



SEMESTRIAL REPORT

SPRING – SUMMER
2024–2025

New Europe College
Institute for Advanced Study
www.nec.ro



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A Word to Our Readers

Delving into a modern Plato's cave—the source code

People often say, especially in recent decades, that our world is deeply shaped by digital technology. And it's hard to disagree: laptops, smartphones, vending machines, online newspapers, almost everything we touch in daily life runs on software. Beneath the surface of a lot of what we see, own or even believe lies a hidden web of interconnected algorithms and endless lines of code. Ironically (or not), in computer programming this code is called “source.”

What you are now reading on this page makes no exception; it is primarily code. If you don't believe it, just take a quick look at the screenshot below; soon you will recognize that those bizarrely colored lines are part of the technology that generated this very report. This is a “source.”

```
// === Create A3 landscape document ===
var doc = app.documents.add();
doc.documentPreferences.pageHeight = "297mm";
doc.documentPreferences.pageWidth = "420mm";
doc.documentPreferences.pageOrientation = PageOrientation.LANDSCAPE;

var page = doc.pages.item(0);

// === BACKGROUND: One big NEC logo ===
var bgFrame = page.rectangles.add();
bgFrame.geometricBounds = [0, 0, 297, 420];
bgFrame.place(logoFile);
bgFrame.transparencySettings.blendingSettings.opacity = 8; // faint watermark
bgFrame.sendToBack();
bgFrame.fit(FitOptions.PROPORTIONALLY);
bgFrame.fit(FitOptions.CENTER_CONTENT);
bgFrame.strokeWeight = 0; // no border

// === TITLE ===
var titleFrame = page.textFrames.add();
titleFrame.geometricBounds = [10, 20, 25, 400];
titleFrame.contents = "2024-2025 Fellows";
var titlePara = titleFrame.parentStory.paragraphs[0];
titlePara.appliedFont = app.fonts.item("Palatino_Linotype");
titlePara.pointSize = 22;
titlePara.justification = Justification.LEFT_ALIGN;

// === Fellows Grid ===
var cols = 6;
var rows = Math.ceil(fellows.length / cols);
var marginTop = 30; // leave space for title
var margin = 15;
var cellW = (420 - 2 * margin) / cols;
var cellH = (300 - marginTop - margin - 32) / rows; // leave 32mm bottom for summary

for (var i = 0; i < fellows.length; i++) {
  var f = fellows[i];
  var row = Math.floor(i / cols);
  var col = i % cols;

  var x1 = margin + col * cellW;
  var y1 = marginTop + row * cellH;
  var x2 = x1 + cellW;
  var y2 = y1 + cellH;

  // Image frame
  var imgFrame = page.rectangles.add();
  imgFrame.geometricBounds = [y1, x1, y1 + (cellH * 0.8), x2];
  imgFrame.strokeWeight = 0; // remove border

  var imgFile = File(imgFolder + "/" + f[2]);
  if (imgFile.exists) {
```

Of course, you will now say, this “source” is entirely secondary, derivative. And so, ontologically benign. Ultimately, it is I (a living consciousness) who composed this text, who thought of these thoughts, who wrote them down in one form or another, before sending everything to the software. Hence, the code does not shape what things *are*, but only what they *appear* to be. The code does not do anything underneath, but barely a little below the surface of things, just like a stream that only channels the water in a rapid or a wide flow, without ever really touching upon the nature of water itself.

Yes... and no.

The source code is, in fact, a language; it comes together with an entire ontology of types, forms, objects, properties, relations and particulars, connected in either short or long strings of instructions that a physical machine understands and then implements accordingly. The source code thus conveys a whole world in its lines, yet one that is only partially similar to our human or common sense one.

Of course, this code may be benign, as I said earlier, when we try to pour our own

ontology into it (for example, when we write each possible integer number as a sequence of binary digits), but it may not be likewise if or when, unbeknownst, the code starts pouring *its own* ontology into ours. This is starting to be the case now with the fast-evolving field of deep machine learning or AI. Did you know, for example, that large language models already available on the market, when performing a basic mathematical task like adding 57 and 63, they actually do trigonometry and use clock representations of numbers in their code? That is, something way more sophisticated than common sense human counting?

A clock face, with its twelve positions, provides a simple way to think about numbers in a circular rather than linear fashion. Instead of continuing in a straight line (as on an abacus), the numbers on a clock “wrap around” once they reach twelve: for example, 12 + 1 takes us back to 1, and 12 + 2 brings us to 2. This wrapping is an example of modular arithmetic,

where values reset after reaching a certain limit. Interestingly, this idea connects directly to trigonometry. Since a circle measures 360° , each step on the clock represents an angle of 30° ($360 \div 12$). Adding numbers on a clock, then, is like adding angles on the unit circle (2π). For instance, starting at 9 o'clock (270°) and adding 5 hours ($5 \times 30^\circ = 150^\circ$) gives 420° , which wraps around to 60° ($\pi/3$), or 2 o'clock. This is equivalent to $9 + 5 = 14$. This circular system illustrates how clocks, trigonometry, and even certain types of computation, including the way AI performs basic addition, are all linked by the same underlying principle of wrapping numbers around a circle.

Let us imagine now that, quite soon, popular AI systems like Gemini, Claude, or ChatGPT will start doing *all* the mathematics in the world for us; even previously unsolvable equations such as the Navier–Stokes equations in fluid physics (a breakthrough recently announced by DeepMind). Won't this eventually change the ontology of mathematics as we know it, since everything these systems do relies, deep down, on trigonometric constructions of numbers and operations, instead of simple abacus counting?

I know this is a tough question, and we do not need to answer it here. But even so, the very act of posing it already emphasizes something about the fundamental changes that digital technology and its "source code" can bring upon the world, up to the point where it may no longer be *our* world at all. A shift in ontology is fundamental enough, I would say.

With such considerations in mind, I conclude that delving, informed and prepared, into this new Plato's cave called the "source code" of intelligent machines or AI becomes a potentially vital task for any modern thinker regardless of their field or work. Hence, this short word of introduction.

Andreea Eşanu

NEC Researcher and Alumna

coordinator of the NEC group *Technology, Culture, Humanities* (NEC-TECH)

```
13 This is a ``source''.
14
15 \vspace*{-2pt}
16 \begin{wrapfigure}{1}{.51\textwidth}
17   \input{figures/code.tex}
18 \end{wrapfigure}%
19 Of course, you will now say, this ``source'' is entirely secondary,
20   derivative.
21 And so, ontologically benign.
22 Ultimately, it is I (a living consciousness) who
```

Current Fellowship Programs and Research Projects

NEC Fellowships (since 1994)

This is the NEC core fellowship program, which during the institute's first years targeted exclusively Romanian scholars from the humanities and social sciences. From 2000 onward, NEC has opened its doors first to researchers from the neighbouring countries, later from the world at large, without relinquishing its support of Romanian young scholars. As a result, starting with 2008 the core program was split into two distinct though closely interrelated lines: **NEC International Fellowships**, enjoying the financial support of NEC's institutional sponsors, and **NEC Ștefan Odobleja Fellowships** (since 2008), targeting young Romanian researchers and funded by the Romanian Executive Agency for Funding Higher Education, Development and Innovation (UEFISCDI, project number: PN-IV-P2-2.1-BSO-2023-0005).

The Fellows are chosen by the NEC International Academic Advisory Board and are awarded a fellowship for a full academic year or one semester. They gather for weekly seminars to discuss the progress of their research and participate in all the scientific events organised by NEC. They receive a monthly stipend and are given the opportunity of a research trip abroad, at a university or research institute of their choice.

UEFISCDI Award (since 2016)

The outstanding scientific activity of the NEC was formally recognized in Romania in 2016, when the Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation organized a competition for institutions coordinating ERC projects. New Europe College applied and won two institutional prizes for coordinating, at that time, two ERC grants. A part of this prize was used to create the UEFISCDI Award Program, consisting of fellowships targeting young international researchers, also meant to complement and enlarge the core fellowship program (project number: PN-IV-P8-8.1-PRE-HE-ORG-2023-0055).

Gerda Henkel Fellowships (since 2017)

This program, developed with the support of Gerda Henkel Stiftung (Germany), invites post-doctoral researchers and academics working in the fields of humanities and social sciences (in particular history, art history, history of law, history of science, historical Islamic studies, archaeology, prehistory and early history) from former Soviet countries (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan), Afghanistan, and China (only Tibet and Xinjiang Autonomous Regions). The terms of fellowship are similar to those of the NEC Fellowships: residencies for one or two terms at the New Europe College during which the fellows work on projects of their choice.

Lapedatu Fellowships (since 2018)

According to its Statute, the Lapedatu Foundation supports research activities on "the life and work of Lapedatu family members and the socio-cultural and political context" in which they lived. Thanks to a generous financial contribution from the Lapedatu Foundation, NEC invites to Bucharest a foreign researcher specialized in the field of Romanian Studies, who is also conducting research in one of the world's top universities. They spend a month in Romania and work with a young Romanian researcher to organize an academic event hosted by the NEC. At this event, the Lapedatu fellows and their guests present scientific papers and initiate debates on themes that cover important topics in the Romanian and Southeastern European history, in both modern and contemporary epochs.

Ameropa Fellowships (since 2020)

Organized with the financial support of Ameropa and its subsidiaries in Romania, and with the academic support of the Center 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 Fellowships 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 is organized in the framework of the Ameropa Program.

DigiHum Fellowships (since 2021)

The “Relevance of the Humanities in the Digital Age” (DigiHum) Fellowships Program, jointly proposed by the Centre for Advanced Study (Sofia) and the New Europe College (Bucharest) with support from the Porticus Foundation, underscores the cognitive functions of the humanities and their potential as critical disciplines by opening them to issues relevant in today’s digital world. The program accommodates a wide range of themes in the humanities and social sciences, provided they connect to debates or challenges to the human condition arising from technological advances and “digital modernity.” It is guided by the belief that humanities scholars, regardless of field, benefit from rethinking their topics in terms of broader contemporary relevance (be it political, ethical, religious, philosophical, or academic). The program addresses international scholars.

Botnar Digital Wellbeing Fellowships (since 2022)

The Botnar Digital Wellbeing Fellowships Program, supported by the Botnar Foundation, is open to Romanian and international researchers in the social sciences and humanities interested in studying the effects of digital technologies on young people’s quality of life. The program seeks to strengthen the role of the New Europe College in this field by contributing to the production of knowledge and skills on the impact of digital transformations. It draws on the potential of the humanities and social sciences as key disciplines for analyzing the opportunities and risks of the digital revolution, particularly in post-communist and transitional societies, while fostering the exchange of ideas and critical debates between social sciences and humanities scholars and experts in IT production and development.

Sustaining Ukrainian Scholarship Fellowships (since 2023)

The SUS Fellowships Program, jointly run by the New Europe College (Bucharest) and the Centre for Advanced Study (Sofia), supports scholarship in regions affected by Russia’s war against Ukraine. It targets post-doctoral researchers in the humanities and social sciences, including law and economics, wishing to pursue projects of their choice. Selected fellows may spend one or two semesters in residence at Bucharest or Sofia, benefiting from a stipend, accommodation, academic support, and integration into international networks. By agreement, financial support may also be granted to researchers who cannot reside fully in Bucharest or Sofia and must continue work in Ukraine. Fellows may additionally apply for seed funds for projects strengthening Ukraine’s academic system—such as developing or rebuilding research infrastructure, especially in the digital field. The program is financed by the VolkswagenStiftung (Germany).

With shared fellowships, NEC and CAS also contribute to the initiative promoted by the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, to establish an (for now virtual) Institute for Advanced Study (VUIAS) in Kyiv.

IWM for Ukrainian Scholars Fellowships (since 2023)

After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) in Vienna allocated special funds to the NEC to host additional Ukrainian researchers in the humanities and social sciences.

GCE St. Gallen Fellowships (since 2022)

Similarly, the University of St. Gallen's Center for Governance and Culture in Europe (GCE) has provided extra funding for scholars whose academic careers have been affected by the current war in Ukraine.

TANDEM – Author with Translator – Translator with Author (since 2022)

TANDEM is a program for *literati*—writers and translators from the cultures and countries around the Black Sea. By promoting translation to and from the languages spoken on the shores of the *Pontos Euxeinus*, it seeks to foster understanding and connection among the region's neighbors. Pairs of authors and their translators are invited for a two-month residency at the NEC to work on translating a specific text (novel, poetry, or children's literature). The program is supported by the S. Fischer Stiftung, Germany.

Mattei Dogan Fellowships (since 2023)

These fellowships, organized with academic and financial support from Fondation Mattei Dogan (Paris), target early-career scholars (within five years of receiving their doctorate) from Central and East European (CEE) and Black Sea countries (Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Belarus, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Turkey, Georgia, Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan) who are affiliated with academic institutions in these countries at the time of application. Candidates should propose original approaches to comparative social science research. The program is open to all social science disciplines. Selected post-doctoral researchers have the opportunity to work on projects of their choice for one or two semesters as fellows in Bucharest.

Landis & Gyr Fellowships (since 2000)

These fellowships are awarded within the framework of the studio program for artists, writers, and cultural critics in London, Zug, Budapest, Bucharest, and Sofia, offered by the Landis & Gyr Stiftung, Zug (Switzerland). The Landis & Gyr Foundation—one of NEC's main supporters since its inception—uses one of the apartments on the NEC premises to host grant recipients. They work on their own projects, present their current work, and are welcome to participate in all NEC activities.

2024 – 2025 Fellows



Maria ADAMOPOULOU, GR



Tatev CHAKHIAN, ARM



Adelin-Costin DUMITRU, RO



Jale ISMAYIL, AZ



Serhiy LAZO, UKR



Metin OMER, RO



Eszter SZABÓ-REZNEK, RO



Iryna YAKOVENKO, UKR



Annette AMBERG, CH



Liliana COROBCA, MLD



Claudia EGGART, DE



Kato JAVAKHISHVILI, GE



Andrei-Tudor MAN, RO



Oleksii PLASTUN, UKR



Peter TILLESSEN, CH



Vladimir ZHBANKOV, RU-UKR



Vadym ARISTOV, UKR



Christian COSTAMAGNA, IT



Daniel FILIP-AFLOAREI, RO



Oksana KASHYNTSEVA, UKR



Wiktor MARZEC, PL



Octavian PURIC, RO



Raluca-Maria TRIFA, RO



Gabriela BADEA, RO



Alena BAGRO, RU-UKR



Raluca BUJOR, RO



Asya DARBINYAN, ARM



Vanessa R. DE OBALDÍA, UK/PAN



Oleksandra DEMIANENKO, UKR



Andrea Umberto GRITTI, IT



Györgyi HORVÁTH, HU



Binyamin HUNYADI, HU/ISR



Dana KATZ, USA



James KORANYI, UK



Roman KYSELOV, UKR



Octavian-Adrian NEGOIȚĂ, RO



Lora NENKOVSKA, BG



Constantin Claudiu OANCEA, RO



Noel SCHMIDLIN, CH



Daniela STANCIU-PĂSCĂRIȚA, RO



Bogdan-Alexandru STĂNESCU, RO



Olena UVAROVA, UKR



Sabine Heidi WALTHER, DE



Paulo WIRZ, CH

Fellows 2024–2025: Citizenship

Armenia	2	Hungary / Israel	1	UK	1
Azerbaijan	1	Italy	2	UK / Panama	1
Bulgaria	1	Moldova / Romania	1	Ukraine	8
Georgia	1	Poland	1	USA	1
Germany	2	Romania	13		
Greece	1	Russia, residency in Ukraine	2		
Hungary	1	Switzerland	4		
				Total	44

Wednesday Seminars



GCE St. Gallen Fellow
Associate Professor,
Bohdan Khmelnytsky
National University of
Cherkasy

March 5, 2025

Oleksandra DEMIANENKO

SOCIAL PROTECTION IN UKRAINE UNDER MARTIAL LAW AND DECENTRALIZATION OF POWER

The project deals with social protection in Ukraine under martial law and decentralization of power. Research goals: analysis of changes in the social protection system in Ukraine as a result of the decentralization reform; to explore social protection practices at the local, regional, and national levels during a full-scale war and the role of online services in these processes. Based on its results, it is planned to publish a monograph, an article, as well as to develop a course for students.

March 12, 2025

Adelin-Costin DUMITRU

“LEAVE IT TO THE PEOPLE”. INHERITANCE TAXATION AND OPEN DEMOCRACY

This research project aims to defend the idea that determining the right level of inheritance taxation, as well as what should be done with the collected taxes, is a matter that should be decided by the people, reunited in a proper deliberative setting. Wealth inequalities originating in disproportionate bequests is a major source of political inequality, and through this proposal I intend to make a contribution not only to democratic theory, but also to set the ground for future policy reforms.



NEC-AMEROPA Fellow
Assistant Professor,
“Politehnica” National
University of Science and
Technology, Bucharest

March 12, 2025

Peter TILLESSEN

AGAINST NATURE. HOW TO LIVE AND WORK IN TIMES OF CLIMATE CRISIS

In my talk, I tried to give an overview of my current activities at the NEC. As an artist and climate activist, my private and professional lives are very much intertwined. In the first part of the talk, I tried to give a rough overview of my artistic work. The second part was focused directly on the pending climate crisis. In a third part, I talked about how I am trying to connect those two topics in my new literary project “Father”. My presentation took some artistic freedom and did not follow the standard academic approaches.



Landis & Gyr Fellow
Artist and Climate Activist

March 26, 2025

Christian COSTAMAGNA

THE 1999 NATO INTERVENTION IN YUGOSLAVIA: POWER, STRATEGY, AND THE KOSOVO WAR

The primary goal of this research is to challenge existing narratives about the Kosovo War and NATO intervention by examining new USA and Yugoslav declassified state sources, particularly focusing on two main factors behind NATO's involvement: humanitarian justifications and geopolitical objectives. The preliminary examination has enabled the discovery of counterintuitive information that poses a challenge to prevailing interpretations.



NEC International Fellow
Non-residential Fellow,
Center for Advanced
Studies Southeast Europe
(CAS SEE), University of
Rijeka, Croatia

April 9, 2025

Daniela STANCIU-PĂSCĂRIȚA

MAKING THE STATE. SOCIABILITY OF OLD AND NEW NETWORKS IN POST-IMPERIAL REALITIES

The project I propose has two dimensions: researching the concept of loyalty among the Transylvanian Romanians and Saxons after 1918 and recreating the sociability of cultural and political networks from the imperial period in transition to the postimperial one. The main objective of the project is to investigate the patterns of formation and metamorphosis of networks from the perspective of minority, social and urban history, combined with aspects of cultural anthropology, in comparison.



Ștefan Odobleja Fellow
Assistant Professor, Lucian
Blaga University, Sibiu

April 23, 2025

Raluca BUJOR

CELEBRATION AND LEISURE: NONLINEAR TIME IN PLATO'S SYMPOSIUM

This project represents a continuation of my research (in progress) on the concept of platonic leisure (*skholê*) and is dedicated to the historical and hermeneutical analysis of the characteristics of temporality in festivals, as moments of Ancient Greek *skholê*. Focusing on the Platonic Symposium, a text uniquely embedded in the dimension of "festive time", it aims at arguing that the structural narrative of the dialogue brings forward discontinuity or rupture as the main traits of *skholê*.



Ștefan Odobleja Fellow
Associate Professor, Faculty
of Philosophy, University of
Bucharest



Ștefan Odobleja Fellow

April 30, 2025

Octavian PURIC

A STUDY OF PLATO'S ONTOLOGY THROUGH THE NOTION OF PROMISE KEEPING AND BREAKING

The goal of this project is to explore Plato's tacit understanding of being and seeming which led to the development of his grades of reality metaphysics. I aim to do this by exploring the hypothesis that both these notions conceptually derive from a common root, identifiable in the notion of promise and its cognates: *being as promise-fulfilling* and *seeming as promise-breaking*.

May 7, 2025

Eszter SZABÓ-REZNEK

CONTROL, UNIFORMITY AND IDENTITY. THE HUNGARIAN THEATRE OF CLUJ IN THE 1950S

The project aims to research a lesser-known period of the history of the Hungarian State Theatre of Cluj, the 1950s, through the analysis of previously unresearched sources, focusing both on local initiatives and practices as well as the strategies of the sovietization of culture on a state level. Besides understanding the case of the theatre of Cluj in the context of the network of theatres in Romania, I attempt a comparison with the practices of theatres in Hungary from the same period.



Ștefan Odobleja Fellow

May 14, 2025

Alena BAGRO

THE PODOLIAN FORTIFICATIONS IN THE UKRAINIAN HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Historians can regard castles as a way to control the conquered lands, but on the other hand, fortifications are an integral part of the border defence system, that has repeatedly been able to stop external enemies. The research focuses on rethinking the general perception of the reasons for the emergence and significance of early modern fortifications in Podolia. This will make it possible to include the Podillia fortifications in the Ukrainian historical narrative.



Gerda Henkel Fellow
Research Fellow,
The German Historical
Institute in Warsaw

May 21, 2025

Vanessa R. de OBALDÍA

**SIMONOPETRA MONASTERY'S OTTOMAN
ARCHIVE: THE CATALOGUING AND
PROSOPOGRAPHICAL CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE
17TH CENTURY ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS OF AN
ATHONITE MONASTERY**

The primary objective of the project is to catalogue, transliterate, and translate the 17th century Ottoman archival documents from Simonopetra Monastery; the secondary objectives are the presentations, exhibitions, and publications. The project's originality and value is in it representing the first comprehensive cataloguing of the entire 17th century Ottoman archive of one Athonite monastery, but also in the research output, dissemination, and artistic and cultural public engagement.



DigiHum Fellow

Affiliated Scholar,
ERC Starting Grant
MAMEMS,
Johannes Gutenberg
University of Mainz

May 28, 2025

Gabriela BADEA

SELF-FASHIONING IN LATE MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

The project explores the dialogic construction of authorial personas in the late Middle Ages, proposing a perspective that sees premodern identities as essentially relational. It aims to redefine literary self-fashioning and its intertextualities, examining how various elements contribute to creating unique, but interwoven literary brands. The research also delves into the posterity of auctorial self-presentation, exploring how distinct poetic identities resonate in later texts and anthologies.



Ștefan Odobleja Fellow

June 11, 2025

Wiktor MARZEC

**PATCHWORK PARLIAMENTS IN POST-IMPERIAL
STATES: POLAND AND ROMANIA 1918–1923**

This project studies representative assemblies in post-imperial states after 1918 to understand the morphing field of power characterised by high cultural diversity, shifts in ethnic hierarchies, crippling regionalisms, and nationalising integration. These chambers were arenas where various elites debated the polity and traded their diverse resources. Comparing two patchwork parliaments staged as national assemblies, the project zooms in on transitory biographies and capitals of their members.



Mattei Dogan Fellow

Researcher, Institute for
Social Studies, University of
Warsaw



June 18, 2025

Binyamin HUNYADI

FROM A MAJOR TO A MINOR CULTURAL REVOLUTION: YIDDISH LITERATURE DURING THE CEAUȘESCU ERA (1965–1989)

My research project proposes a close reading of literary works by Yiddish authors active during the “minor cultural revolution” of the Ceaușescu era in Romania (1965–1989). It will follow the *Rezeptionsgeschichte* of their works and analyze the transnational dynamics of Yiddish literature in the Socialist Bloc.

NEC UEFISCDI Fellow
Archivist and Research Assistant, The National Library of Israel



Tatev CHAKHIAN

Tandem Fellow
Poet, Translator,
Visual Artist



Asya DARBINYAN

Tandem Fellow
Translator

June 25, 2025

THE POLITICS OF PRESENCE AND ABSENCE IN TATEV CHAKHIAN’S *MIGRANT POINT*

Migrant Point, the second poetry collection by Tatev Chakhian, offers a compelling exploration of the intricate layers of migrant experience. With 26 poems, Chakhian delves into the themes of migration, belonging, and the lasting impact of war and displacement on diasporic narratives. Each poem in *Migrant Point* provides an introspective look into the resilience required to navigate the challenges of displacement, inviting readers to delve into the core of the migrant experience with thought-provoking insight.



Research Projects

Transnational Histories of ‘Corruption’ in Central-South-East Europe (1750–1850) (TransCorr)

ERC Advanced Grant (October 2023–September 2028)

PROJECT OVERVIEW For centuries, Central-South-East Europe grappled with the stigma of corruption. From 1750 to 1850, politicians, scholars, and writers painted a grim picture of graft, nepotism, and bribery as endemic issues. These allegations shaped the region’s identity, linking corruption to cultural backwardness and economic under-development. With this in mind, the ERC-funded TransCorr project will explore how regional leaders repurposed traditional practices, labelling them as corrupt when juxtaposed with Western European modernity ideals. The findings promise to change the way we perceive patronage, graft, and center-periphery dynamics. The emphasis on the intersection of social and political practice and discourse on “corruption” in a transnational context constitutes TransCorr’s main methodological novelties and contributions to existing scholarship on Central-South-East Europe.

This ERC Advanced Grant is coordinated by the NEC Alumna Silvia MARTON, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Bucharest. It is funded by the European Union (ERC, TransCorr, ERC-2022-ADG no. 101098095). *Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Council Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.*



**Funded by
the European Union**



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission



PROJECT WEBSITES <https://www.transcorr.eu/>
<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101098095>

PUBLICATIONS Silvia Marton and Alex R. Tipei will co-edit TransCorr's first volume, (provisionally) titled "Conceptualizing Corruption: The 'Old Regime' and the New Order in East-Central-South Europe (1750s-1850s)." Presently, no trans-imperial or transnational history of "corruption" in Central-South-East Europe between 1750 and 1850 exists. Yet, in these borderlands, nestled between the Russian, Habsburg, and Ottoman empires, "corruption" became a key concept in political and economic debates during an initial era of modernization. To fill in this gap in the literature, contributors to the volume use micro-historical case studies to track how public figures mobilized accusations of "corruption" to legitimize their political and economic aims and assert their own authority. Equipped with a wide range of linguistic skills and archival know-how, as a group, the authors capture the variety of discursive possibilities that the language of "corruption" offered to the individuals that they study. Micro-empirical research allows the contributors to rethink macro-level processes. The authors address key historiographical issues from practices associated with formal (and informal) imperialism to those linked to the rise of liberalism, capitalism, and nationalism. The manuscript will be submitted to Bloomsbury (within its "A Modern History of Politics and Violence" series.)

Team members

Project leader

Silvia MARTON, PhD, Associate Professor, Faculty of Political Science,
University of Bucharest

Experienced researchers

Constantin ARDELEANU, PhD, Senior Researcher, Institute for South-East European Studies,
Bucharest; Researcher, New Europe College, Bucharest

Augusta DIMOU, PhD, Privatdozentin, Institute of Cultural Studies / Chair of Comparative
European History, University of Leipzig

Lucien FRARY, PhD, Professor, Rider University

Mária PAKUCS, PhD, Senior researcher, "N. Iorga" Institute of History,
Romanian Academy, Bucharest

Alex R. TIPEI, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of Montréal

Constanța VINTILĂ, PhD, Senior researcher, "N. Iorga" Institute of History,
Romanian Academy, Bucharest

Postdoctoral researchers

Boriana ANTONOVA-GOLEVA, PhD, Assistant Professor, Institute for Historical Studies of
the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Andrei-Dan SORESCU, PhD, Researcher

Oana SORESCU-IUDEAN, PhD, Researcher, Centre for Population Studies,
Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca

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Romanian Academy, Bucharest

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Politikátörténeti Intézet, Budapest

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Frédéric MONIER, PhD, Professor, University of Avignon

Host institution

New Europe College—Institute for Advanced Study, Bucharest

ACTIVITY REPORT by Silvia Marton, Principal Investigator.

Team members shared their findings at TransCorr's regular public research seminars and international conferences.

Silvia Marton presented her research "Electoral Corruption and Violence in Nineteenth Century Romania" on March 17, 2025 in the framework of the project's regular Research Seminars. The aim of her research is to explain the paradox of the simultaneous strong normative condemnation and the systematic and recurring practice of electoral corruption by all the relevant historical actors from the 1850s up to 1914 in the Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia / Romania. She discussed, first, electoral fraud and interference—subsumed in the then (in)famous expression "moral influence"—that included a wide range of (physically) violent techniques of influence, control, mobilization, or dissuasion of voters, in the context of a fierce rivalry between the two main contenders, the Liberals and the Conservatives that dominated parliament and politics. Second, she examined the polemical and violent vocabulary and rhetoric of excess and satire that permeated the press, occasional publications (such as pamphlets), the official documents, and the parliamentary debates, when historical actors condemned electoral interference and corruption.

In May 2025, all TransCorr team members met on the premises of the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca for the TransCorr recurrent Strategic Meeting. During this meeting, postdoctoral team members Boriána Antonova-Goleva, Oana Sorescu-Iudean and Michał Wasiucionek presented their research questions and methodology, and the initial results of their archival findings. The members of the ERC project participated in two roundtables organized within the Society for Romanian Studies 2025 International Conference "Voices and Silences: 50 Years of the Society for Romanian Studies," held in Cluj-Napoca:

Transnational Histories of "Corruption"

Chair: Alex R. TIPEI

Panelists: Augusta DIMOU, Silvia MARTON, Constantin ARDELEANU, Mária PAKUCS, Constanța VINTILĂ, Andrei SORESCU

Voices and Silences of Political "Corruption" in the Nineteenth Century in Romania and Central-South-East Europe

Chair: Silvia MARTON

Panelists: Constantin ARDELEANU, Lucien FRARY, Mária PAKUCS, Andrei SORESCU, Alex R. TIPEI, Constanța VINTILĂ

Finally,

Reframing the Phanariot Past, Historicizing "Corruption" in the Danubian Principalities / Romania (1750s-1900s), panel

Conveners: Silvia MARTON and Andrei SORESCU

Chair: Silvia MARTON

Organized at the 2025 ICCEES XI World Congress held at University College London, July 21–25, 2025

Team members Constanța Vintilă, Mária Pakucs, Alex Tipei and Andrei Sorescu presented papers, and Constantin Ardeleanu was the discussant. The session explored the historical semantics and the social history of the concept "phanariotism" as a basic historical and disruptive concept that was crucial for conceptualizing political life, state, and society in the Danubian Principalities / Romania from the eighteenth century and into the 1900s. Panelists offered both synchronic and diachronic analyses in order to explore the evolving meanings of the term. This covered a period beginning with the waning years of the so-called "Phanariot" rule, by the Istanbul-appointed elites in Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, as client states of the Ottoman Empire.

Research Groups

Reflections on the Political and Social History of the 18th and 19th Centuries (GRiPs)

Research Group, since 2009

GROUP OVERVIEW Since 2009, our monthly research group has aimed to study the political, social and cultural history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from a variety of theoretical and disciplinary perspectives. Its guests are historians, political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, as well as other scholars whose collective expertise covers two centuries' worth of transformation and modernization, with a particular focus on Romania. Administrative support is offered by Constantin ARDELEANU (PhD, Senior Researcher, New Europe College / Institute for South-East European Studies, Bucharest).

The research group's values and priorities:

Recapturing the multiplicity of historical voices: The “famous” names immortalized by traditional historiography and biographies are by no means the only actors worth studying. De-mythicizing the existing historiography by means of critical appraisal is crucial for understanding Romanian modernity.

Critical re-examination: The “long” nineteenth century sees the founding of the Romanian nation-state's main social, political and cultural institutions. Their critical re-examination and, in some cases, their outright “discovery” is crucial for understanding the subsequent developments. Connections and comparisons with other imperial peripheries encourage the discovery of new analytical frameworks, both as perceived by historical actors, and as generated by contemporary research.

Diversifying research objects: Discourses, practices, representations, institutions, processes, and concepts must be studied through a broader and more varied source-base, much of which still remains unpublished. The dynamics of modernity themselves demand this—just as “modernity” itself refuses to be constrained by neat periodization or political and geographical boundaries.

A transnational perspective: The emergence of a transnational perspective in recent historiography has shown that shifting the focus from the nation-state as a unit of analysis is both necessary and methodologically productive.

GROUP WEBSITE <https://grips.nec.ro/>



Coordinators

Constanța VINTILĂ, PhD, Senior Researcher, “Nicolae Iorga” Institute of History,
Romanian Academy, Bucharest

Silvia MARTON, PhD, Associate Professor, University of Bucharest

ACTIVITY REPORT In this semester, the group organized several events:

Moldavia and Oltenia after the Union: Orientalism, Symbolic Geographies, and Historical Imagination, presentation, March 27, 2025

Mihai-Cezar CHIPER, Senior Researcher II at the Romanian Academy—Iași Branch, “A.D. Xenopol” Institute of History

After the 1859 Union, Moldavia and Oltenia, “the two extremities of Romania,” were drawn into a strange rivalry on the field of internal geopolitics. Oltenia was portrayed as a land of ethnic purity, Roman origins, mercantile genius, modern military bravery, revolutionary spirit, and national rebirth inspired by historical figures such as the Basarab dynasty, Michael the Brave, or Tudor Vladimirescu. By contrast, Moldavia was associated with irreversible decline, suspected of separatist intrigues and centrifugal tendencies hostile to national interests. While Oltenia was seen as “progressive,” the rising star of politics, “old” Moldavia, undergoing denationalization, was perceived as a decadent shadow of its historical past, losing its regional prestige in terms of cultural determinism and essentialism. The talk explored how political rhetoric, historical imagination, and cultural representations elevated Oltenia while stigmatizing Moldavia, including contrasts such as “ethnically pure Oltenia” versus a “Moldavian Palestine” marked by Jewish presence.



Retracer les balbutiements de l’archéologie dans la Moldavie et la Valachie du premier XIXe siècle, presentation, May 15, 2025

Mathieu MOKHTARI, PhD student at University of Lyon 3 and Inalco



Lithograph published in supplement no. 5 of *Albina românească* (January 17, 1837)

At the dawn of the 19th century, the foundations of archaeology in the Romanian principalities began to take shape. This period saw the first institutional initiatives to study the past and local remains, driven mainly by elites. Efforts included education (archaeology courses introduced in Moldavia in 1828 and Wallachia in 1833), the creation of collections (museums established in Iași in 1834 and Bucharest soon after), and the first excavations (in Oltenia in 1836 and Moldavia in 1837). Intellectuals like Gheorghe Asachi, collectors such as Nicolae Mavros, and aristocrats like Mihail Ghika played key roles in these early developments, which were strongly tied to questions of origins and identity. This concern appeared across contemporary sources (newspapers, literature, correspondence, legal texts, and official reports) and influenced how excavations were conducted and interpreted. A notable example of this was the 1845 archaeological journey of Cezar Bolliac and August Treboniu Laurian across Wallachia, following the Danube and Olt rivers and even venturing into neighboring Bulgaria.

A House for the Nation? Consulates, Cities and Sovereignty in the Early Modern Mediterranean, 16th-18th Centuries, talk, June 11, 2025

Mathieu GRENET, Associate Professor in Early Modern History, Université Toulouse—Jean Jaurès

Details about the event can be found on page 24.

The Group for Anthropological Research and Debates (GARD)

Research Group, since 2019

GROUP OVERVIEW GARD is a research group within the New Europe College (NEC), launched in 2019 at the initiative of our late and dearly missed friend and colleague, Viorel Anastăsoaie, PhD. The group focuses on contemporary anthropological research and its wider significance within the humanities and social sciences. Building on NEC's longstanding support for anthropology through fellowships, workshops, and conferences, GARD offers a space for exchanges, debates, and projects for scholars interested in anthropology in Romania and beyond. Benefiting from NEC's multidisciplinary and international environment, interdisciplinary dialogue is strongly encouraged. Monthly meetings, continuing Viorel's legacy, include public talks, discussions of pre-circulated papers, film screenings, debates, and roundtables on new books. GARD promotes broad dissemination of research, fosters new projects, and develops competitive proposals, with particular attention to EU research calls, maintaining an open, diverse thematic scope.

GARD is currently supported by a grant of the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitization, CNCS/CCCDI—UEFISCDI, project number PN-IV-P8-8.1-PRE-HE-ORG-2023-0055, within PNCDI IV.

Coordinators

László FOSZTÓ, PhD, Researcher, The Institute for Research on National Minorities, Cluj-Napoca

Giuseppe TATEO, PhD, NEC Alumnus, Researcher at the Bruno Kessler Foundation, Trento, Italy

Cătălina TESĂR, PhD, NEC Alumna, Researcher, National Museum of the Romanian Peasant

ACTIVITY REPORT by Cătălina Tesăr, co-coordinator of the group.

During the second term of the 2024–25 academic year, the Group of Anthropological Research and Debates (GARD) hosted two meetings.

District Heating and Infrastructural (Dis)continuities in Bucharest, Romania,

March 20, 2025

Olga Bostan, PhD candidate at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology (Halle, Germany)



Drawing on her ongoing fieldwork with Bucharest residents, Termoenergetica employees, policymakers, and archival research, Bostan examined the post-socialist transformations of hot water and heating provision and their implications for citizen–state relations. Her presentation highlighted how the largest district heating network in the European Union—built under socialism and now plagued by malfunctioning power plants and

corroded pipes—struggles to adapt to privatization, urban expansion, and new ecological standards. The talk resonated strongly with the audience, which included foreign NEC fellows, local residents who experienced themselves the lack of hot water and heating for prolonged periods, and even engineers from Termoenergetica who dealt with infrastructural breakdowns, and sparked a lively and thought-provoking debate.

Thinking Through Language: The Stakes of the Social Sciences in Translation,

June 23, 2025

Veronica Lazăr (Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest)
and Miruna Voiculescu (translator)

The second meeting was focused on issues related to translations of international social scientific literature to Romanian. The event took the shape of a hybrid interactive round-table and brought together specialists in the social sciences and translators from various foreign languages. Among others, Iulian Bocai, Roxana Dinu, Bogdan Ghiu, Simion Pop, Maria Rădan-Papasima, Paul Sandu, Cătălin Stoica, and Ruxandra Vișan contributed to the discussions. Further details about the event can be found on page 26.

NEC-TECH: Technology, Culture, Humanities

Research Group, since 2023

GROUP OVERVIEW NEC-TECH is a multi-disciplinary research group that has been active at New Europe College since 2023. Its aim is to foster dialogue, reflection, and understanding on the fast-evolving technologies of our times, including social media, smart devices, and artificial intelligence. The focus of the group is on the discussion of aspects, dimensions, and impact(s) of such technologies in our lives, in our communities, and more generally in our worldviews. Currently, the group functions as a reading group with bimonthly meetings, in which the members and their guests discuss texts (books, articles, and research papers). The group also welcomes presentations of original research papers and work in progress from its members or from guests.

Coordinators

Andreea EȘANU, PhD, NEC Alumna
Răzvan NICOLESCU, PhD, NEC Alumnus

Partner

The Institute for Logic and Data Science (ILDS),
a non-profit independent research institute dedicated to the spread and advancement of
logic-based and data-oriented scientific methods.

ACTIVITY REPORT by Andreea Eșanu, co-coordinator of the group.



The group's recent activities reflect its diverse intellectual interests and engagement with contemporary debates at the intersection of anthropology, philosophy, science, and technology. One of the sessions focused on Peter L. Forberg's article "From the Fringe to the Fore: An Algorithmic Ethnography of the Far-Right Conspiracy Theory Group QAnon" which was introduced by Răzvan Nicolescu and sparked a discussion on the methodological challenges and broader societal implications of studying digital extremist communities. Another meeting centered on a seminal paper by Gürol Irzik and Faik Kurtulmus, "What is Epistemic Public Trust in Science?," introduced by Andreea Eșanu, which led to an exploration of the ways trust in science is conceptualized, built, and sometimes undermined in public discourse.

Beyond the group's internal discussions, its members have also contributed to external academic events. In May, Andreea Eșanu was invited to deliver a seminar at the Institute for Logic and Data Science (ILDS), where

she presented “Doing and Observing in (Large) Sequence Models: A Discussion of Auto-Suggestive Delusions.” Her talk examined the epistemological dimensions of working with large-scale language models, raising questions about the boundaries between observation, interaction, and machine-driven suggestion.

In July, another member, Larisa Gogianu, together with Andreea Eșanu participated in the biannual conference of the International Society for the History, Philosophy and the Social Studies of Biology (ISHPSSB). Their presentation revisited Imre Lakatos’s influential concept of “research programs” in science—a theme that had previously been the subject of lively discussion within NEC-TECH—highlighting its continuing relevance for understanding scientific progress and theory choice.

Environmental Humanities

Research Group, since 2024

GROUP OVERVIEW This research group is an interdisciplinary collaboration between three scholars who critically analyze the development of ideas about the natural landscape in Romania, the interaction between humans and nature, and the relation between nature and the political, artistic, and social spheres. We are interested in themes such as the interrelation between rural architectural heritage and the Carpathian landscape, the relationship between the history of nature conservation, and the history of science, alpine history, the development of forestry, and the ecological history of Romania and Central and Eastern Europe, literary representations of nature, and human and non-human animal encounters in Romanian literature and visual arts.

Coordinators

Valeska BOPP-FILIMONOV, PhD, Assistant Professor, Friedrich Schiller University Jena
Cosmin KOSZOR-CODREA, PhD, Postdoctoral Researcher, New Europe College, Bucharest /
Regional Representative of Romania, European Society for Environmental History
Cosmin MINEA, PhD, Postdoctoral Researcher, Masaryk University, Brno

ACTIVITY REPORT by Cosmin Koszor-Codrea, co-coordinator of the group (together with Cosmin Minea and Valeska Bopp-Filimonov).

During the timeframe March–July 2025 the group continued its series of regular meetings, public events and the individual research of each member. One public event was organized and followed by discussions with participants and afterwards by discussions only within the focus group:

More than a Border. Forests in the Early Modern Carpathians, March 4, 2025

Dr. Kata TÓTH, University Assistant, Department for East European History,
University of Vienna

The paper explored the economic significance of the Carpathian forests for the surrounding principalities (Moldavia, Transylvania, Wallachia) in the 16th and 17th centuries. It raised questions such as who used these resources? What measurements were taken to regulate their exploitation? The study shows that the Carpathians can be also seen as a historical region and an environmental unit rather than merely a border.

Panel at the “Voices and Silences” Conference, May 2025

together with Prof. Raluca Alexandrescu

Conference organized by the Society for Romanian Studies in Cluj-Napoca

Our panel focused on the history of the human and non-human entanglements within the Carpathian Mountain range and the Danube Delta in modern Romania. Presenters addressed from different perspectives the unwritten histories of the natural environment in Romania,

the voices of non-human actors in relation to social and political processes and the complex multispecies dynamics on the backdrop of an inter-imperial space. The panel, which was very well attended, aimed to fill an important gap in the literature, namely the lack of research on the modern history of Romania from the perspective of environmental humanities.

In the summer of 2025, part of the members of EH research group participated at the 13th International Conference “Climate Histories” organized by the European Society for Environmental History, that was held in Uppsala. On this occasion their panel interrogated, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the axis of human-environment interaction, an aspect still little investigated by scholars in Romania: the construction of a conceptual framework to define and name human-environment interaction and its performative roles, translated into capacities and agencies linked to social justice and/or cultural heritage.



The members of the Environmental Humanities Research Group in Cluj-Napoca at the Triennial Conference organized by the Society for Romanian Studies: Valeska Bopp-Filimonov, Cosmin Minea and Cosmin Koszor-Codrea

International Conferences and Lectures

Entangled Traditions: Parabiblica about the End of Times, March 19–20, 2025

The conference was jointly organized by Beyond Canon Centre of Advanced Studies, University of Regensburg, New Europe College–Institute for Advanced Study, Bucharest, and the “Iorgu Iordan–Al. Rosetti” Institute of Linguistics of the Romanian Academy.



Conveners

Stephanie HALLINGER, Alexandru IONIȚĂ, and Emanuela TIMOTIN

Participants

Vlad BEDROS, Iulia DUMITRAȘCU, Marta FEDAK, Nenad FILIPOVIĆ, Agnieszka GRONEK, Daniar MUTALÂP, Tobias NICKLAS, Cristinel SAVA, Stephen SHOEMAKER, Michael SOMMER, Alexey SOMOV, Taras TYMO, Emanuela VALERIANI

The Splendors and Sufferings of Europe: An Imaginary Foray into Geopolitics

April 1, 2025 (in Romanian)



The conference sought to examine the cartographic imagination of Europe at the dawn of the modern era, situated within the context of the great geographical discoveries, the Copernican revolution, and the upheavals unleashed by the Thirty Years' War.

Victor I. STOICHIȚĂ, Professor Emeritus,
University of Fribourg; Member of the
Academic Board, New Europe College

Spaces of Negotiation in Post-imperial Orders, May 5–6, 2025

This international conference was organized within the Mattei Dogan Fellowship Program at New Europe College.



Conveners

Wiktor MARZEC, Mattei Dogan Fellow

Daniela STANCIU-PĂSCĂRIȚA, Ștefan Odobleja Fellow

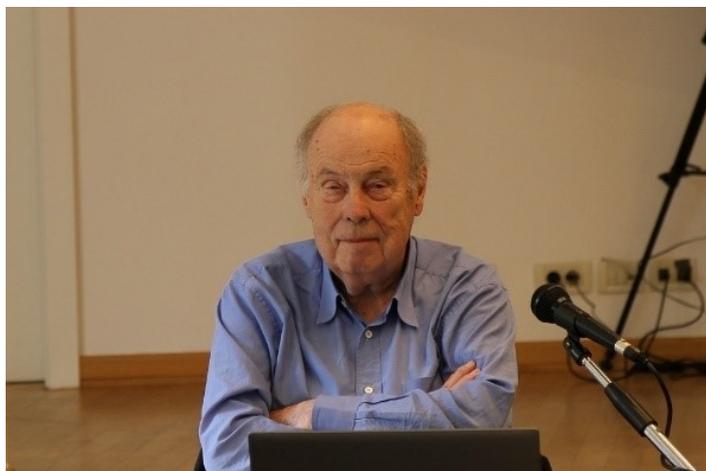
Participants

Constantin ARDELEANU, David BORCHIN, Daniela DETEȘAN, Gábor EGRY, Ioana FLOREA, Edina GÁL, Marian HARIUC, Natalija JAKUBOVA, Patryk KRUPIŃSKI, Loránd MÁDLY, Silvia MARTON, Luka NAKHUTSRISHVILI, Metin OMER, Aleksandra POMIECKO, Zhanna POPOVA, Vlad POPOVICI, Stephan RINDLISBACHER, Dan-Alexandru SĂVOAIA, Naum TRAJANOVSKI, Raluca-Maria TRIFA

What Makes Academic Quality Excellent, May 8, 2025

Quality judgments in terms of academic standards of excellence required by external stakeholders such as labour markets and steering hierarchies obviously exert strong pressure on universities. Do they generate an “iron cage” effect imposing a passive and uniform conformity on global standards?

Jean-Claude THOENIG, Senior Research Director (em.) at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (Paris)



Apocalypticism as Crisis Management. A Survey of Ancient Jewish Text and The Revelation of John, June 5, 2025



Jörg FREY, Professor of New Testament Studies,
Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies,
University of Zurich

In a time that many consider “apocalyptic,” it is in place to reconsider the effects, dangers, and original intentions of “apocalypticism.” This is in particular needed, as the scholarly views on apocalypticism have changed considerably in the last decades, in particular due to the discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls and other early Jewish texts. Drawing on a selection of early examples of Jewish Apocalypticism, the Book of Watchers (1 Enoch 1–36), the Book of Daniel, and 4 Ezra, Jörg Frey shows how apocalyptic imaginations were conceptualized and effective as a form of crisis management in various periods of the history of ancient Judaism. Then, he turns to the New

Testament book of Revelation which has been most efficient in shaping apocalypticism in Christianity, with the question of how far this book was also intended and effective as crisis management, or whether it was rather intended to impose a crisis on its recipients they had not been aware of before. In the end, there will be some considerations on the use and abuse of apocalypticism in church and society.

A House for the Nation? Consulates, Cities and Sovereignty in the Early Modern Mediterranean, 16th-18th Centuries, June 11, 2025

What is a consulate? The private residence of the consul? A common space for “nationals” and “protégés”? A public house where receptions and ceremonies are held? An island of sovereignty in a foreign land, protected by its extraterritorial status? All of these things and possibly much more. This lecture is an invitation to explore these multifaceted places, between public and private, outside and inside, “national” and “foreign”. Whether we penetrate their history through that of their architecture, their location in the urban space, their role in local social life or even the surveillance to which they are subjected, consulates constitute privileged and original observatories not only on local realities, but more broadly on international relations and migrations, from the end of the Middle Ages to the present day.



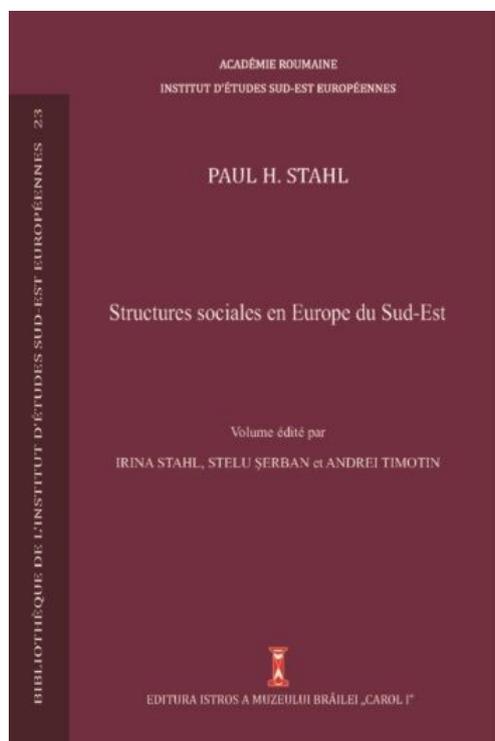
Mathieu GRENET,
Associate Professor in Early
Modern History, Université
Toulouse-Jean Jaurès

Roundtables and Discussions

Roundtable on the book: Paul H. Stahl, “Structures sociales en Europe du Sud-Est”, edited by Irina Stahl, Stelu Șerban, and Andrei Timotin, April 28, 2025

Published by Istros Publishing House of the “Carol I” Museum of Brăila, 2024

Event organized in collaboration with the Institute for South-East European Studies of the Romanian Academy



The book brings together 22 articles by Paul Henri Stahl (1925–2008), director of the Institute for South-East European Studies (1999–2007), a member since its founding in 1963, honorary member of the Romanian Academy (1993), and professor at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (1969–1999).

Paul H. Stahl’s extensive and multifaceted body of work continues the legacy of the Bucharest School of Sociology (1925–1948)—one of the most significant collective scientific projects of the interwar period—at the crossroads of several disciplines: sociology, ethnology, and history. This collection is the result of a carefully curated selection from his complete works, focusing on the overarching theme of the structures that organize the life of traditional societies in South-East Europe. The selected texts are grouped around several interrelated sub-themes: archaic pre-state formations, old village communities, the relationship between the built environment (house, church, village) and the social group, biological and symbolic kinship, personal identity, and naming.

Participants

Irina STAHL, Stelu ȘERBAN, Ștefan DORONDEL, Otilia HEDEȘAN, Evangelos KARAMANES, Sokol KONDI, Dejan DIMITRIJEVIC

On Talent, June 18, 2025 (in Romanian)

Contemporary neuroscientists appear to concur that what we usually call talent has, until now, been overrated. How, then, do they seek to demonstrate this? And to what extent are we prepared to accept that achievement at the highest level is not a miracle, but rather seems to be the fortunate outcome of favorable conditions for development and learning? The surgeon and writer Cătălin Vasilescu invited Valentina Sandu-Dediu and Andrei Pleșu to a dialogue on talent.



Thinking Through Language: The Stakes of the Social Sciences in Translation,

June 23, 2025

Veronica Lazăr (Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest)
and Miruna Voiculescu (translator)

Translations of classical or recent texts in the social sciences have visibly stagnated in Romania over the past three decades. With the exception of some commendable editorial or academic initiatives, which have remained rather sporadic and isolated, and despite the very promising development of the relevant academic field, the landscape of social science translations is rather poor and marked by publishing practices that, in turn, risk contributing to intellectual and social impoverishment. Beyond mere transmission and popularization, what would be today the role and place of translation in the social sciences, with ramifications extending far beyond them? The focus was primarily on disciplines such as sociology and anthropology. The discussions concluded that translators remain unjustly marginalized within social science discourse, highlighting the need for more systematic attention and support to facilitate the translation process.

Participants

Ștefan BAGHIU,
Iulian BOCAI,
Roxana DINU,
Bogdan GHIU,
Simion POP,
Maria RĂDAN-PAPASIMA,
Paul SANDU,
Cătălin STOICA,
Ruxandra VIȘAN



Musical Encounters

Music and Affects at the Courts of the Moldavian-Wallachian Aristocracy at the End of the Phanariot Era, May 21, 2025

Conference and recital

“Trei Parale” is a revivalist group from Bucharest that relies on thorough research in the field of traditional musical culture. An important role in this respect is played by Florin Iordan, ethnomusicologist at the Romanian Peasant Museum in Bucharest and leader of the ensemble. In shaping their repertoire and interpretive style, the members of the group draw on various methods of exploration, such as field trips to villages and working with elderly musicians, listening to old field recordings made by Constantin Brăiloiu or Béla Bartók, consulting various volumes of musical folklore, and studying 19th-century transcriptions (by A. Pann, G. Ucenescu, D. Vulpian, etc.). The ensemble simultaneously develops several different projects of musical reconstruction, some dedicated to urban musical traditions—such as the “Bazar. Songs from the 19th Century” project—while others focus on rural traditional music.



Cătălin CERNĂTESCU, Researcher, National University of Music, Bucharest
Nicolae GHEORGHIȚĂ, Professor, National University of Music, Bucharest
Constanța VINTILĂ, Researcher, "Nicolae Iorga" Institute of History,
Romanian Academy, Bucharest



"Trei Parale" Group

Marius BOLDEA (piano),
National University of Music,
Bucharest



Financial Support



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MARGA UND KURT
MÖLLGAARD-STIFTUNG
IM STIFTERVERBAND

GERDA HENKEL STIFTUNG

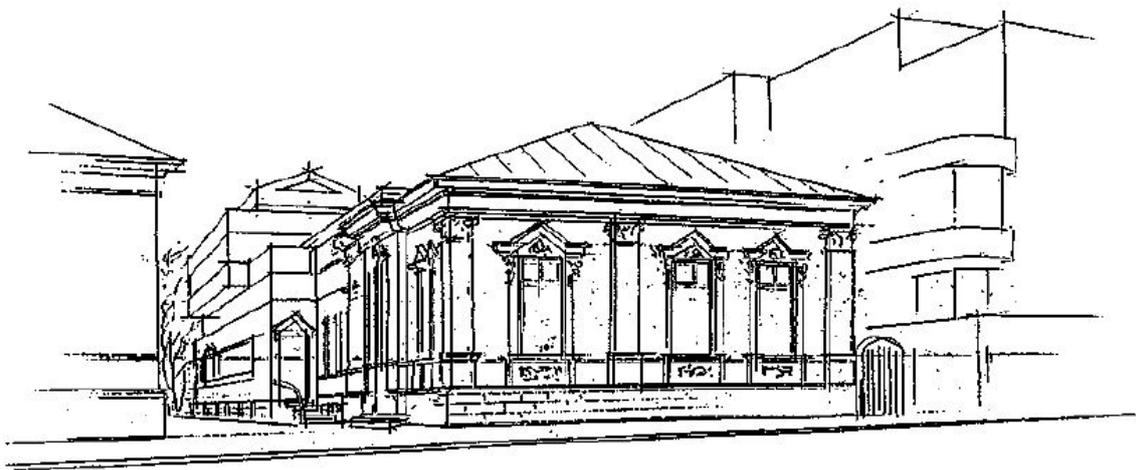


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