) has the use of one of the apartments on the NEC premises, where recipients of a grant offered by the Foundation are hosted. They work on their own projects, give presentations of their current work and are welcome to take part in all NEC activities.

## **Research Projects**

### **Art Historiographies in Central and Eastern Europe. An Inquiry from the Perspective of Entangled Histories (ArtHistCEE)**

#### **ERC Starting Grant (2018–2021)**

This ERC Starting Grant proposes a selective account of the art histories produced in present-day Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia between 1850 and 1950, from an entangled histories perspective. The team members look at the relationships between the art histories produced in these countries and the art histories produced in Western Europe. But more importantly, they propose to investigate how the art histories written in the countries mentioned above resonate with each other, either proposing conflicting interpretations of the past, or ignoring uncomfortable competing discourses.

The untimely demise of the Principal Investigator, **Ada Hajdu**, has led to a process of phasing-out of the project (initially granted until 2023), which continued for a limited period of time, until July 31, 2021, during which some of its objectives have been finalized.

### **Periodization in the History of Art and its Conundrums. How to Tackle Them in East-Central Europe**

#### **Supported by the Getty Foundation as part of its *Connecting Art Histories* initiative (2018-2021)**

This program consists of a series of three research seminars of one-week duration each, discussing periodization and related issues in the history of art, whose addressees are early-career art

historians from East-Central Europe, and which include a number of invited guest speakers, from this region, and outside it. Though a sense that the conventional periodizations are in need of revision can be detected earlier, a more pointed reflection on this topic can be noticed after the demise of communism and the dismantling of the colonial system. In the aftermath of the 1989 events in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, a number of scholars felt the pressing need to reconsider the place of local art histories within the established narratives, and to reflect on how these local histories might fit within the Western canon, or to question its authority. Art historians dealing with modern and contemporary art were particularly sensitive to such questions, but this gradually became a more general concern, affecting the writing of histories of art of earlier periods. Frictions between the generally accepted periodizations and local trajectories in art became more apparent, making it necessary to reflect on approaches that could address such concerns, and on the instruments art historians may put to use in order to tackle particular case studies. It thus seems to us that periodization, with the many issues related to it, is a topic likely to elicit interest from colleagues and younger scholars from countries in the region, and to lead to fruitful exchanges not just across the discipline, but across national borders, and – through the presence of the invited speakers – across regional ones.

The research program is coordinated by **Anca Oroveanu**, Academic Coordinator of the New Europe College and Professor of History and Theory of Art at the National University of Arts in Bucharest.

### **Citizen Science for Environmental Citizenship: Backyard Birding and the Potential for Cultivating Green Engagement (EnviroCitizen)**

**Horizon 2020 (2020-2024)**

The EnviroCitizen project brings together seven partners in Norway, Sweden, Estonia, Netherlands, Romania, Spain, and Cyprus to uncover the processes by which citizen scientists working in environmental-based activities can strengthen their environmental citizenship. The team of researchers has selected to study birding activities because they hold great potential for developing environmental citizenship. The project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Program. One of the team's members, **Ștefan Dorondel**, is a NEC Alumnus and Senior Researcher at the "Francisc I. Rainer" Anthropology Institute of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest. The researchers aim to (1) assess the evolution of citizen involvement in citizen science birding activities; (2) evaluate how citizens learn about and enact environmental citizenship through their citizen science birding activities; and (3) develop innovative community interventions designed to complement existing citizen science birding programs in order to cultivate environmental citizenship in the future.

### **Networks of Devotion: The Selection of Saints as Marker of Religious Identity in Post-Byzantine Moldavian Representations (Wall-Paintings and Texts) (NoDeS)**

**UEFISCDI Young Research Teams (2020-2022)**

The project proposes a case study of a delimited corpus: the iconic portrait of saints in Moldavian monuments, cca. 1490-cca. 1530, with a view at elaborating a methodology for the study of South-Eastern European cultural transfers. Its aim is to investigate the peculiar selection of saints, contextualizing it within the Moldavian monastic culture and spirituality during the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> C. and within the already inventoried Late and Post-Byzantine pictorial tradition. The devotional peculiarities, the interplay between written evidence and artistic practice, the theological culture, and its relevance for the study of cultural heritage, are still rarely addressed topics in local scholarship. For the study of these issues, we will make use of recent approaches in the history of art: the geography of art, cultural transfers, and hybridization. We intend to assess the peculiar Moldavian sanctoral, either as a result of specific devotions of the monastic milieu, or as a consequence of integrating workshop traditions from the Post-Byzantine Balkans.

The research project is coordinated by **Vlad Bedros**, NEC Alumnus, Researcher within the Department for Medieval Art and Architecture of the “G. Oprescu” Art History Institute in Bucharest and Assistant Professor at the National University of Arts in Bucharest.

### **Yiddish Culture in Greater Romania (1918-1940): in the Aftermath of the Empires and Challenged by the New National State (YIDCULT)** UEFISCDI Exploratory Research (2021-2023)

The project aims to investigate one of the most prolific periods in the history of Yiddish culture in Romania, starting from the fact that, after the creation of Greater Romania, old traditional Yiddish centers such as Tshernovits/Czernowitz, Satmar/Szatmar or Keshenev/Kishinev, but also Yos/Jassy had to reconfigure their position within the Yiddish-speaking Eastern European world as a consequence of the fall of empires and construction of new nation states such as Greater Romania. In this context of peripheralization of old centers within the new state, the activity of the traditional Yiddish centers declined as local activists and intellectuals started to migrate to Jassy or Bucharest, looking for better professional opportunities and visibility and, as a consequence, new centers of Yiddish culture flourished in regions without a previous strong tradition (Bucharest), while communication and synchronization with reputed centers such as Vilna/Vilnius or Varshe/Warsaw increased. The project aims to investigate what were the socio-cultural mechanisms responsible for restructuring Yiddish cultural life after the changes brought by the end of World War I and by the creation of Greater Romania, and how this process occurred by tracing relevant individuals, institutions and projects until the first laws and decrees of the political regimes forbid the activity of Yiddish theatres, press and, eventually, the usage of Yiddish, thus making cultural life impossible.

The research project is coordinated by **Camelia Crăciun**, NEC Alumna and Associate Professor in Jewish Studies, Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Bucharest.

### **The Oldest Romanian Manuscript and Printed Versions of the Akathistos Hymn (17<sup>th</sup> C). The History of a Liturgical Masterpiece Between Text and Image (AKATHYMN)** UEFISCDI Exploratory Research (2021-2023)

The interdisciplinary team involved in this project intends to study a most influential liturgical piece dedicated to the Virgin Mary, the Akathistos Hymn, from a philological and historical perspective. They will focus on the multilingual textual tradition (Greek, Slavonic and Romanian) of the Akathistos Hymn which develops simultaneously in the Romanian-speaking regions in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and on the flourishing iconography of the Akathistos cycle, present in mural representations and in illuminations. The first Romanian versions of the Akathistos Hymn appear as manuscripts and printed texts in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. These important documents for the history of old Romanian and for the history of liturgy in Romanian remained unstudied, although two metropolitans, key-figures of the old Romanian literature, Dosofti and Antim, printed the Akathistos Hymn in 1673 and 1698 respectively. The relation of the Romanian tradition with the contemporary Slavonic texts, from which it originates, has never been studied, nor have been its connections with the Greek illuminated manuscripts of the Akathistos Hymn which high Greek clergymen executed in Wallachia in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The present project attempts to evaluate the dynamics of this multilingual 17<sup>th</sup>-century tradition of the Akathistos Hymn, to edit the oldest manuscript and printed Romanian versions, and to assess the relation between the textual and the iconographic traditions.

The NEC Alumna **Emanuela Cristina Timotin**, Senior Researcher at the “Iorgu Iordan – Al. Rosetti” Institute of Linguistics of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest, is coordinating this research project.

These last three projects are developed with the financial support of the *Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation* (UEFISCDI) of the Ministry of Education and Research, Romania.

# 2020 – 2021 Fellows



Nargiza  
ARJEVANIDZE  
(Georgia)

Volodymyr  
ARTIUKH  
(Ukraine)



Galyna  
BABAK  
(Ukraine)

Alberto  
BASCIANI  
(Italy)



Mariana  
BODNARUK  
(Ukraine)

Elena-Cristina  
BRĂGEA  
(Romania)



Elena  
BRODEALĂ  
(Romania)



Kateryna  
BURKUSH  
(Ukraine)

Pantelis  
CHARALAMPAKIS  
(Greece)



Kirill  
CHUNIKHIN  
(Russia)

Elena Magdalena  
CRĂCIUN  
(Romania)



Mustafa Yakup  
DIKTAŞ  
(Turkey)

Maria Sabina  
DRAGA-  
ALEXANDRU  
(Romania)



Lucia  
DRAGOMIR  
(Romania)



Andrei  
EMILCIUC  
(Moldova)



Oksana  
ERMOLAEVA  
(Russia)



Adela-Gabriela  
HÎNCU  
(Romania)

Andrada-Mihaela  
ISTRATE  
(Romania)



Ciprian  
JELER  
(Romania)



Luciana-Marioara  
JINGA  
(Romania)



Cyrill  
LIM  
(Switzerland)



Dumitru  
LISNIC  
(Moldova)



Nika  
LOLADZE  
(Georgia)



Ioana  
MANEA  
(Romania)

Ancuța Maria  
MORTU  
(Romania)



Sergei  
MUDROV  
(Belarus)



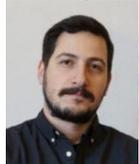
Andreea-Maria  
MURARU  
(Romania)



Andriy  
POSUNKO  
(Ukraine)



Cosmin-Gabriel  
RADU  
(Romania)

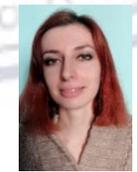


Lola  
SAN MARTÍN  
ARBIDE  
(Spain)



Denis  
SKOPIN  
(Russia)

Aram  
TERZYAN  
(Armenia)



Irina  
TROCAN  
(Romania)



Spyridon  
TSOUTSOUMPIIS  
(Greece)



Cătălin  
ȚĂRANU  
(Romania)



## Wednesday Seminars

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### WRITING ABOUT THE REVOLUTIONS AND THE FALL OF THE GREAT EMPIRES OF THE ORIENT (1670's-1730's): THE EMERGENCE OF "ORIENTAL HISTORY"?

**Ioana MANEA**

(Romania)

October 2020 – July 2021

*Ștefan Odobleja* Fellow

Teaching Assistant,

Georg-August Universität, Göttingen

Presentation on March 3, 2021

Belonging to the field of intellectual history, but closely related to other complementary fields like literature, philosophy and theology, my research aims at answering the following question: is there an “Oriental history” that appears between 1671 and 1734? Understood as the European writing of the history of the Orient, the “Oriental history” has, so far, not drawn the researchers’ interest, though it may contribute to a better understanding of the concept of “universal history”, which is central to Enlightenment. My research is based on a corpus of three works written by authors coming from different cultural backgrounds, namely Jean-François Bernier, Judas Thaddeus Krusiński and Dimitrie Cantemir. Though belonging to different genres (travel account, chronicle), the three works share the focus on the crises undergone by the great Muslim Empires of the Orient. My study of the three texts will rely on a comparative approach that, among others, will use concepts like passions and interests.

### POLITICS OF CULTURAL TRANSFER IN SOVIET UKRAINIAN LITERATURE AND LITERARY THEORY IN 1920S – THE BEGINNING OF 1930S: NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL MODERNIZATION

**Galyna BABAK**

(Ukraine)

March – July 2021

*Pontica Magna* Fellow

PhD Candidate, Department of East-European Studies, Charles University, Prague

Presentation on March 10, 2021

The proposed project is focused on the role of cultural exchange as a driving force of “modernisation” of Ukrainian literature and literary theory in the 1920s – and to its political dimension and outcome. Ukraine’s history of 1920s is one of the best examples of the co-existence and development of nationalism and communism. The aim of the proposed research is to demonstrate how the project of radical “modernization” of Ukrainian literature and theory was used for the construction of the new national identity in the 1920s.

My project will deepen our understanding of political, cultural and intellectual history of Soviet Ukraine in the 1920s. Also, it will demonstrate how the crucial tendencies of the 20th century global history – colonialism, troubled relationships between nationalism and communism, a balance of power and influence between metropolis and colonies – manifested themselves in Ukraine. This is of prime academic importance because of the decades of Soviet falsification of Ukrainian history and of the recent attempts to interpret this period from the nationalist perspective.





## THE PHILOSOPHY OF PROMISE AND ITS TWILIGHT

**Ciprian JELER**  
(Romania)

October 2020 – July 2021

*Ștefan Odobleja* Fellow

Researcher, Institute for Interdisciplinary Research,  
Social Sciences and Humanities Research  
Department, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, Iași

Presentation on March 17, 2021

The topic of this project lies at the intersection of philosophy, cultural history and, to some extent, history of literature and art. Its starting point is the thesis that making historical promises – i.e. describing a future state of society/humanity based on an explanation of what has led to their current situation – has been the very driving force of modern philosophy. But this is a project of cultural history because, instead of focusing on the conceptual content of modern philosophy, it attempts:

a) to clarify the role that modern philosophy – as a philosophy of promise – has assumed within the cultural space of modern society and to distinguish the structure of its promissory work from other kinds of cultural promises in modern societies, such as the promises of societal change made by certain avant-garde movements;

b) to determine why contemporary philosophy has drifted away from the historical promissory work that had undergirded its discourse for almost two centuries.

## THE ROTATION OF THE SMALLER WHEEL – “TOLERANCE REMITTANCES” IN TRANSYLVANIA VS. NORTHEASTERN ROMANIA

**Andreea-Maria MURARU**  
(Romania)

October 2020 – July 2021

*AMEROPA* Fellow

Associate Professor, Faculty of Cybernetics,  
Statistics and Economic Informatics,  
University of Economic Studies, Bucharest

Presentation on March 24, 2021

Post-communist Romania experienced massive migration. With almost 20 percent of the Romanian population living abroad, migration is a phenomenon that has (and continues to) profoundly changed the Romanian society. 5 billion US dollars are yearly sent by emigrants to Romania. But it's not only money that comes from migrants; they engage in a system of complex flows with their sending country making the relation between the Diaspora and the home country resemble a system of interlocking wheels.

In this framework of interconnectivity, I intend to study whether emigration has contributed to “remitting tolerance” in Transylvania and northeastern Romania and if money tells a story of tolerance in Transylvania and northeastern Romania.

For this purpose, I intend to combine the quantitative approach, using survey data, with a qualitative analysis (the profile of the emigrant in the recipient countries, the economic conditions of the staying population) and to enforce results by references to ethnographic and anthropological studies developed for communities in Transylvania and Moldova.





**LES ALEAS DES ECHANGES  
LITTERAIRES A L'EST**

**Lucia DRAGOMIR**  
(Romania)

October 2020 – July 2021

*Ștefan Odobleja* Fellow

Lecturer, Faculty of Foreign Languages and  
Literatures, University of Bucharest

Presentation on March 31, 2021

L'analyse croisée des mécanismes et des perceptions des échanges littéraires entre les pays dits « frères » à l'époque communiste – dont je privilégie les rencontres entre les écrivains – fait sortir à la surface des micro-logiques significantes dans le tissu même d'une réalité complexe et souvent très différente de l'image stéréotypée que l'on a parfois sur l'homogénéité de ce que l'on appelle le « Bloc de l'Est ». Plus que « le transfert vertical » (de l'Union Soviétique vers les pays satellites), « les circulations horizontales » (entre les pays satellites) (cf. termes employés par S. Kott et J. Faure dans « Le Bloc de l'Est en question », 2011) – reflétées dans une variété de documents conservés par les archives des institutions impliquées (en Roumanie et dans les autres pays « frères ») et à travers les témoignages personnels – aident à mieux comprendre les aléas des rencontres littéraires (leur réalisations et échecs), les pratiques et les attitudes des acteurs concernés sur une réalité dynamique, tout en dépassant la vision réductrice imposée par la violence symbolique du discours officiel et dominant du « Grand Frère ».

**BORDERIZATION OF THE BOUNDARY:  
ENTANGLED PERSPECTIVES  
ON THE SPLIT VILLAGES OF TSKHINVALI  
REGION/SOUTH OSSETIA**

**Nika LOLADZE**  
(Georgia)

October 2020 – July 2021

*Pontica Magna* Fellow

Researcher, International Scientific Research  
Institute of the Peoples of the Caucasus, Tbilisi

Presentation on April 7, 2021

Since the Russia – Georgia war in August 2008, once a fictional administrative boundary of occupied Region, began to transform into a barriered “international border”. Except settlements that appeared behind the occupation line, 33 villages already had been split by heavily guarded fences. The process of “borderization” remains ongoing and restricts residents’ access to each other and to their homes, water, farming lands, or village cemeteries. While much of the perimeter stays uncertain and unmarked, frequently locals are detained by the Russian/South Ossetian militants, what creates constant psychological pressure and insecure living environment. According to the interviews in some cases „border” demarcations serve to create security through their supposed clarity. At the same time, they produce uncertainties for other actors and in other places.

Based on interviews conducted during summer-autumn 2019, my project aims to show how locals experience the complex process of borderization of the boundary around the occupied territory what creates ambiguities, complicate clarity, and thus generate further un/certainties that must be dealt with – analytically as much as practically.





## PROCESS AND PERCEPTION – A SUBJECTIVE INTRODUCTION INTO SOUND ART

**Cyril LIM**

(Switzerland)

February – May 2021

*Landis & Gyr* Fellow

Sound artist and composer

Presentation on April 21, 2021

I am interested in the development of Romanian artists and art in the time period between 1971 and 1989 in Romania. Especially in two regards:

First, I'm interested to know how the exchange or interchange between Romanian artists and Western artists was during that period, or if there was any exchange at all. Second, and that's where my main focus lies, has there been an active scene of artists in the performance art scene with focus on sound and music (traditionally coming from the visual art)? And if so, how does it distinguish itself from the American (and Japanese) performance art scene evolving around people like Cage/Lucier/Behrman, Shiomu/Kosugi/Ono...?

I read about composers and musicians during that time period (for example the Ars Nova Ensemble) but haven't found a lot of information about the artists combining performance art and sound/music. I'm looking for documentations about such performances as well as for still active artists to get in touch with. Perhaps there will even be an opportunity or possibility to perform some of these works. Since I'm first and foremost an artist and not a researcher, my goal is to get new impulses for and a fresh perspective on my own artistic work, which in a music – and art – historical context is mainly oriented towards American artists and art.

## THE FISH QUESTION IN ROMANIA. THE FISH, THE PEOPLE, AND THE STATE (LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> – EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES)

**Constantin ARDELEANU**

(Romania)

October 2020 – July 2021

Long-Term Fellow

Professor of Modern History,  
The “Lower Danube” University of Galați

Presentation on May 5, 2021

During the early modern and modern age, significant political, economic, national or technological mutations transformed the structure, direction and organisation of European trade. The Mediterranean world faced the competition of the West on an emerging global market that challenged the traditional commercial ingredients, instruments and recipes that merchants employed. Nevertheless, the South-Eastern part of the continent remained in the periphery of this new economic map, with its links to the core strangulated and suffocated by the political and juridical status of the Lower Danubian area and the Black Sea region. This perspective has been refuted by scholars trying to prove that the closing of the Black Sea was rather relative and that the Ottoman economic control was not extremely restrictive. The maritime routes connecting the Romanian Principalities to the Eastern Mediterranean could be used in disguise, by Greek merchants or other Ottoman subjects who used Istanbul as a relay in these exchanges on the East–West axis. At the same time, terrestrial routes across the Balkans or towards the Austrian Empire secured good and reliable links to the global market. Starting from these premises, this project aims to focus on the economic history of the Black Sea and its convergences to the world market across the long 19<sup>th</sup> century.





**VISUAL RHETORICS OF POWER IN MOLDAVIA  
(CA 1480 – CA 1535):  
ECLECTIC OR HYBRID?**

**Vlad BEDROS**

Senior Researcher at “G. Oprescu” Institute of Art History, Assistant Professor at the Department of History and Theory of Art, National University of Arts in Bucharest and Team Leader of the research project *Networks of Devotion: The selection of saints as marker of religious identity in Post-Byzantine Moldavian representations (wall-paintings and texts)* (NoDeS) granted by UEFISCDI

**Andrei DUMITRESCU**

BA, Affiliated Researcher NoDeS

Presentation on May 12, 2021

The project proposes a case study of a delimited corpus: the iconic portrait of saints in Moldavian monuments, cca. 1490-cca. 1530, with a view at elaborating a methodology for the study of South-Eastern European cultural transfers. Its aim is to investigate the peculiar selection of saints, contextualizing it within the Moldavian monastic culture and spirituality during the late 15th and early 16th c. and within the already inventoried Late and Post-Byzantine pictorial tradition. The devotional peculiarities, the interplay between written evidence and artistic practice, the theological culture, and its relevance for the study of cultural heritage, are still rarely addressed topics in local scholarship. For the study of these issues, we will make use of recent approaches in the history of art: the geography of art, cultural transfers, and hybridization. We intend to assess the peculiar Moldavian sanctoral, either as a result of specific devotions of the monastic milieu, or as a consequence of integrating workshop traditions from the Post-Byzantine Balkans.

**THE COGNITIVE STRUCTURE OF  
ART APPRECIATION**

**Ancuța Maria MORTU**

(Romania)

October 2020 – July 2021

*Ștefan Odobleja* Fellow  
Independent Researcher

Presentation on May 19, 2021

My aim in this project is to study the phenomenon of art appreciation within the framework of nomothetic approaches that are implicit in art studies, both experimental and humanistic. Drawing on my previous research, I will bring in converging methodologies from analytic and empirical aesthetics, art theory, anthropology and cognitive psychology and try and provide an integrative framework for studying the cognitive structure of art appreciation. While recent research massively addresses this question, one still needs to concentrate the data reported across studies around a core conceptual framework. What are the cognitive processes that shape an episode of art appreciation? In trying to answer this question, I will assign a central role to forms of artistic and creative practices that lie outside the canon of fine arts (e.g. indigenous art), in an attempt to challenge and displace the predominance of speculative metaphysical systems in the discussion of aesthetic and art appreciation.





**EPISTEMIC ENCOUNTERS: FOREIGN SOCIAL  
SCIENTISTS IN ROMANIA, 1960s-80s**

**Adela-Gabriela HÎNCU**

(Romania)

October 2020

*NEC* Fellow

November 2020 – July 2021

*NEC UEFISCDI Award* Fellow

Visiting Professor, School of Arts and Sciences,  
Ilia State University, Tbilisi

Presentation on May 26, 2021

My project concerns epistemic encounters between foreign sociologists, anthropologists, and ethnographers conducting fieldwork in Socialist Romania in the 1960s-1980s and local social scientists. Based on the publications stemming from their fieldwork, autobiographical sources, oral history interviews, and archival research, I ask how the post-colonial anthropological sensitivities, the new left political commitments, and the second-wave feminist thought of the 1970s were met and transformed by the everyday realities of real-existing socialism, as well as how they integrated and built into local ideas about the social. I argue that reconstructing the epistemic feedback loops between foreign and local social scientists during state socialism is essential for understanding the afterlife of these encounters for the perception of academic inequality in the post-socialist period, the (dis-)empowerment of local forms of knowledge production, and the sociological imaginary informing social policies after 1989.

**TRAVELING MEMORY AND  
RE-PERFORMANCES OF THE PRIVATE IN  
POST-COMMUNIST WOMEN'S WRITING:  
DOMNICA RADULESCU, KAPKA KASSABOVA  
AND YIYUN LI**

**Maria Sabina DRAGA-ALEXANDRU**

(Romania)

November 2020 – July 2021

*NEC UEFISCDI Award* Fellow

Associate Professor, University of Bucharest,  
Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures,  
Department of English

Presentation on June 2, 2021

This project focuses on reconstructions of the private in narratives and memoirs by three migrant postcommunist women writers: Domnica Radulescu, Kapka Kassabova and Yiyun Li. Through looking at narrative and/ as performance particularly in the work of Romanian American author Domnica Radulescu, placed in a global perspective within the triangle Romania-Bulgaria-China represented by the authors chosen, but also through an interdisciplinary approach to the social/historical context through the lens of performance, I will examine the ways in which a necessary work of reparation of the damage done to private female life under communist surveillance is carried out in contemporary female diasporic writing. While I disagree with some recent views that state socialism benefited women's private lives, I will aim to show that the three writers' practice of narrative hybridization with other forms (theater, memoir and even poetry) is a way to voice the innermost depths of individual memory.





**MIGRATION INDUSTRY IN ROMANIA:  
TEMPORARY WORK AGENCIES, EMPLOYERS  
AND THE STATE IN THE MAKING OF A NON-  
EU MIGRANT LABOUR REGIME**

**Cosmin-Gabriel RADU**

(Romania)

October 2020

*NEC* Fellow

November 2020 – July 2021

*NEC UEFISCDI Award* Fellow

Sociologist, National Institute of Criminology,  
Bucharest

Presentation on June 9, 2021

The project explores practices of temporary work agencies, companies relying on African and Asian guest workers, and the state in the area of shaping a non-EU migrant labour regime in Romania. The working hypothesis concerns the `privatization` of immigration and labour policies, which 1) unfolds as a result of the collaborations between government and private actors, and 2) effects a growing precarisation of migrant workers and of labour more generally. Examining policies and informal practices ethnographically (with fieldwork in Bucharest), the project will look at how private and public actors manage the Asian workforce, and how the `privatisation` of labour and immigration policies unfolds in the lives of migrant workers. The study will consider the workers' struggles for decent work and living conditions pointing to the pivotal roles of private actors and the state in this transformation based on criminalisation of claims and state violence in the regulation of migrant labour.

**THE OLDEST ROMANIAN MANUSCRIPT AND  
PRINTED VERSIONS OF THE AKATHISTOS  
HYMN (17<sup>TH</sup> C). THE HISTORY OF A  
LITURGICAL MASTERPIECE BETWEEN  
TEXT AND IMAGE (AKATHYMN)**

**Emanuela TIMOTIN**

Senior Researcher, Institute of  
Linguistics of the Romanian Academy,  
Team Leader of the AKATHYMN research project,  
granted by UEFISCDI

**Ovidiu OLAR**

Senior Researcher, Nicolae Iorga Institute of History  
of the Romanian Academy,  
Affiliated Researcher, AKATHYMN

Presentation on June 16, 2021

This project intends to study a most influential liturgical piece dedicated to the Virgin Mary, the *Akathistos Hymn*, from a philological and historical perspective. It focuses on the multilingual textual tradition (Greek, Slavonic and Romanian) of the *Akathistos Hymn* which develops simultaneously in the Romanian-speaking regions in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and on the flourishing iconography of the *Akathistos* cycle, present in mural representations and in illuminations. The first Romanian versions of the *Akathistos Hymn* appear as manuscripts and printed texts in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. They remained unstudied, although two metropolitans, key-figures of the old Romanian literature, Dosoftei and Antim, printed the *Akathistos Hymn* in 1673 and 1698 respectively. The relation of the Romanian tradition with the contemporary Slavonic texts, from which it originates, has never been studied, nor have been its connections with the Greek illuminated manuscripts of the *Akathistos Hymn* which high Greek clergymen executed in Wallachia in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.





**SHELTERING THE GHOSTS? DIGITIZED  
PHOTOGRAPHS OF POLITICAL VICTIMS AND  
WORLD WAR II VETERANS ON RUSSIAN  
ONLINE DATABASES**

**Denis SKOPIN**

(Russia)

June – July 2021

*Pontica Magna* Returning Fellow  
Associate Professor, Faculty of Liberal Arts and  
Sciences, St Petersburg University

Presentation on June 23, 2021

The talk will be devoted to the role of photographs in practices of remembering the victims of the last century political conflicts in Russia.

First, I will focus on the role of photography as a mean of remembering the dead and in particular political victims. I would like to argue that the process of remembering political victims depends on many factors and the choice of commemorative strategy is not only determined by the political situation in a country, but also depends on what kind of death the victim died, as well as the problem of the presence or absence of his/her remains. Second, I will consider Russian online databases that collect, digitize and organize film-based photographs showing Russian victims and participants of the twentieth-century political cataclysms, primarily World War II and Stalin's political terror. Finally, I would like to put my research into a broader disciplinary and geographical context, turning to the experience of other post-communist countries.

**THE RECEPTION OF YIDDISH CULTURE IN  
INTERWAR ROMANIA: BETWEEN THE OLD  
EMPIRES AND THE NEW NATIONAL STATE**

**Camelia CRĂCIUN**

Associate Professor in Jewish Studies,  
Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures,  
University of Bucharest

Team Leader of the Project *Yiddish Culture in  
Greater Romania (1918-1940): in the Aftermath of  
the Empires and Challenged by the New National  
State*, granted by UEFISCDI

Presentation on June 30, 2021

The project aims to investigate one of the most prolific periods in the history of Yiddish culture in Romania, starting from the fact that, after the creation of Greater Romania, old traditional Yiddish centers such as Tshernovits/Czernowitz, Satmar/Szatmar or Keshenev/Kishinev, but also Yos/Jassy had to reconfigure their position within the Yiddish-speaking Eastern European world as a consequence of the fall of empires and construction of new nation states such as Greater Romania. In this context of peripheralization of old centers within the new state, the activity of the traditional Yiddish centers declined as local activists and intellectuals started to migrate to Jassy or Bucharest, looking for better professional opportunities and visibility and, as a consequence, new centers of Yiddish culture flourished. The project aims to investigate what were the socio-cultural mechanisms responsible for restructuring Yiddish cultural life after the changes brought by the end of World War I and by the creation of Greater Romania, and how this process occurred by tracing relevant individuals, institutions and projects until the first laws and decrees of the political regimes forbid the activity of Yiddish theatres, press and, eventually, the usage of Yiddish, thus making cultural life impossible.



Fellows\* in the 2020–2021  
Academic Year (\*including the Long-Term Fellow):  
Citizenship

Armenia	1
Belarus	1
Georgia	2
Greece	2
Italy	1
Moldova	2
Romania	16
Russia	3
Spain	1
Switzerland	1
Turkey	1
Ukraine	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>



# Art Historiographies in Central and Eastern Europe. An Inquiry from the Perspective of Entangled Histories (ArtHistCEE)

Final report on activities by Project Administrator Mihnea Mihail  
ERC Starting Grant, 2018–2021

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Our project (ArtHistCEE StG-802700, 2018–2023) was funded by the European Research Council under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation program, through its Starting Grants Scheme. The core members of the project were Ada Hajdu (Principal Investigator), Shona Kallestrup (Senior Researcher, also affiliated with University of St Andrews), Magda Kunińska (Senior Researcher, also affiliated with Jagiellonian University), and Mihnea Mihail (Research Assistant). During 2019 and the first months of 2020 we opened two postdoctoral positions and hired the fifth and the sixth members of the team: Anna Adashinskaya, who gained her PhD at the Central University in Budapest, and Cosmin Minea, who defended his PhD at the University of Birmingham. Following the tragic loss of Ada Hajdu, our Principal Investigator, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 2020, we had to formulate a new Grant Agreement that was to comply with the initial phasing out period (3 to 6 months). Dr. Shona Kallestrup was appointed Supervisor of the project for the phasing-out period. The remainder of July and the month of August were dedicated to the planning of the new Grant Agreement, including a renewed proposal, with adapted objectives and costs. The whole team worked together in order to recalibrate the project in response to its curtailed phase-out period. This activity took place under the close supervision and with the continuous support of the NEC staff and of its Academic Coordinator, Prof. Anca Oroveanu. Following our new project proposal, the ERCEA scientific board decided that the phasing-out period could be extended to the end of July 2021.

Our project proposes a fragmentary account of the art histories produced in Central and Eastern Europe in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, from an entangled histories perspective. Our plan was to look at the relationships between the art histories produced in the region and those produced in Western Europe and to investigate how the art histories written in present-day Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Russia resonate with each other, either proposing conflicting interpretations of the past, or ignoring uncomfortable competing discourses. Initially, our project was conceived according to the lines of inquiry of two main issues: 1. How do Central and Eastern European art historians adopt, adapt and respond to theories and methodologies developed elsewhere? 2. What are the periodizations of art produced in Central and Eastern Europe; what are the strategies for conceptualizing local styles; and how was the concept of influence used in establishing hierarchical relationships? Since we had to reconsider our project in the time given, and the ERC required that the phasing-out period had to include only projects that were already under development, with no possibility of starting new activities, we had to limit ourselves to completing our individual projects and to concentrate our efforts on the publication of the collective volume that will be published as a result of the conference *Questions of Periodization in the Art Historiographies of Central and Eastern Europe*, that we organized at NEC and that took place on 29 November – 1 December 2019.

Like the research community more widely, our project has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Team has not been able to meet in person since December 2019, and despite trying to organize a meeting at the beginning of 2021, travelling restrictions impeded its realization. Conferences that team members were due to attend have either been postponed or moved online.

### *Project scientific activities*

Following the sudden loss of our Principal Investigator, we had to reconfigure our activities and to focus on the completion of ongoing projects. We continued meeting online, via Microsoft Teams, every 2-4 weeks, in order to plan working steps for our main project outcome and to discuss various administrative issues.

Our activities between March and July 2021 were mainly focused on editing the volume *Periodization in the Art Historiographies of Central and Eastern Europe*, to be published with Routledge in 2022. All members of the team are part of the editorial board. In addition to working on their own author chapters, each member commented on and corrected the chapters of the contributors. Shona Kallestrup maintained a close and continuous dialogue with both the editorial staff at Routledge, as well as with the contributors to our volume. Besides her own chapter, Anna Adashinskaya worked on the notes and drafts of Ada Hajdu and managed to write the chapter that our Principal Investigator was planning on publishing in our collective volume.

All members of the ArtHistCEE project worked as a team and were in constant communication while preparing the volume.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of May, the team was invited by NEC to deliver a public presentation in which to assess the main results of the project. The event took place on the Zoom platform and was organised by the host institution.



Besides working on the *Periodization in the Art Historiographies of Central and Eastern Europe* volume, all team members attended conferences, presented papers and submitted articles or encyclopedia entries.

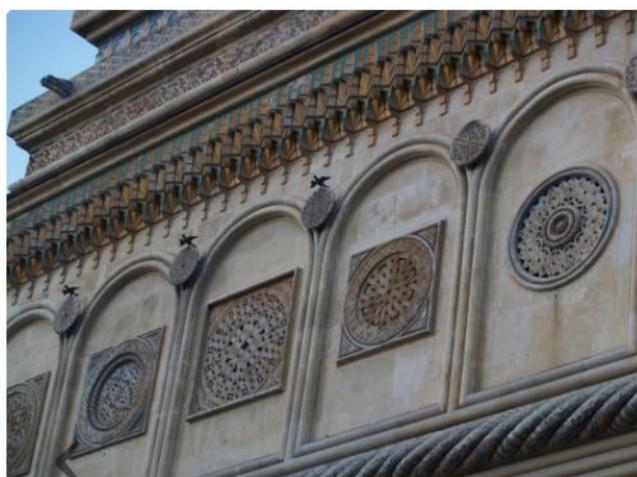
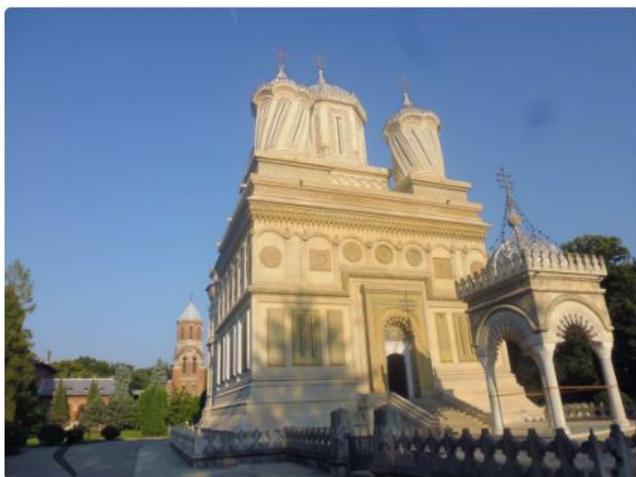
Dr Shona Kallestrup participated in a seminar series organized by Beatrice Joyeux-Prunel within the framework of the Artl@s project. She also wrote an entry on Romanian art for Unesco's forthcoming 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary publication on its art collection.

Dr Magdalena Kuninska took part at the CRAACE online workshop devoted to Modernity and Religion (1 April) and gave a lecture for the Commission for Art History of the Polish Academy, entitled "The disciplinary and political context of Józef Łepkowski's textbook" (8 April). Dr Kuninska also attended the conference *The Influence of the Vienna School of Art History II: The 100th Anniversary of Max Dvořák's Death*, where she delivered a paper on "The dignity of art historian': Lech Kalinowski, Jan

Białostocki and a response to Max Dvořák ‘Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte’ in Poland after the Second World War” (15-16 April). Besides these activities, she submitted an article to the *Journal of Art Historiography*, entitled “Identity built on myth. Fact and fiction in the foundational narrative of the ‘Cracow School of Art History’ and its relations to Vienna”.

In addition to her work on Ada Hajdu’s chapter for our Routledge volume, Dr Anna Adashinskaya attended two international workshops: *Bridging the Gap: The Prosopography of a Fragmented World* (Vienna, 27-28 May) and *Medieval Russia and Byzantium: New Data* (Moscow, 16 June). She also presented a paper at the *Actual Methods of Cultural Studies XIII. Materialized Holiness: Visual Studies and Visual Discourse*, with the title “Icons or Relics?: Icon as a Cult object and Image. History of Icon museification in Russia” (16 April).

Dr Cosmin Minea published an encyclopedia entry on Curtea de Argeș on the online database *Mapping Eastern Europe*, and submitted an article on Habsburg Art Historians for a collective volume edited by KU Linz and to be published with Transcript Publishing. In addition to these, he published an article in the journal *Anastasis*, entitled “Art Museums and National Heritage in Late 19th Century Romania”. Dr Minea presented a paper with the title “The Transnational Creation of the Romanian National Architectural Heritage in the Nineteenth Century” at the *Space, Art and Architecture Between East and West: The Revolutionary Spirit* conference (18-20 March), attended a CRAACE seminar (15 April) and delivered a paper entitled “Transnational Relations and National Identity: The Renewal of the Architectural Heritage in 19th Century Romania” in the context of the *GETTY-CAS Archaeological Schools: Spring School 2021* (19-23 April). Dr Minea also gave a public lecture under the framework of the *Long 19<sup>th</sup> Century* seminar hosted by Oxford University (5 May).



The Episcopal Church of the former Monastery of Curtea de Argeș, *Mapping Eastern Europe*, Cosmin Minea, <https://mappingeasterneurope.princeton.edu/item/the-episcopal-church-of-the-former-monastery-of-cu.html>

Team members also wrote a number of blogs for the project website.

In sum, despite the tragedy of Dr Hajdu’s loss, and the difficulties of the pandemic, the team has come together strongly in its efforts to deliver the scientific outcomes presented in the revised Grant Agreement. Although the curtailed timeframe has inevitably limited the Team’s ability to fulfil Dr Hajdu’s original ambitions for the project, we managed to finalise all the projects that we included in the Grant Agreement for the phasing-out period. Our work continues after the termination of the project in July 2021, in order to deliver the complete manuscript of our collective volume to Routledge and to have it published before July 2022.

# Periodization in the History of Art and Its Conundrums. How to Tackle Them in East-Central Europe

Third seminar, to take place in May 2022, by Anca Oroveanu, Coordinator

A program supported by the Getty Foundation as part of its *Connecting Art Histories* initiative, 2018–2021

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This program, supported by the Getty Foundation as part of its *Connecting Art Histories* initiative, consists of a series of three research seminars of one-week duration each, discussing periodization and related issues in the history of art. As we previously reported, the first seminar was organized in May 2019, the second in November 2019. According to the original schedule, the third should have been held in May 2020. Due to the Covid pandemic this has proved impossible, and in agreement with the Getty Foundation we originally postponed it for May 2021 and later for mid-November 2021, hoping that organizing a live seminar (or at least a hybrid one) will be possible. Unfortunately, the pandemic situation in Romania worsened, therefore the Getty Foundation generously encouraged and supported us in our decision to further postpone the live seminar until June 2022. In the meantime, all participants met online, on the occasion of a webinar organized on May 21, 2021, in addition to the one we had on October 15, 2020, and we are planning another one early next spring.

Once again, this being the current situation, we can only report on projects regarding the third (and last) seminar, rather than on achievements, even though, in an assessment that can only be provisional at this point, it can be said that so far it has been a success.

The seminar series addresses young scholars from Central and Eastern Europe, and our selection resulted in 16 participants from Austria, Bulgaria, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Poland, Romania, Ukraine. The seminars, including 7 active days, are organized around three components:

- Discussions around key concepts related to the question of periodization
- Presentations of their projects by the young scholars selected in the program
- Talks given by guest speakers and by some of the consultants in the program

In deciding on the topics for the discussions around key concepts we were building on what appeared to us as being an already assured foundation provided by such discussions during the first two seminars, while also taking into account that this will be the last. We collaborated closely – as we have so far – with the Consultants in this program (Edit András, Ruxandra Demetrescu, Cristian Nae, Bojana Pejić, Mara Rațiu), but we also wished to involve the young scholars in a more direct way in the shaping of these discussions. As things stand now, their topics will be: *Theorising the contemporary* (introduced and moderated by Cristian Nae); *Spectatorship* (introduced by Ancuța Mortu, and moderated by her and Anca Oroveanu); *Looking globally: colonial, postcolonial, decolonial, transperipheral* (introduced and moderated by Bojana Pejić); *What Frameworks and What discourses are to be Used in Writing East/ern-Central European Art History? National/Transnational – Regional/Transperipheric – what else? OFF/Counter/Horizontal/Parallel/Alter – what else?* (introduced by Edit András). They will be followed by a concluding discussion on *The State and Future of the Discipline* to be probably moderated by Anca Oroveanu, in which the young scholars enrolled in the program will play a decisive role.

As in the previous seminars, a number among the young scholars will present their ongoing research. They will be those who didn't yet have the chance to make these presentations: Mădălina Brașoveanu: *The Transversal Network: Mail Art Practices and International Contacts in Atelier 35, Oradea, and the MAMŪ group, Tîrgu-Mureș, in the early 1980s*; Cristina Moraru: *Expanded Art History "After the Global"*; Giorgi Papashvili: *Photography and the Twofold Origins of Modern Georgian Painting*;

Radek Przedpełski: *Steppe Cosmotechnics | Art as Engineering of Forces in Marek Konieczny and Beyond*;  
Zsuzsa Sidó: *Beyond Style? Problems in Periodizing 19th Century Art in Hungary*.

We had during all this time exchanges with the guest speakers invited for the third seminar. They confirmed their participation, some of them off- and one or two most probably online.

The guest speakers and their topics are:

- Zdenka BADOVINAC, curator and writer, who has served since 1993 as Director of the Moderna galerija in Ljubljana, with its two locations: the Museum of Modern Art, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova: *Lost and found in transition*

- Mieke BAL, Professor, co-founder of ASCA, the Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis: *Preposterous! Towards a Relational Inter-Temporality*

- Andrea GIUNTA, researcher, curator, Professor at Universidad de Buenos Aires, and visiting scholar at the University of Texas at Austin: *Against the Canon. Contemporary Art in a World Without Center*

- Romy GOLAN, Professor, 20th Century Art, The Graduate Center, and Lehman College, The City University of New York: *When Did the 20th Century Begin?*

- Christopher WOOD, Professor in the Department of German at New York University: *Does realism interfere with periodization schemas?*

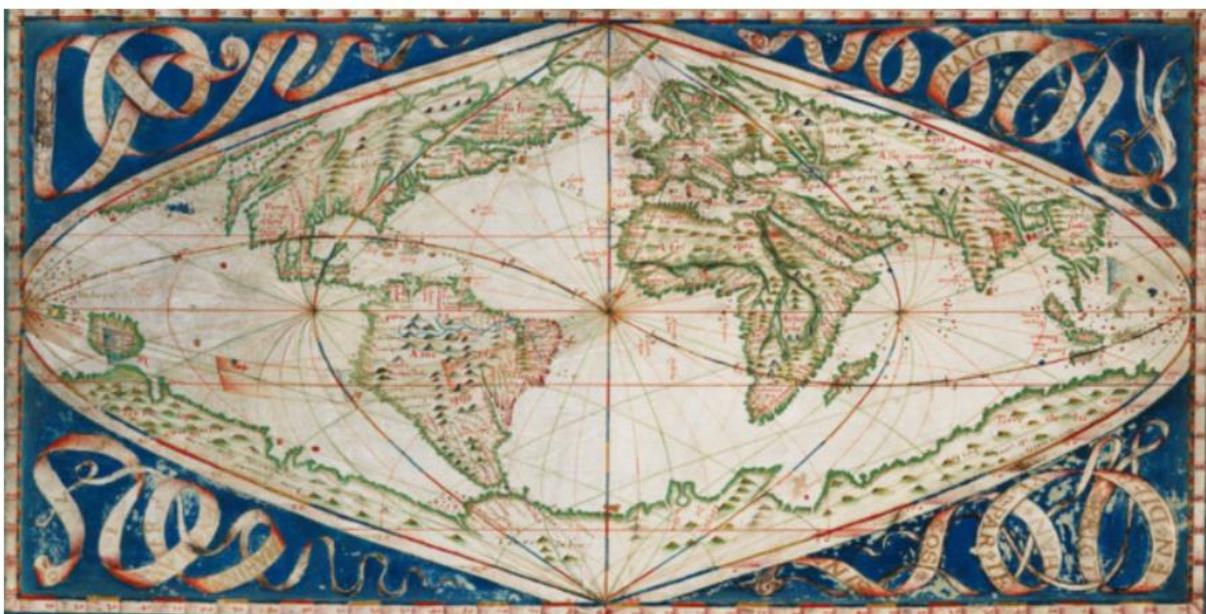
Two additional talks will be given by Consultants in the program:

- Edit András: *A Little Hungarian Time Travel: Whose memory is commemorated in The Memorial for National Unity?*

- Cristian Nae: *Affective Time (Socialist Futures and Post-socialist Pasts)*

As on previous occasions, the talks given by the invited guests will be open to the public.

Background literature for all the events mentioned above was posted on the platform we set up for this seminar series and made thus available to all the participants. We will most probably add to it until November, and / or make some adjustments and corrections, should they prove necessary. Details on the seminar series can be found on the NEC site (<https://nec.ro/programs/getty/>).



# Citizen Science for Environmental Citizenship: Backyard Birding and the Potential for Cultivating Green Engagement (EnviroCitizen)

Report on activities during the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of the academic year 2020–2021 by Agota Abran  
Horizon 2020 Project, 2020–2024

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The research project *Citizen Science for Environmental Citizenship: Backyard Birding and the Potential for Cultivating Green Engagement* (acronym EnviroCitizen) funded under the Horizon 2020 call started in April 2020. The research is led by Radboud University, the Netherlands, and started by establishing common theoretical topics and concepts, methodological approaches, a fieldwork plan, and an interview guide. We, the Romanian team from New Europe College, participated actively in these works especially by elaborating on topics such as multispecies ethnography, help with conducting ethnographic fieldwork, and working on the interview guide. Meanwhile, as the postdoctoral researcher, although not included in this work package I worked on the historical background of ornithology and volunteer birding in Romania starting from the inter-war period. I also familiarized myself with works in anthropology concerning human and bird relations, started doing interviews and fieldwork from May 2021, and have been actively following the online output of the two birding NGOs in Romania.

The agreed minimum work package goal between the research partners is 15 interviews and 15 field events until December 2021. Up until now, I conducted 17 interviews, five of which included birding activities. I participated in nine birdwatching events and three meetings between birders. I volunteered for a waste reduction project for the Romanian Ornithology Society and have been doing birding on my own in known birding locations to understand more about the activity itself and learn more about birds. I also participated in regular work package meetings held online because of the pandemic situation, where we discussed research planning, interview and fieldwork experiences. In the future, I have in plan to attend a bird ringing event (September 11, 2021), participate in a birding marathon on the occasion of Eurobirdwatch (October 1-3, 2021), volunteer for a ringing station (October 4-10, 2021) and if possible, conduct a few more interviews. From November onwards, I will focus less on interviewing and fieldwork and more on transcribing interviews and organizing fieldnotes. Nevertheless, if the opportunity arises I will participate in birding events as well.

The research already conducted beautifully reveals the topics the international research team highlighted previously. We can already see examples of care for birds, the environment, and care for those who newly enter birding communities. There are many excellent illustrations of the amount of time and effort invested in learning about birds and helping the scientific community composed of ornithologist and their effort to analyze and maintain biodiversity. We can trace interesting historical lines about the emergence of birding efforts in Romania and can see some exciting topics revealing themselves about databases, hunting, birding tools, and space.



# Networks of Devotion: The Selection of Saints as Marker of Religious Identity in Post-Byzantine Moldavian Representations (Wall-Paintings and Texts) (NoDeS)

Report on activities by Vlad Bedros, Project Leader  
UEFISCDI Young Research Teams (2020–2022)

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Our project proposes a case study of a clearly delimited corpus: the iconic portrait of saints (a part of the iconographic program usually overlooked by local scholarship) in Moldavian monuments, c. 1490–c. 1530, with a view at elaborating a methodology for the study of South-Eastern European cultural transfers. We aim to investigate the peculiar selections of saints, contextualizing them within the Moldavian monastic culture and spirituality during the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, on the one hand, and within the already inventoried Late and Post-Byzantine pictorial tradition from the Balkans, on the other. Our common goal is to explain the peculiar local selections of saints, assessing them either as a result of specific devotions of the monastic milieu, or as a specific workshop tradition which could hint at the circulation of pictorial models.

Our research stems from a shared interest in the field of iconography, which led the art historians of the team to scrutinizing details of the monumental programs of Late Medieval Moldavia. During individual on-site documentation travels, we noted unusual selections in the row of iconic portraits within all compartments of the monuments. Prompted by these oddities, the art historians of the team decided to join their previously gained research data in order to reverify it and address the issue of these peculiar selections, with a view at evaluating a twofold working hypothesis: the choice of saints was generated either by the commissionaires (the courtly, ecclesiastic, or monastic milieu), or by the workshop tradition to which the master painters belonged. In order to decide between the two patterns of agency (monastic or pictorial), we propose a research project which puts forward a transdisciplinary approach to the Moldavian selection of saints, resting upon an evaluation of the local monastic culture (including theology) alongside an attempt to map the circulation of Balkanic workshop traditions into Moldavia. More specifically, we intend to survey the corpus of relevant Late Medieval unedited texts (*menaia*, *synaxaria*, *florilegia*), in a quest for sources which would explain the noted peculiar selections.

The most beneficial feature of our proposal is represented by its focus upon an overlooked element of the local medieval culture. The devotional peculiarities, the interplay between written evidence and artistic practice, the theological culture and its relevance in the study of cultural heritage, are still rarely addressed topics in local scholarship. On the other hand, the relevance of our project for the local field of medieval studies consists of its use of recent approaches in the history of art – geography of art, cultural transfers and hybridization – which reinforce its inter- and transdisciplinary vocation, opening the discipline towards issues belonging to the spheres of cultural studies (through focusing on cultural identities) and of comparative history, by borrowing methods from areas such as the transnational history. Finally, we intend to integrate a new approach to the relation between text and image, which should be mindful of the central role played by memory and orality in an age still defined by a low level of literacy.

A basic methodological approach that we assume is represented by the geography of art, questioning issues like the opposition between the concepts of ‘center’ and ‘periphery’, on the one hand, and the concept of ‘border’, on the other. We aim to discuss the issue of center(s) and peripheries in a manner which excludes the traditional viewpoint that the creative forces are strictly connected with the center, relegating the periphery to an ancillary state, receiving ‘central’ formulas only at a later stage, when they become obsolete. Such an antagonistic perspective is criticized in the recent scholarship, which encourages an inquiry into the complementarity between ‘centers’ and ‘peripheries’, the two categories defining each other.

This balanced approach is fruitful for pondering upon the issue of cultural transfers, another crucial aspect of our methodological framework, as the periphery is included as an active agent in the continuous exchange of cultural goods, on the one hand, and the hegemonic conception of a privileged 'center' is replaced by a network with multiple centers, functioning as crossroads in this permanent cultural ebb-and-flow. A useful tool in such a context is the history of literacy, which opens a set of problems such as the status of books in medieval culture, the frequency of reading in private, the relevance of the libraries and scriptoria within the monasteries.

Our approach targets mainly the complex and ambivalent relationship between text and image; the two terms should not be set in a simple coupling, but rather mediated via a third element, the ecclesiastic milieu. Instead of bringing forth the heroic image of the clergyman who sanctioned or even built up a whole program, one should attempt to depict the complex image of a cultural milieu which focused on its corporate identity, on tradition and its transmission.

The broader cultural environment will benefit from our project through the creation of an open-access database hosted by the website of the project, where we intend to upload the inventoried iconographic programs, all the collected epigraphic data (the inscriptions on the scrolls of the saintly bishops and monks), the references to relevant manuscripts, translations of selected content from these Late Medieval unedited texts, and, eventually, the online book which will summarize our research outputs. This on-line open-access repository of visual and literary references will be also used for teaching activities by members of the team.

**Team members:**

Vlad BEDROS, PhD, Project Leader (NoDeS), Assistant Professor at the Department of History and Theory of Art, National University of Arts, Bucharest; Senior Researcher at "G. Oprescu" Institute of Art History

Mihail-George HÂNCU, PhD, Postdoctoral Researcher (NoDeS), Scientific Researcher at the Institute for South-East European Studies of the Romanian Academy

Oana IACUBOVSKI, PhD, Postdoctoral Researcher (NoDeS), Senior Researcher at the Institute for South-East European Studies of the Romanian Academy

Ștefania DUMBRAVĂ, PhD Student, National University of Arts in Bucharest

Andrei DUMITRESCU, BA, Affiliated Researcher (NoDeS), Department of Art History and Theory, at the National University of Arts in Bucharest



**Nova Pavlica (built in 1381, paintings from 1387), Serbia**

# Yiddish Culture in Greater Romania (1918-1940): in the Aftermath of the Empires and Challenged by the New National State (YIDCULT)

Report on activities by Camelia Crăciun, Project Leader  
UEFISCDI Exploratory Research (2021-2023)

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Our three-year project, YIDCULT, started on January 15, 2021 with a team of four researchers, focusing on the Yiddish culture during the interwar Romania, a topic belonging to an area never charted before, as Yiddish studies are still in their early stages and archives and public libraries or private collections were not previously investigated in order to indicate precise funds. The pandemic situation has raised additional obstacles, hindering the access to public institutions, including archives and libraries, for a significant period of 2021. Nevertheless, substantial progress has been made, as some important international archives were available online, providing sources to start our research with. We have divided the topic in several subtopics, according to our individual specialization and expertise, and we started working individually, after agreeing on objectives and deadlines. Our monthly online meetings allowed us to keep in touch in terms of scholarly investigation and to exchange information regarding our findings. We started planning our dissemination and publication events, as well as the content of the two anticipated volumes (one collecting individual articles in a synthetic approach and the second one listing the most significant documents that each of us encountered and should be presented as an illustration for the public). As we are in the first year of the project, the administrative arrangements occupied a significant amount of the time, while the support of the New Europe College greatly simplified the tedious procedures.

A significant part of our activity within the project is represented by dissemination through individual or collective panel participation in conferences, workshops or lectures, as well as webpage project presentation. Therefore, the project's team is constantly searching to identify events which could be suitable for disseminating our project or for presenting our work in search for networking and feedback.

On June 1, 2021 Dr. Camelia Crăciun delivered a lecture as a guest lecturer within the Jewish Culture Festival in Copenhagen titled *Barașeum – A Jewish Theatre in the Shaddow of the War presenting the situation of the*



Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka - Teatr NN”, Lublin (<https://teatrnn.pl>)

*Yiddish actors during Holocaust in Romania.* On June 30, 2021 she also delivered an online lecture for the New Europe College scholars within the NEC seminar series, *The Reception of Yiddish Culture in Interwar Romania: Between the Old Empires and the New National State.* Together with Dr. Irina Matei, team member, the lecture was preceded by a general presentation of the project, situation of Yiddish culture in interwar Romania, premises, state of art in the field, directions of research, expected findings and sources to be investigated. Dr. Camelia Crăciun delivered an online presentation also on July 15, 2021 – *Între tragedie și tăcere. Literatură idiș în perioada Holocaustului în România* (Between tragedy and silence. Yiddish literature during Holocaust in Romania) for the Colloquium of the Romanian Association of General and Comparative Literature.

At the end of July 2021, Dr. Francisca Solomon presented a paper *Die Herausbildung eines jiddischsprachigen kulturellen Feldes in der Bukowina. Eine Untersuchung am Beispiel der Zeitschrift Tshernovitser bleter (1929-1937)* within the XIV Congress of the International Association of German Studies (IVG), Palermo, Italy, on the Yiddish cultural landscape in Bucovina, starting for an analysis on the journal *Tshernovitser bleter* (issues published between 1933 – 1937), available online on the platform <https://www.difmoe.eu>.

Dr. Valentin Săndulescu presented a paper entitled *Violence, Anti-Semitism and Boycott: Hitler's 1933 Rise to Power and its Impact on Interwar Romanian Politics* within the international conference commemorating 80 years from the Jassy Pogrom (June 1941) – *Iași 1941-2021: Memorie, asumare, uitare* (Jassy 1941-2021: Memory, Taking Responsibility, Forgetting), organized by INSHR-EW and University Al. I. Cuza of Iași, describing and analyzing how the antisemitic interwar discourse was influenced by Hitler's coming to power in Germany, also contributing to shape the historical general context for the Jewish community in interwar Romania. Valentin Săndulescu's second paper presentation was *Mobilization in Times of Crisis: The Jewish Community in Interwar Romania and its Response to the Rise of Nazism* within the yearly international conference of the British Association for Jewish Studies, *World in Crisis: Reflections and Responses from Antiquity to the Present*, organized by Parkes Institute, University of Southampton, on July 5-7, 2021 focusing on how the Jewish community in Romania reacted to the Hitler's rise in power in Germany, basically presenting the general context for the Jewish community in Romania and analyzing changes within the Jewish community (different regional perceptions and ideas, way of approaches key issues of the community etc.).

The project team proposed a panel of the project to be presented on September 24-26, 2021 at the International Colloquium *Latinitate, Romanitate, Românităte* edition *Mediere culturală – traducere, interferențe, învățare* organized by the University of Târgoviște; the whole team will participate with four individual presentations reflecting the research and intermediary findings accumulated so far, a useful exercise for the assessment and coherence of our work, as well as for a potential academic feedback. Furthermore, we plan to participate in a conference organized by POLIN (Museum of the History of Polish Jews), *What's New, What's Next? Innovative Methods, New Sources, and Paradigm Shifts in Jewish Studies* in October 2021 and we applied as a team with a whole panel: each of us submitted an individual presentation abstract which generated a coherent panel proposal regarding Yiddish during interwar Romania. At Valentin Săndulescu's suggestion, the team plans to apply for panel participation in the yearly conference of the British Association for Jewish Studies, to take place at King's College, London during July 11-13, 2022. Such events would help us better articulate our ideas and research findings individually, but also collectively, while also exposing us to a group of peers able to address an informed feedback, mostly useful for the early stages of the project.

In terms of actual research, each project member started to work on a clearly delimited area of the larger topic, respectively Yiddish culture in interwar Romania, keeping in mind also the potential overlapping on some issues with other colleagues. A number of online databases and Jewish Yiddish and Romanian-language journals have been selected, as well as personalities and institutions, archives and collections that are important for the project research. As the first months of the year did not offer possibilities of working in archives or libraries, the whole team started identifying and using the relevant online sources available in the area of Yiddish culture<sup>1</sup> and platforms containing available material in scanned version<sup>2</sup>, as well as personal archives for the contextual analysis. While the lockdown was problematic in many ways, it provided opportunities for attending interesting online events relevant for our research such as the on-line seminar organized by The Mayrent Institute for Yiddish Culture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison <https://mayrent.wisc.edu/event/call-for-applications-for-the-yiddish-object-a-mayrent-institute-graduate-seminar/>).

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<sup>1</sup> CNSAS, CSIER, YIVO, B.C.U. Iași, B.A.R, BCU digital, Digibuc etc.)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.difmoe.eu/d/>, <https://www.nli.org.il/en/discover/newspapers/jpress>, <http://sammlungen.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/cm/nav/index/title/>, <https://onlineprimarysources.cercec.fr/sources> by CNRS-EHESS)

Once the access to sources was allowed, Dr. Camelia Crăciun started to include the Romanian- and Yiddish-language Jewish press as well as non-Jewish Romanian journals, mostly to be found in the Romanian Academy Library collections (*Cronica teatrală* 1931, *Copilul evreu* 1923-1940, *Știri din lumea evreească* 1922-, *Adam* 1929-1940, *Curierul israelit* 1918-). In order to better prepare for the research work, Dr. Camelia Craciun participated during July 1-29, 2021 in an online language course in Yiddish language and culture organized within the Naomi Praver Kadar Yiddish Language and Culture Summer School within Tel Aviv University (completing it with a certificate).

Within her research on Yiddish press and literature in Greater Romania and on how a cultural field of Yiddish language was articulated, Dr. Francisca Solomon investigated journals such as *Der Cancic* (1928-1929), *Der Grager* (1928-1940), *Der Parech* (1929), *Czernowitzer Humentasch* (1934) on satiric-humoristic Yiddish press of Bukowina, as well as journals *Tshernovitser bleter* (1929-1937), the eldest Yiddish journal in Romania, with over 300 issues, *Die Stimme* and *Ostjüdische Zeitung*, and documented the profiles of writer Aleksandr Shpiglbat and of the editor of *Tshernovitser bleter*, Schmucl Aba Soifer, researching also Shlomo Bickel's *Rumenye: geshikhṭe, liṭeratur-krīṭik, zikhroynes* (Buenos Aires 1962). Also, Dr. Solomon reviewed the activity of several authors such as Ițic Manger, Moshe Altman, Kubi Wohl, Schimschon Först, Josef Burg and she also focused on how Yiddish was integrated within the cultural, social and political trends of the moment, including the debate on modernization of Yiddish through using the Latin alphabet or the promotion of Yiddish culture by book reviews and theatre chronicles.

Dr. Irina Matei's research activity focused on institutions promoting Yiddish culture in Greater Romania, mainly through cultural associations and schools, by investigating the collections of ANIC Ministry of Public Schooling / Propaganda Ministry; CNSAS – Secret Police Archives (the Union of Israelite School of Timisoara Graduates, the Union of the Jewish Youth in Romania 1931-1936 and 1936-1940; various Jewish organizations); local archives, etc.

Focusing on the general context of evolution of Yiddish culture during interwar period, mainly the way in which Yiddish speakers interacted with and were treated by the state and its institutions, how they were represented within the Jewish community and also how Yiddish language and culture were regarded by Romanians in the context of the rise of anti-Semitism that occurred in the 1920s and the 1930s, by theoretical, comparative and contextual perspective, Dr. Valentin Săndulescu started with the general literature on the period (David E. Fishman, *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture*; Zvi Gitelman, *The Divergent Fates of Yiddish and Hebrew*; Dovid Katz, *Yiddish and Power*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015; Marc Caplan, *Yiddish Writers in Weimar Berlin: A Fugitive Modernism*, Indiana University Press, 2021; Tal Chever-Chybowski, *The Semitic Component in Yiddish and its Ideological Role in Yiddish Philology*, în *Philological Encounters*, 2/2017, etc.) and further worked on various relevant primary sources such as press articles (*Curierul Israelit*), political works of the period, memoirs (Wilhelm Filderman, *Memorii și Jurnale*, Volumul I-1900-1940, București, Editura Hasefer, 2016), Parliamentary debates (*Parlamentari evrei în forul legislativ al României (1919 – 1940). Documente (extrase)*. București, Editura Hasefer, 2000), legal documents (*Minoritățile naționale din România 1925 - 1931: documente*. Ioan Scurtu, Ioan Dordea (coord.), București, Arhivele Statului din România, 1996), etc. In terms of exploring archives, Dr. Săndulescu has worked on two topics so far, respectively the problem of private education (which generated a heated debate during the mid-1920s, prompting to the center the issue of Yiddish language both within the national political debate, but also within the Jewish community as it was paramount in maintaining the cultural and linguistic identity of the community; reactions of the community to the legal draft and the educational context affected by antisemitic incidents; investigating the archive of the Education Ministry 1924-1926 at ANIC) and the case study represented by the Kanapoff Yiddish theatre company tour in Romania in 1922 (by following primary sources such as Corneliu Zelea Codreanu's *Pentru legionari*, archival documents and *Adevărul* of 1922 collection, the series of antisemitic incidents which affected the tour was identified; also the collections of the General Direction of Arts 1920-1929 and of the Ministry of Arts 1928-1934 were consulted).

# The Oldest Romanian Manuscript and Printed Versions of the Akathistos Hymn (17<sup>th</sup> C). The History of a Liturgical Masterpiece Between Text and Image (AKATHYMN)

Report on activities by Emanuela Cristina Timotin, Project Leader  
UEFISCDI Exploratory Research (2021-2023)

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This project focuses on one of the most influential liturgical pieces dedicated to Virgin Mary, the *Akathistos Hymn*, and aims to edit its oldest Romanian versions and describe the literary, theological and artistic context in which they emerged.

The *Akathistos Hymn* was probably composed in the fifth century and was included in the liturgy of the Orthodox Church not before the ninth century. Its 24 stanzas, whose initials form an alphabetical acrostic in Greek, represent the source of the iconographic theme known as the ‘Akathistos cycle’ since late thirteenth century. Used in liturgy, at the feast of Annunciation and at specific days of Lent, the *Akathistos Hymn* circulated as an independent text, but in parallel it was also fully or partially included in various liturgical books. It represents the pattern of all the texts entitled *Akathistos* which are in use in the Orthodox Church.



Polovragi Monastery, Akathistos Hymn, photo by Oana Iacubovschi

The first Romanian versions of the *Akathistos Hymn* appear as manuscripts and printed texts in the seventeenth century. They are, therefore, important documents for the history of old Romanian, since the oldest texts in Romanian which have survived up to now date to the beginning of the sixteenth century. At the same time, the first Romanian versions of the *Akathistos Hymn* are paramount for the history of liturgy in Romanian. The textual tradition of the *Akathistos Hymn* remained unstudied and its main versions are unedited, although important figures of the Romanian seventeenth century literature and theology, Dosoftei, metropolitan of Moldova (1671-1674, 1675-1686), Theodosie, metropolitan of

Wallachia (1668-1672, 1679-1708), and Antim, metropolitan of Wallachia (1708-1716), published it in Uniev Monastery (nowadays Poland) in 1673, in Bucharest (ca 1783), and in Snagov Monastery in 1698 respectively. The relation of the Romanian tradition with the Slavonic one, from which it originates, has never been studied. Equally unstudied are the connections of the Romanian tradition with the production of Greek illuminated manuscripts of the AH which flourishes in Wallachia in the first half of the 17th century, thanks to the efforts of three high Greek clergymen: Luke, bishop of Buzău (1583-1603) and metropolitan of Wallachia (1603-1629); Matthew, metropolitan of Myra (1605-1624) and abbot of Dealu Monastery (1603-1629); Jacob, Luke's pupil, bishop of Ganos and Chora (1624-1629). Finally, philologists have never questioned the relation between the textual tradition of the *Akathistos Hymn* and the Akathistos cycle, which already features on the frescoes of Cozia Monastery at the end of the fourteenth century.

This project attempts to evaluate the seventeenth-century production of the *Akathistos Hymn* in the Romanian-speaking regions, to reveal the place of the Romanian tradition within this multilingual textual tradition, to edit the oldest Romanian versions, and to assess the relation between the textual and the iconographic traditions. The team is composed of philologists (Emanuela Timotin, principal investigator; Cristina-Ioana Dima, Mihail Hâncu, Daniar Mutalâp), historians (Lidia Cotovanu; Ovidiu-Victor Olar, affiliated researcher) and an art historian (Oana Iacubovschi), and we all seek to bring to attention liturgical texts as important documents for researches other than theological and to develop an appropriate methodology meant to enable their analysis by means of an interdisciplinary approach.

## Reflections on the Political and Social History of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries (GRiPs)

Research Group, 2009 – present

Since 2009, several scholars meet at NEC to discuss topics on the political, social and cultural history of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries from various theoretical and disciplinary perspectives. The members of this group and their guests are historians, political scientists, sociologists etc. who conduct research on different themes related to transformations and modernizations in the Romanian area or the Balkans. GRiPs' ambition is to establish a wider European and regional scientific network as well. GRiPs is coordinated by NEC Alumnae **Constanța Vintilă** and **Silvia Marton**.

Due to the pandemic situation research activities within this group have been conducted mainly on individual level and conferences have been organized online. **Andrei Sorescu**, a NEC Alumnus and currently a post-doctoral researcher at ICUB (the Research Institute of the University of Bucharest) held a lecture about a loan middle class of Aromanians in 1848-1906 Romania (*O clasă de mijloc de împrumut? Aromânii și România, 1848-1906*) on March 11, 2021.

A second lecture, *Surveying Bucharest. The 1832 Panorama Sketch by Miklós Barabás*, was given by **Zsuzsanna Szegedy-Maszák**, Head of the Budapest Gallery of the Budapest History Museum, on April 1, 2021. The event was organized in collaboration with the Amsterdam School for Regional, Transnational and European Studies (ARTES) of the University of Amsterdam. Miklós Barabás (1810-1898, born in a village in Transylvania) was a painter-photographer who in Hungarian art historiography is perhaps one of the most well-known figures of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Barabás is regarded mostly as a portrait painter. Indeed, Hungarian students in elementary and secondary schools come across his portraits in their literature and history textbooks, as he was the primary portraitist for anyone who was anyone in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Hungary. Yet despite his output in portraiture numbering into the thousands, in his autobiography, he makes references to the allure of landscape painting, and the two lengthier theoretical writings he published both concerned the subject of perspective, an area of expertise that indisputably belonged more to landscape painters. During his stay in Bucharest, where he enjoyed the patronage of Count Pavel Kiselyov, Barabás made a series of seven preliminary drawings of the city which, when placed side by side,



offer a continuous 360-degree panorama of Bucharest. We can only venture guesses concerning the possible function of this panorama, but we can safely ascertain that this experiment in creating an unconventional cityscape seems to have spurred in Barabás a lifelong interest in the potential of creating spatial illusion in both painting and photography.



Source: Bucharest Digital Library  
 (<http://www.digibuc.ro/colectii/publicatii-periodice-c1574>)

On May 21, 2021 a third conference has been organized within this research group and addressed the topic of populism. Two invited guests held lectures on this occasion: Prof. **Jens Ivo Engels** from the Institute for History of the Technische Universität Darmstadt talked about *Changing Obsessions in Populism: From the History of Corruption to the History of Transparency*, and Prof. **Frédéric Monier** from the Centre Norbert Elias and the Avignon Université, gave a talk on *Denouncing Oligarchy and Plutocracy: An Historical Assessment on Populism*.



## The Group for Anthropological Research and Debates (GARD)

Research Group, 2019 – present

This research group focuses on contemporary anthropological research and theories and their larger relevance within the humanities and social sciences. Building on the continuous support for anthropology during NEC's existence through fellowships, workshops and conferences, this research group aims at offering a space for exchanges, debates, projects of anthropological relevance for all scholars interested in anthropological research on/in Romania and beyond. Benefiting from the multidisciplinary and international profile of NEC, inter-disciplinary exchange between anthropologists and other social scientists is strongly encouraged and anticipated. While the group's range of topics and themes of interest is programmatically left as open as possible, further thematic and topical threads of discussion and research are expected to emerge.

**Viorel Anăstăsoaie**, NEC alumnus, librarian and researcher at NEC, founded this research group as an expression of his great passion for Anthropology. In a short timeframe he organized no less than seven scientific events, all included in previous reports (one had to be canceled due to the pandemic outbreak in March 2020).

During the last year and a half Viorel Anăstăsoaie fought an exemplary battle with a disease and his untimely demise on August 6, 2021, left his family, his friends and colleagues at NEC, and the entire scientific community he was such a significant part of, in grief. Continuing his research projects and initiatives within this group for anthropological research and debates is just a vague expression of how much we all miss him, and of how much we value his accomplishments.



# The Bible in Its Linguistic Context: Hebrew

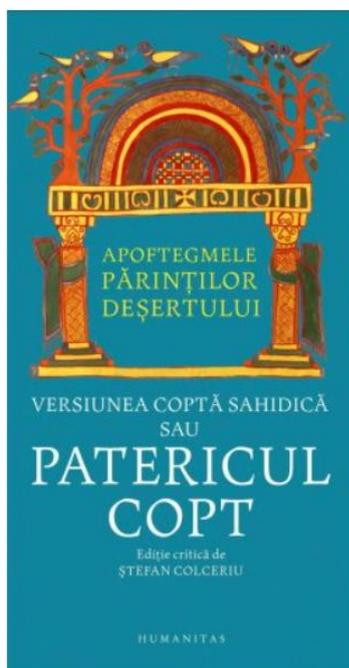
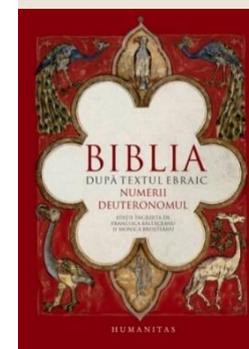
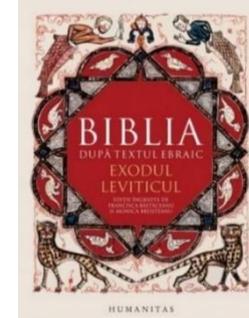
Research Group, 2013 – present

This research group aims at supporting and developing the scientific study of Biblical Hebrew within the Romanian academic context. Its members are both senior and junior specialists in the field of Biblical studies from various scientific backgrounds (theologians, classical philologists, philosophers). Their competence and experience with biblical texts of different linguistic traditions (Hebrew, Greek and Latin) go along with their rigorous understanding of modern scientific standards. The immediate goal of the group is to provide the Romanian culture with a new, complete, scientific, non-confessional, and accurate translation of the Hebrew Bible. By so doing it also envisages the reinforcement of the study of Biblical Hebrew on a sound scientific base within the Romanian academic milieu.

The research group is coordinated by **Francisca Băltăceanu** and **Monica Broșteanu**, two well known names in this field of study, formerly Professors of Biblical Studies at the Catholic Institute of Bucharest, currently still delivering courses at the University of Bucharest. One of the members of the research group, Ștefan Colceriu, is a NEC Alumnus and researcher at the Institute of Linguistics of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest. He was a member of the Septuagint translation project at New Europe College, Bucharest, led by Francisca Băltăceanu.

The first tangible result of this research group was the publication in 2017 of the translation from Hebrew of the Genesis: *Biblia după textul ebraic. Geneza*, followed by a second volume in 2019, the translation from Hebrew of the Exodus and of the Leviticus: *Biblia după textul ebraic. Exodul. Leviticul* (both volumes published by the *Humanitas* publishing house).

Due to the pandemic situation research activities within this group have been conducted mainly on individual level, however in 2021 a new volume of this translation project has been published at the same prestigious publishing house, the translation from Hebrew of the Numbers and of the Deuteronomy: *Biblia după textul ebraic. Numerii. Deuteronomul*.



In the timeframe 2013-2019 Ștefan Colceriu coordinated another research group at NEC: *The Bible in Its Linguistic Context: Coptic*, aiming to implement and develop the scientific study of Coptic within the Romanian academic context. Its members were young academics from various backgrounds (theology, philology, history, philosophy) who shared the same ideal of scientific excellence and methodological efficiency. The group's activity filled an important gap in the Biblical studies from Romania by providing direct access to original Coptic sources and by bringing into focus a huge cultural tradition which had been neglected. Since it benefitted from a flexible and mobile structure, the group was involved in achieving several goals, like translating Coptic literature into Romanian (biblical, apocryphal, patristic), collaborating with fellow scientists and academic institutions worldwide, and, most importantly, supporting and encouraging the study of Coptic among students interested in Biblical and Religious Studies.

In 2021, as a result of this group's scientific activity, Ștefan Colceriu published an exceptional translation of the Sayings of the Desert Fathers: *Apoftegmele Părinților deșertului. Versiunea coptă sahidică sau Patericul copt* (*Humanitas*).

# Society and Economy on the Fringes of Empires. The Romanian Principalities in a Regional Context in the Premodern and Modern Periods

Research Group, 2020 – 2021

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This research group was created in November 2020. It aims to investigate aspects related to the history of the Romanian Principalities and Southeast Europe in the XVII–XX centuries, a period marked by profound changes in the political geography of the region, but also in its socio-economic situation. In taking into account the individual interest of its members in institutions and commercial practices, aspects related to private life or consumption, political organization or women's history, the group will identify and study some of the specific forms modernity has taken in South-Eastern Europe, as well as the routes and networks through which it has penetrated into the region.



The research group is supported by a grant of the *Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation* – UEFISCDI, within the Prize for Excellence in Research awarded to New Europe College. It is coordinated by **Constantin Ardeleanu**, NEC Alumnus and Long-Term Fellow at NEC, Professor of modern Romanian History at The Lower Danube University of Galați.

## Team Members:

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*Wikimedia commons*

On May 24, 2021 the members of this research group organized an online event entitled: *On the Fringes of Empires: Violence, Corruption and Networks in Eastern Europe (1600-1900)*.

# Nationalism and its Effects on Music in Central and Eastern Europe since the Second Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Research Group, 2020 – 2021

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The founding of new states in nineteenth-century Europe – especially those in the central and eastern parts of the continent – inevitably generated and inspired creations whose musical ideas or motifs (emerging from folklore or religious music, with specific rhythms and harmonies, etc.) expressed their belonging to a country, an ethnic group, a religious community or even a geographical region. In the developing states of Central and Eastern Europe these national “sound identities” are significantly more prominent, being generated and reinforced on the one hand by independence movements and on the other by a certain reaction, subtly expressed, to the tradition of great European music, which dominated the era, although, paradoxically, local compositions made full use of the resources of the Western-type ones.

This newly established research group (November 2020) aims to investigate the forms and ways in which nationalism has left its mark, influencing and shaping music production in its various forms (composition, performance, musicology, etc.), as well as the establishment and mission of specialized institutions in the developing countries of Central and Eastern Europe, starting from the second half of the nineteenth century until after World War II. It is coordinated by **Valentina Sandu-Dediu**, Rector of the New Europe College and Professor of Musicology at the National University of Music of Bucharest. The research group is supported by a grant of the *Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation* – UEFISCDI, within the Prize for Excellence in Research awarded to New Europe College.

## **Team Members:**

Nicolae GHEORGHITĂ, PhD, Professor, National University of Music, Bucharest

Costin MOISIL, PhD, Associate Professor, National University of Music, Bucharest

Florinela POPA, PhD, Associate Professor, National University of Music, Bucharest

Corina-Antigona RĂDULESCU, PhD, Professor, National University of Music, Bucharest

On February 25, 2021 the research group hosted its first online event, a roundtable discussion organized on the occasion of a highly awaited book launch: *Noi istorii ale muzicilor românești* [*New Histories of Romanian Music*], a two-volume book, coordinated by Valentina Sandu-Dediu and Nicolae Gheorghită (also a member of the research group). All 14 authors who contributed with a chapter were present at the online event, as well as a notable number of guests and students from the field of Musicology. The discussion was moderated by Patrick Zuk, Professor at the Durham University in England.

A second event has been organized on June 25, 2021, an international conference entitled *Defining Nations Musically: Discourses on Nationalism in 20<sup>th</sup> Century European Music*.

## **Conveners:**

Valentina SANDU-DEDIU, Rector, New Europe College, Professor, National University of Music Bucharest

Nicolae GHEORGHITĂ, Professor, National University of Music Bucharest

## **Participants:**

Anna DALOS, Nicolae GHEORGHITĂ, Joep Th. LEERSEN, Olga MANULKINA, Melita MILIN, Costin MOISIL, Florinela POPA, Antigona RĂDULESCU, Valentina SANDU-DEDIU, Rūta STANEVIČIŪTĖ-KELMICKIENĖ, Harry WHITE



# Wiko meets NEC: The Thursday Lectures

A series of online lectures held by Fellows of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin

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## My Boss Is an Algorithm?

### From Independence to Dependency of Uber Drivers

Prof. Sophie Bernard, April 8, 2021

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The series of Thursday Lectures with fellows from the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin continued during the second semester of the academic year 2020-21 with a talk given by Sophie Bernard, Professor of Sociology at the University of Paris Dauphine and researcher at IRISSO. She is also a junior member of the Institut Universitaire de France and currently a fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg. As a sociologist of work and employment, she has been conducting research for several years on the blurring of employment statuses between self-employment and salaried work and in particular on platform capitalism. Her latest book, published in 2020, is entitled “Le nouvel esprit du salariat”.

For many analysts, Western societies are in the path of “uberization”. Behind Uber’s case, a new business model is emerging in

© private, [www.wiko-berlin.de](http://www.wiko-berlin.de) which companies take the form of digital platforms and act as intermediaries between customers and service providers, between job seekers and job providers. If these workers have the particularity of being self-employed, we show that the deployment of digital platforms contributes to a blurring of employment statuses that reinforces their subjection. The survey conducted among Uber drivers in Paris and Montreal allows us to approach this question from a sociological point of view. It aims to answer several questions, like who the Uber drivers are, or what relationship they have to the platform. Does the platform supervise their work or is it a simple intermediary between them and the passengers? What kind of employees are the Uber drivers, are they really self-employed, or rather “hybrid employees” or “employees in disguise”? The conducted research seems to indicate the latter, this kind of “algorithmic management” only offering the illusion of autonomy of self-employed workers, actually creating a high dependence on the platforms, however without offering neither the protection nor the rights associated with the employee status.



# The Schools of Early Scholasticism and the Social History of Truth

Prof. Frank Rexroth, June 17, 2021

A second conference in this series of lectures has been given by Prof. Frank Rexroth, Chair for Medieval and Modern History at the Georg-August University, Göttingen and the present Dean for the Humanities Faculty. Prof. Rexroth holds an impressive résumé; among many academic achievements, such as a remarkable number of published books and articles, he also received numerous awards and fellowships, like the ones from the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton and from the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, where he was a Fellow in 2008-09.

The lecture refers to one of his many research interests, the cultural history of medieval scholars, a topic that lies at the core of Prof. Rexroth's latest book, "Fröhliche Scholastik: Die Wissenschaftsrevolution des Mittelalters".



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*A reproduction from "Fröhliche Scholastik: Die Wissenschaftsrevolution des Mittelalters" (page 256, plate 3), 2018 by Frank Rexroth*

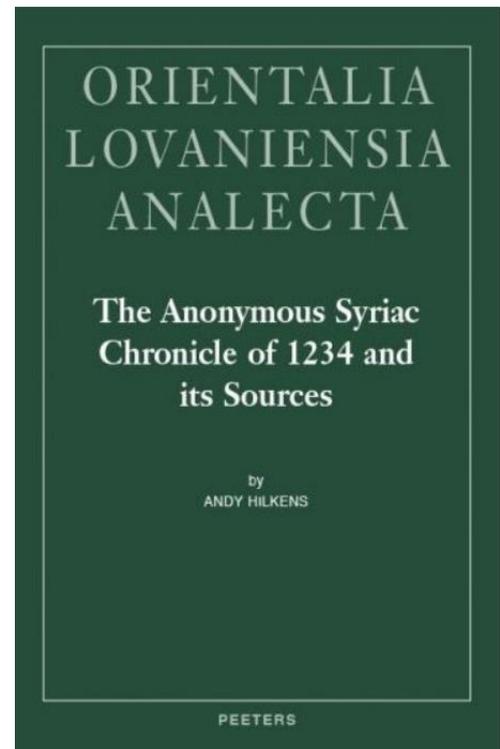
It is a classic argument in the historiography of science and the humanities that epistemic boundaries are by no means protected demarcation zones but, on the contrary, ideal fields of innovation, places which induce scholars to think 'outside the box' by integrating questions, methods and theories into their empirical field that usually are not domiciled there. One kind of social group I am dealing with in my current work are particularly inviting with respect to such an approach: the early scholastic schools of private, entrepreneurial masters and their students. During my talk I will sketch these schools and the changing episteme of 'higher learning'. Then will ask what the specific contribution of Peter Abelard (d. 1142) to the epistemic change was that was taking place during the twelfth century. Here, the social form of the schools, including behavioural and emotional aspects, will be at the centre. And thirdly, I will at least touch upon a few notions and patterns of thought that seem to have permanently moulded the communication between scholastic scholars and their environment.

## The Armenian Reception of Jacob of Serugh and His Writings

Andy Hilkens, March 18, 2021

The most well-known consequence of contacts between Syriac- and Armenian-speaking Christians in Antiquity and the Middle Ages was the production of Armenian translations of Syriac texts, the first of which appeared after the creation of the Armenian alphabet in the early fifth century. It seems that the Armenian reception of the non-Chalcedonian homilist Jacob of Serugh (d. 520) and his writings must be dated to the Cilician period (eleventh-thirteenth centuries), the golden age of Armenian translations from Syriac. In this talk Dr Andy Hilkens explored how Jacob and his writings were received, perceived and transmitted by Armenian Christians. This investigation took us on a journey that tracked Jacob's presence in Armenian culture from twelfth- and thirteenth-century Armenian Cilicia to the late medieval Armenian homeland and throughout the Armenian diaspora all the way to 1930s Bulgaria.

One of Andy Hilkens' major research interest is the circulation of knowledge in ancient and medieval times, in particular among Christian communities and most particular in the formal writings, translations and their perception. He devoted special attention to the writings of Jacob of Serugh, one of the major Syriac poet theologians, and their reception in Armenia. Dr Hilkens is a research associate at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, in the cluster "Minority Studies: Language and Identity" and he is currently investigating the identity discourse in Syriac Christianity in history and present.



**Andy Hilkens, PhD Dissertation**

 This is a screenshot of a Zoom lecture. On the left, a slide titled "Jacob's writings" lists several items:
 

- 781 homilies in verse (*memrē*)
- Homilies in prose (*turgāmē*)
- Hymns
- Liturgical poems
- *Life of Daniel of Galash*
- *Life of Hannina*
- Letters

 Below the list, the text "zoom\_0" is visible. To the right of the slide is a video player showing a painting of a bearded man in ornate, colorful robes, likely Jacob of Serugh, holding a cross. The video player interface includes a progress bar at the bottom with a play button and a volume icon. On the far right, a vertical strip of small video thumbnails shows other participants in the Zoom meeting.

Lecture on Zoom, Andy Hilkens, March 18, 2021

# Îngerii căzuți. De la literatura enohică la Cabala

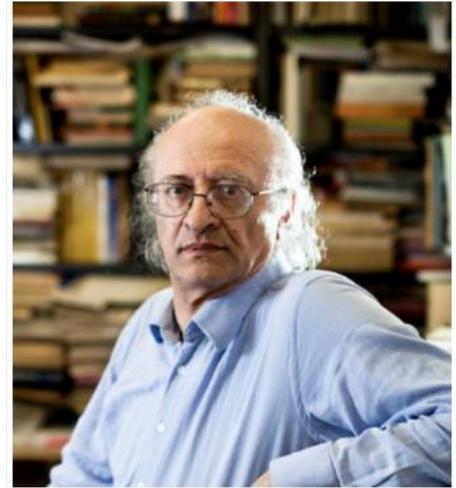
## [Fallen Angels. From Enochic Literature to Kabbalah]

Moshe Idel, May 13, 2021

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The well-known historian and philosopher of Jewish mysticism Moshe Idel, Emeritus Professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Max Cooper Professor of Jewish Thought) and Senior Research Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem, gave a lecture on one of his main research interests, the Kabbalah. During his outstanding academic career, Prof. Moshe Idel served as a visiting professor and researcher at universities and institutions worldwide, including Yale, Harvard, and Princeton universities in the United States, and Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris. He has published over one hundred books, translated into a dozen different languages and received numerous academic distinctions.

His lecture, *Fallen Angels. From Enochic Literature to Kabbalah*, was once again a fascinating intellectual expedition into the teachings of Jewish mysticism.



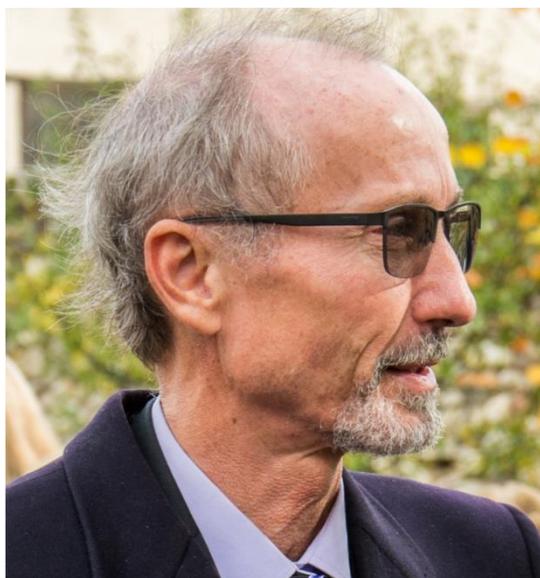
Moshe IDEL, Emeritus Professor, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

# Chiara Lubich: teologie mistică și dialog interreligios

## [Chiara Lubich: Mystical Theology and Interreligious Dialogue]

Prof. Stefan Tobler, June 10, 2021

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Does an authentic inter-religious dialogue exist without reassessing one's own truth? The mystical current, present in all religions, points to a possible path, as it is based on experiencing reality beyond words and language. Chiara Lubich, the founder of the Focolare movement, is a remarkable example in the 20th century. Although a devout Catholic, she was spiritually close to personalities from all the major religions. Yet unpublished fragments of Chiara Lubich's mystical writings from 1949-1950 contain evidences about the experience and theological perspectives that shaped her religious beliefs and opened the way to an authentic encounter with the other.

Stefan Tobler, Professor of Systematic Theology at the "Lucian Blaga" University in Sibiu and Director of the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Sibiu (Institut für ökumenische Forschung Hermannstadt, IÖFH), offered an outstanding lecture on Chiara Lubich's mystical theology and the opportunities she envisioned for an authentic interreligious dialogue.

## Writers from around the Black Sea between Art and Academia

Debate, *Pontica Magna* Program, March 25, 2021

This event is organized within the framework of the *Pontica Magna* Fellowship Program, supported by VolkswagenStiftung, Hannover. The *Pontica Magna* Program addresses young researchers, media professionals, but also writers and artists from the countries around the Black Sea and beyond it. Three *Pontica Magna* Alumni, writers Maria Rybakova (PhD), Andriy Lyubka and Tamta Melashvili invited us to a conversation about Art and Academia, moderated by the literary scholar, author and critic Markus Bauer, not before offering their personal view on this topic.

Dr Markus Bauer wrote a dissertation on melancholy in Walter Benjamin. From 1998 to 2003 he had a decisive encounter with Romania as lecturer of the German Academic Exchange Service at the Al. I. Cuza University in Iași – since then, his work has focused on the (cultural) history of this region. He spent a two-year research stay at the University of Portsmouth (UK) for a project about the Jewish press in Chernivtsi. His résumé counts numerous publications as author (e.g. “In Rumänien. Auf den Spuren einer europäischen Verwandtschaft”, Berlin 2009) or editor, as well as essays and lectures on Southeast Europe, especially Romania. He is conducting journalistic work for several major German newspapers.



We present some of the questions that served as basis for the discussion:

- How does it come that you all three are writing prose and poetry and at the same time are engaged in research in the humanities?
- Is there any special aspect in this that reacts to post-Soviet situations (regarding themes, styles, genres)?
- You write in your native tongues, but have your works translated in foreign languages for international audiences. What do you think gets lost in translation?
- Your research obviously influences your literature and vice versa. When you are writing prose, how do you get rid of scientific formulas and rhetoric? When you are writing texts in the humanities how do you prevent them sounding like literature?

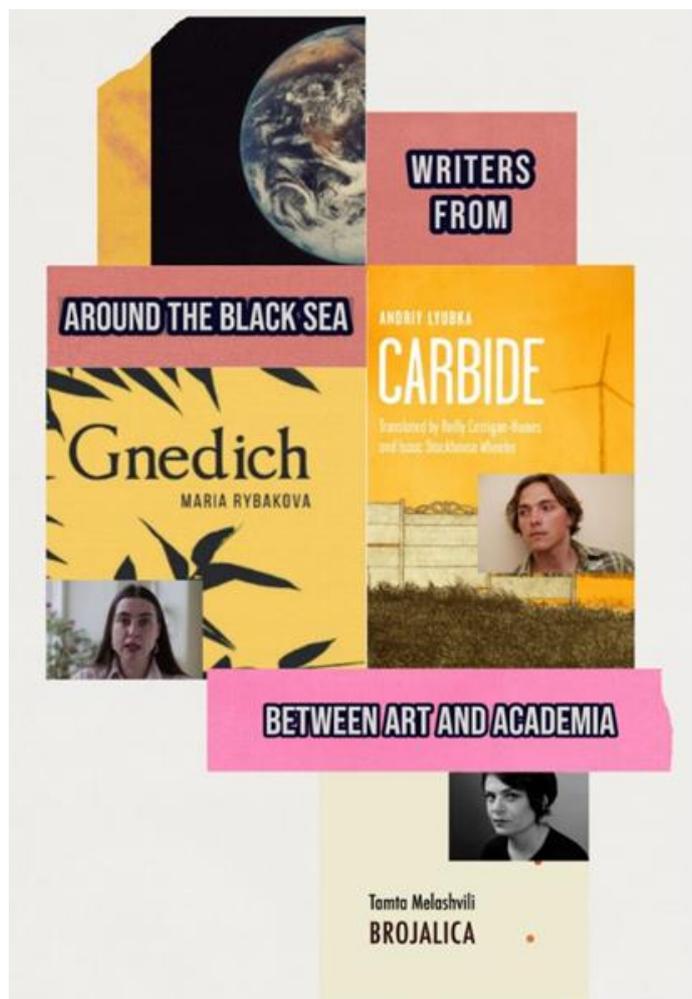
- Could/Should there be more “literature” in humanities’ research? Or more “science” in literature?
- Do you find it helpful for your position to remember Soviet perspectives on literature and science? Are such positions still prevalent in your countries of origin?
- You are all civically involved in your countries and promote different causes related to democratic values or social equality. Is there a relation between this social activism and your literary production?
- Are fellowship residences within groups of scholars (such as the one you had at NEC) any inspiration for your literature?

We quote parts of Maria Rybakova’s, Andriy Lyubka’s and Tamta Melashvili’s answers to that last question, as they are beautiful examples of how important a community of scholars is for each and every fellow, researcher or writer. It therefore also offers an opportunity to reflect on how important institutions like New Europe College are for our societies, how they support the process of creating and shaping new ideas, knowledge, scientific outcomes or artistic creations. Maybe also how such institutions contribute in (re)discovering and shaping “normality”:

“It’s a resounding *yes!* There is no greater happiness than being surrounded by the lightminded people pursuing research, being infected by their enthusiasm and have an opportunity to participate in their debates. My novel “If There is Paradise” germinated when I was writer in residence at the Institute for Advanced Study of the Central European University. Here at NEC it was while I was looking into Mircea Eliade and falling in love with Romania, that my new project began – that four novellas collection that’s called “Quaternity”. It started with me walking around Bucharest, looking at places that were connected to Eliade’s life. (...)” – Maria Rybakova

“Being in a multidisciplinary environment of researchers from different countries, allows one to compare positions and see that in fact we have a lot in common, on both individual level and in the whole countries. It seems especially valuable to me that in this program writers had the opportunity to communicate and collaborate with academic scholars, because it formed a completely different, deeper nature of discussions than it is often the case in festival-type literary programs.” – Andriy Lyubka

“There is a necessity of exchange, of academic exchange, and I think that NEC is – and was at least in my experience – the best platform. (...) I feel really privileged that I’ve been a fellow there.” – Tamta Melashvili



# Financial support

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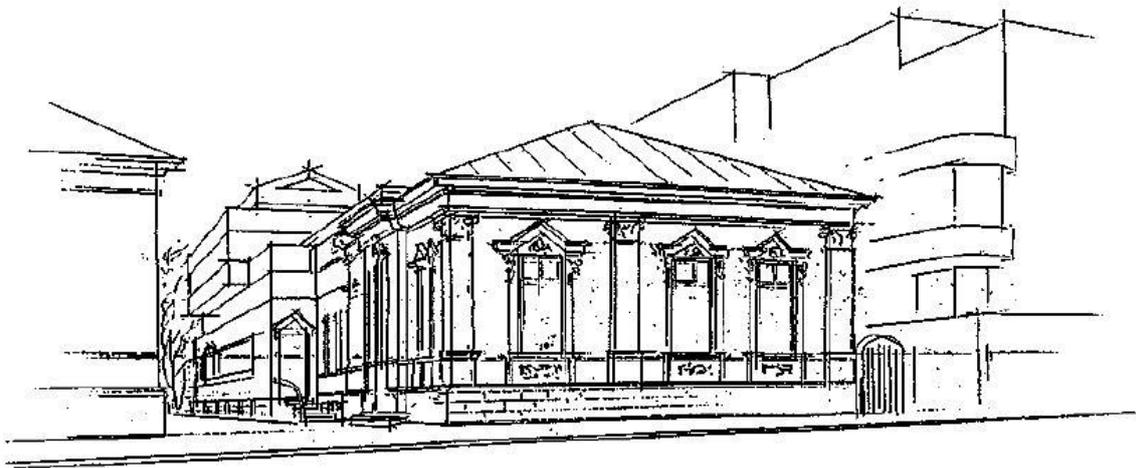


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