

SOCIETY FOR ROMANIAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

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The Society for Romanian Studies

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Roland Clark
SRS President

President's Message

As those who were able to attend the annual general meeting a few weeks ago can testify, 2020 has been a big year for the SRS and for Romanian Studies more broadly. Cosmin Koszor Codrea (Oxford Brookes University) walked away with this year's [SRS Graduate Student Essay prize](#) for his essay on "Mismeasuring diversity: Popularizing scientific racism in the Romanian Principalities around the mid-nineteenth century," and Cosmin Tudor Minea (New Europe College) received an honourable mention for his research on "Old buildings for modern times: The rise of architectural monuments as symbols of the state in late nineteenth-century Romania." In other news, Katherine Verdery, Emanuela Grama, Alina-Sandra Cucu, R. Chris Davis, and Leah Valtin-Erwin were awarded distinguished prizes at this year's [ASEEES](#) conference. You can read interviews with some of the prize winners later in this issue. Big congratulations to them all! For those still interested in applying for prizes, this year [Plural](#) launched their inaugural Local Archives & Collections Research Prize and a three-month fellowship for research in Moldova. Details can be found in this issue. On a less happy note, both Iuliana Conovici (University of Bucharest) and Keith Hitchins (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) passed away in the last couple of months. You can find an obituary of Conovici written by Anca Şincan on page 14, and a 56-page special supplement dedicated to Hitchins edited by Leah Valtin-Erwin and Maria Bucur attached. Both will be sorely missed.

As an organization the SRS continues to be very productive. Thanks to Petru Negură we now have a new website with a much more streamlined membership system. [Be sure to have a look next time you're online](#). The Fall issue of the [Journal of Romanian Studies](#) is also out, with Svetlana Suveica having taken over from Diane Vancea as co-editor with Peter Gross. This was a special issue on "Law, History and Justice in Romania" edited by Monica Ciobanu and Mihaela Şerban. The journal continues to seek new contributions, so please consider it for your next article or send Iuliu Raţiu copies of books you would like reviewed.

[H-Romania](#) continues to be active as well, and is currently looking for a new book review editor. Please [get in touch](#) with the editors if you or someone you know are interested.

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From the President

cont'd.

As usual, the [SRS/Polrom Book Series](#) continues to bring out new and exciting books, and the editors would love to hear from you if you are an author with a manuscript that might be suitable for the series. SRS mentors are still accepting mentees and a conference team chaired by Anca Şincan is hard at work planning [our next conference](#) at Universitatea de Vest din Timişoara. As my old union used to say: the SRS works because you do. Thanks to all those people who labor tirelessly behind the scenes to contribute to Romanian Studies through this organization and in other ways. We really appreciate all you do!

Roland Clark
University of Liverpool
SRS President

Announcements

H-Romania

[H-Romania](#) is seeking a new book review editor. Please contact Chris Davis at R.Chris.Davis@LoneStar.edu if you are interested in joining the H-Romania editorial team.

Calls for Papers

[“Islamic Radicalisation in the Balkans after the Fall of Communism”](#)

Deadline: December 31, 2020

[Perspectives on Romania and Moldova](#)

Deadline: January 10, 2021

[Hiperboreea Vol. 8, No. 1 \(June, 2021\)](#)

Deadline: February 1, 2021

[Journal of Romanian Studies Special Edition – Fall 2021: Media and Communication](#)

Deadline: March 1, 2021

[25th Annual World Convention of the Association for the Study of Nationalities \(ASN\)](#)

Deadline: November 11, 2021

Publications

The [Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities \(RIRNM\)](#) in Cluj recently published two edited volumes:

- Anca Filipovici (ed.), *Polonezii din România. Repere identitare* [The Poles in Romania. Identity landmarks], RIRNM Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2020, 238 p.
- Marius Lazăr, Iulia-Elena Hossu (eds.), *Ruşii lipoveni din România. istorie, identitate, comunitate* [Lipovan Russians from Romania: history, identity, community], RIRNM Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2020, 438 p.

Journal of Romanian Studies

The Journal of Romanian Studies is pleased to announce the release of its **special fall 2020 edition**, examining law, justice, and history, guest edited by Mihaela Șerban and Monica Ciobanu. Cosmin Cercel, Ștefan Cristian Ionescu, and Șerban address issues of legality during the interwar era of the authoritarian regimes of King Carol II and Marshall Ion Antonescu's fascist wartime dictatorship. Emanuela Grama examines legal claims over the confiscated property of a high school in Transylvania, while Ciobanu discusses the trial against the communist-era prison commandant Alexandru Vișinescu. Simona Livescu considers "staged" reenactments and the practices of mis- and over-remembering in "red" and "dark" tourism, and Dragoș Petrescu examines the case of the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives. This issue also includes book reviews by Peter Gross and Luliu Rațiu. Members receive a complimentary electronic subscription to the journal. If you are interested in taking out an individual or institutional subscription, please write to the publisher at subscription@ibidem.eu.



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CALL FOR PAPERS

The Journal of Romanian Studies seeks submissions for its special fall 2021 issue on **communications**. The editors will consider:

- original research articles (of up to 10,000 words, including bibliography)
- review articles (of up to 3,000 words, commenting on 2-3 books on a common theme)
- book reviews (of up to 1,000 words)

Please include a title, a 200-word abstract, the text of the article, and a bibliography. Double space your article and abstract, and do not include your name and affiliation anywhere. Note that we will NOT consider manuscripts that are under review elsewhere or manuscripts that have been previously published (in English or Romanian). To this effect, your email should clearly state that your manuscript is not under review with other journals and has not been previously published. Please send all submissions to romanian.studies.journal@gmail.com. Articles on communications will be considered for publication in fall 2021. All other articles will be considered on a rolling basis for future publication.

The biannual, peer-reviewed Journal of Romanian Studies, jointly developed by The Society for Romanian Studies and ibidem Press, examines critical issues in Romanian studies, linking work in that field to wider theoretical debates and issues of current relevance, and serving as a forum for junior and senior scholars. The journal also presents articles that connect Romania and Moldova comparatively with other states and their ethnic majorities and minorities, and with other groups by investigating the challenges of migration and globalization and the impact of the European Union.

ASEEES PRIZES

This fall's Association for Slavic, East European, & Eurasian Studies [Awards & Prizes](#) had a strong showing by SRS members. Congratulations to all the winners!

Distinguished Contributions to Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies Award:

Katherine Verdery, Julien J. Studley Faculty Scholar and Distinguished Professor of Anthropology at the City University of New York's Graduate Center.



Ed A Hewett Book Prize for outstanding publication on the political economy of Russia, Eurasia and/or Eastern Europe

Emanuela Grama, *Socialist Heritage: The Politics of Past and Place in Romania* (Indiana University Press)



Honorable Mention: Alina-Sandra Cucu, *Planning Labour: Time and the Foundations of Industrial Socialism in Romania* (Berghahn Books)



Barbara Jelavich Book Prize for a distinguished monograph published on any aspect of Southeast European or Habsburg studies since 1600, or nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ottoman or Russian diplomatic history: R. Chris Davis, *Hungarian Religion, Romanian Blood: A Minority's Struggle for National Belonging, 1920– 1945* (University of Wisconsin Press)



ASEEES Graduate Student Essay Prize for an outstanding essay by a graduate student in Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies

Leah Valtin-Erwin, "A Bag for All Systems: Shopping Bags and Urban Grocery Shopping in Late Communist and Early Post-Communist Eastern Europe 1980-2000"



ASEEES PRIZES

*Emanuela Grama received the Ed A Hewett Book Prize for her book *Socialist Heritage: The Politics of Past and Place in Romania*.*

First of all, congratulations on your recent Ed A Hewett Book Prize for an outstanding publication on the political economy of Russia, Eurasia and/or Eastern Europe from ASEEES! Your book, *Socialist Heritage*, examines the socialist state's exploitation of the past to create its own 'heritage,' focusing on the transformation of Bucharest's Old Town. How did this book project come about?

Well, I never thought that I would write a book about Bucharest. I had begun my dissertation research in Transylvania, where I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in two locations looking at how claims for property restitution were being backed-up or justified via projects of built heritage reconstruction/preservation. In 2007, I received a dissertation writing fellowship at the wonderful institute “New Europe College” in Bucharest. During that time, I visited the Old Town neighborhood very often and became more and more interested in its history. I was particularly interested in finding the answer to a key question: how did the Old Town survive the radical intervention that the communist officials launched in the early 1980s in Bucharest, when entire neighborhoods were erased on a surface equivalent to the territory of the city of Venice (Italy) to make room for a new socialist city center (*Victoria Socialismului*)? After all, the bulldozers that destroyed most of the houses in these neighborhoods stopped right on the western border of the Old Town. Some people that I talked to during my time in Bucharest considered this simply a miracle--because, they argued, it is pretty clear that Nicolae Ceaușescu, the leader of the country, wanted the Old Town to disappear as well.



Photo by Bella DeSanctis

As it often turns out, the answer to this question is more complicated. I actually found that answer in a thick file of letters exchanged among archaeologists and architects regarding the debatable relevance of the Old Town. In the 1950s, a committee of architects led by Pompiliu Macovei, then Bucharest's chief architect, tried to complete a master plan for the transformation of Bucharest into a modern socialist city. Soon they realized that their plans had to take into account not only limitations of resources and expertise, but also competing agendas of other professionals, such as archaeologists. The latter sought to persuade the state officials to reject any architectural intervention in the neighborhood of the Old Town, because, they claimed, such plans would lead to the erasure of some sites that they deemed to be of pivotal importance for national history. A key site was the ruins of the Old Court, a medieval palace built in the 15th century, but demolished in the early 19th century, with the site being parceled out and given to merchants to build new houses. This palace formed in fact the nucleus of the Old Town, as this commercial neighborhood emerged and expanded around the site of the Old Court. Eventually, through a combination of political maneuvering, wit, chance, and shifts in political agendas, it was the archaeologists that won this battle.

In my book, I argue that we can understand the survival of the neighborhood during the demolitions of the 1980s only if we took into account the sudden political relevance that the Old Court had gained beginning in the 1960s, through its full reconstruction in early 1970s (it officially open as a museum in 1972), and its becoming a key heritage site for the socialist state until the end of the communist period.

How would you characterize the socialist states' relationship to urban space? What makes urban space a compelling subject for study how the socialist states understood and related to the past? Is this useful only for the study of Romania?

In the book, I use this story to show that the Romanian socialist state viewed the urban space not only as a venue to produce and project an alternative socialist modernity, but also to build strategically chosen sites to represent the past. In the particular case of Bucharest, the Old Court became such a site: it stood for the medieval national past that allegedly preceded and enabled socialism to emerge as a particular political order (especially in the light of a Marxist theology that depicted socialism as a stage of economic and social development, preceded by "feudalism" and then capitalism). But this story must also be placed in the particular context of Romania of the 1960s, when the communist government started viewing nationalism as an increasingly appealing mechanism to gain legitimacy from the population--and to signal a subtle distance from Moscow.

What resources were most important to you in this project, whether a particular institution, funding source, methodological framework, or something else?

I often say that I would not have written this book, in this particular form about this particular subject, had it not been for a serendipitous trifecta: a file, a metal bookcase, and a brave archivist. The entire correspondence regarding the negotiations around the Old Court, and later, around the Old Town neighborhood is part of a thick file in the archive of the National Institute of Patrimony, in Bucharest. When I inquired whether there was any documentation about the Old Town, Mr. Iuliu Șerban, the then archivist of the Institute, went into the stacks and returned holding this file with a look of surprise and slight amusement on his face. He noted that somehow, he had never seen this particular file even though he had handled and assessed the entire collection when he reorganized the archive of the Institute in the early 1990s. This archive had belonged to the Division of Historic Monuments, active between 1952 and 1977. In December 1977, the communist authorities decided to "reorganize," which meant in fact to drastically curtail its personnel and funds. As Mr. Șerban told me, some of the employees tried to save the archive, so they transported it and deposited it in a room in the basement of the House of Spark, a large building on the outskirts of Bucharest that used to house all of the presses and newspapers during the communist time (including the newsroom of *Scînteia*, the Romanian Communist Party daily--hence the name). They thought that the archive would slowly disappear, but as luck would have it, a metal bookcase inside that room fell over and thus blocked the access door. The archive remained thus both abandoned and inaccessible for more than thirteen years, until the end of communism. The Institute was reestablished in 1990 as part of the network of state institutions of the postcommunist era. Soon thereafter, a team of employees, including Mr. Șerban, went to the House of Spark to check on the documents left in that basement, holding though little hope that they would be able to retrieve most of them. But they encountered the blocked door. They eventually broke in and found the documents all over the room, covered by a thick layer of dust but otherwise intact.

I love to tell this story because it captures so much about the special combination of chance and determination that could make or break so many research projects. I believe that we as researchers must keep an open-mind about our work, both in the archives and while doing fieldwork. Sometimes, a particular story that someone shares with us as an aside, or a document that we stumble across in an archive while searching for something else may lead us to eventually write a totally different book than the one we had initially imagined.

How would you advise junior scholars considering taking on a project which combines historical and ethnographic research?

I would encourage them to approach the archives as being as subjective a site as the stories one would encounter during the fieldwork. In other words, I would urge them to think about the ways in which files and archival categories are themselves products of particular political times, and what do these categories tell us about how specific organizations (and actors within those organizations) “think”; how they view themselves in relation to other institutions within one particular system. This is particularly relevant when one conducts research in archives of powerful institutions, ranging from political parties to corporations, who cared deeply about their legacy.

In the same vein, I would encourage junior scholars to approach the stories and observations that they encounter while doing fieldwork as “archives in the making.” Obviously, these stories must be anonymized to protect the privacy of the narrators--or of the actors engaged in actions that the researcher would witness. But the researchers must be fully aware of these stories as being foremost narratives--that is, subjective accounts that emerge through the particular relationship between the researcher and the narrator. Whatever someone chooses to tell you (or not) depends on so many factors: how they view themselves, how do they view you, what do they want to accomplish by telling those stories (what things do they want to do with their words, as John Austin would put it). When you are doing fieldwork, everything matters--from your age and gender to the kinds of shoes you are wearing and sometimes even your haircut! All that subjectivity should not only be acknowledged, but also viewed as evidence and research material.

Paying attention to details also is pivotal. Your book cannot be just a series of theoretical arguments; it must also tell a good story. The details of your fieldwork, from the shape of the streetlights, to the shoes people wear, the bags they carry in their hands, the kinds of cell phones they use, their clothing, the lack of parking spots--you must record everything in the notebook that you, ideally, should carry it with you all the time. Also, try to take lots of photos, if you can. Lots of photos and lots of notes will help you much later to retrieve the forgotten details of your fieldsite and to reconstruct that atmosphere in writing.

What are you working on now?

I'm returning to a project that I've left on the backburner for a while. It draws on earlier and more recent ethnographic research that I conducted in Transylvania regarding the debates about property restitution among the region's ethnic Germans and Hungarians. I focus on three specific case studies to analyze the ways in which these two ethnic groups appealed to their kin-states (Germany and Hungary, respectively) to support their claims and thus endow them with more visibility in the European Union--which, in turn, has given them more leverage in dealing with the Romanian state.

ASEEES PRIZES

*Alina-Sandra Cucu received an honorable mention in the Ed A Hewett Book Prize category for her book *Planning Labour: Time and the Foundations of Industrial Socialism in Romania*.*

Your book, *Planning Labour: Time and the Foundations of Industrial Socialism in Romania*, recently received the honorable mention in the Ed A Hewett Book Prize for outstanding publication on the political economy of Russia, Eurasia and/or Eastern Europe from ASEEES. Congratulations! In the book, you examine the policy of "primitive socialist accumulation" in Romania and uncover the various tensions resulting from that project and the state socialist understanding of the worker. How did you come to this subject?

First of all, thank you for inviting me to share my thoughts about my research in the newsletter. Looking back, my decision to write about this topic and to approach it from this particular angle was the outcome of a both a particular intellectual trajectory and pure chance. I was trained in critical theory and developed a sensibility for inequality and social justice beginning in my undergraduate years, which I spent in the Sociology Department at Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj.



As a master's student and then as a PhD student, I was exposed to the anthropology of labour and class at Central European University, as well as to the extensive literature on state capitalism in Eastern and Central Europe. The Western critique of state socialist regimes was simultaneously inspiring and, to be honest, irritating, because it relied on very little empirical work and on very little contact with those who actually carried forward the Bolshevik project in the region and felt its consequences at the most intimate level. Of course, my irritation was very unfair, because at the time, scholars had very limited access to the socialist world apart from controlled contacts with representatives of the communist parties, and there were no archives upon which they could rely.

The third source of influence was the reaction of the Romanian left to the hegemonic anti-communism that infused all intellectual circles in the country at the time and did not allow for a critical reassessment of the regime from any other perspective. Basically, this was the starting point: a nagging feeling that there was something more to be said about class and socialism, beyond the theoretically sound but empirically thin claims of the state capitalist literature, and beyond the victimhood-dominated discourse of Romanian intellectuals. And then, of course, when I started reading more seriously on the topic, I was strongly influenced by the work of a British socialist labour historian, Mark Pittaway, whose work on the Hungarian working-class and its relationship with the state in the postwar period is still an ideal to be reached.

The category of the 'worker' has long been a central preoccupation of scholars of the socialist period. How has our conception of the state socialist worker and their place in the twentieth century socialist state changed? What interventions does your book make?

I think the book tries to look at the socialist worker as a "subject/object" of state politics, or in other words, to illuminate the tension between what the worker meant discursively as an embodiment of progressive politics, and what he (mainly he in this period) had to do in practice, which was to produce as much as possible for as little money as possible. The book also follows a classical line in the history and anthropology of labour to move the emphasis from class as an abstract succession of material conditions – commonality of interests – crystallization of consciousness – action, to class as a historical operator of difference and coagulation and as a lived reality. Class then brings attention to things that in my opinion should always be treated together when we talk about the "socialist worker": everyday struggles for social reproduction, mechanisms of surplus extraction, and their political framing, which again can go to the level of ordinary practices – in a good anthropological vein.

What made Cluj an apt case study in which to study socialist transformation? How did the city's ethnic diversity impact the story you told?

This is where chance comes in. I actually wanted to do research in Braşov, which was so much more a “proper” industrial city, marked by earlier processes of proletarianization, central to the investment logic of the Romanian government, and of course, given the 1987 protest, a clear case of the ‘crystallization of class interests and consciousness.’ However, at that time, access to factory archives in Braşov was impossible for many reasons that would require a separate interview to explain. So, I decided on a Plan B very quickly. Cluj was this Plan B; it was also my hometown. Initially, I was disappointed precisely because it was harder to find “class” in the classical sense. In the end, I think a city that was marginal in the accumulation logic of the state allowed me to come up with an understanding of class that was more nuanced and functioned better as a key to unlocking workers’ histories on the ground.

What resources were most important to you in this project, whether a particular institution, funding source, methodological framework, or something else?

I have already mentioned the two departments that shaped my theoretical and methodological take on my topic: the Sociology Department in Cluj and the Sociology and Social Anthropology Department at Central European University. I should also mention here the members of my PhD committee, Don Kalb, Prem Kumar Rajaram, and Martha Lampland, who worked for me not only as intellectual influences and critical advisers, but also as people who helped me navigate my own idiosyncrasies and limits, and who knew what to say when self-doubt emerged (which happened many times).

How would you advise young scholars considering taking on a project which requires archival research?

I feel I am yet to grow into someone who can advise young scholars on anything. But based on my limited experience, I would tell any PhD student to do as much preliminary research in the archives before committing to a project and choose a supervisor who would be invested in their work and in their growth. More important than anything, be kind to the people working at the archives and ask for their advice. Remember they are overworked, archives are always underfunded and understaffed, and things take time. I would also advise them to remember to have a life during their PhD, but I know nobody would listen to that, so...

What are you working on now?

I am currently affiliated with Goldsmiths, University of London, as a beneficiary of a Marie Curie postdoctoral grant. This allows me to work on my second book, which is an analysis of the advance of flexible capitalism in Romania, with the Automotive Factory in Craiova since its beginnings in the mid-1970s as a case study.

ASEEES PRIZES

For her essay entitled “A Bag for All Systems: Shopping Bags and Urban Grocery Shopping in Late Communist and Early Post-Communist Eastern Europe, 1980-2000,” Leah Valtin-Erwin received the ASEEES Graduate Student Essay Prize.

Interview by [Kate Mower](#), PhD student at the University of California, Riverside

Describe what you do in SRS. What has that involvement meant for you?

I have been the Newsletter Editor for SRS since the spring of 2019, after Chris Davis recommended the position to me as an early stage graduate student. I have edited two area studies newsletters before, one academic and one for a non-profit, so I was thrilled to join the SRS team in this capacity. The editor job also comes with a position on the SRS board, so I also contribute my opinion on various issues presented to the board, which has itself been a real opportunity to learn about the way these organizations are run. My work with SRS has connected me with scholars in our field, allows me to stay up to date on recent scholarship, and exposes me to the challenges facing academic organizations such as this one - but also to the advantages these organizations offer to scholars.



Moving to the ASEEES Graduate Student Essay Prize, you make a note in your essay about moving away from a 1989 framing and toward a transition framing. Can you tell us about the periodization and how you position this essay on the socialist to post-socialist transition?

The paper looks at a consumer practice (carrying a shopping bag) and a consumer good (the shopping bag itself) in the last decade of communism and first decade of post-communism. As a historian-in-training, the post-communist period initially seemed off-limits to me; the domain of social scientists and others more equipped to write about the so-called present. And yet, as someone born after 1989 and having spent some of my childhood in Berlin in the 1990s, I have long been conscious of the lingering traces of the communist past, as well as legacies of the Cold War more generally, as a part of a larger reckoning in the last decade of the twentieth century that, in turn, has implications for our present. I felt that, to write a history of daily practice in post-communism, some of the origins of what are often called the ‘legacies of communism’ would need to be made explicit. Challenging the historical profession’s trepidation with regard to post-communism, meanwhile, also meant questioning 1989 as a point of rupture. I don’t dispute the profound shift marked by the 1989 moment but hope, in my work, to illuminate some of the global and regional processes of change in which 1989 was one of many such moments.

How does this essay speak to interdisciplinarity and how do you approach writing across disciplines? And getting at the heart of your paper, what does one everyday object tell us about our consumption patterns?

I’m trained (rather, training) as a historian, but have found the body of work on post-communism, particularly the anthropological literature, enormously influential. One of the reasons for that is, as I mentioned above, the dearth of historical work on the post-communist period, particularly in Anglo-American writing. Historians are now growing interested in the 1990s and tend to assign anthropological or political science literature; it was that kind of research that first drew me into the post-communist period, so I find myself speaking as much to those debates as to emerging historiographical discussions. Furthermore, my interest in material culture and consumption manifests in a preoccupation with daily practice and other features of everyday life that do not show up in the archival record in quite the same way as the subjects of political or economic history. Therefore, I rely heavily on ethnographic studies to help me uncover these stories.

As for the study of objects (and I encourage everyone should look to Péter Berta's recent book as an exemplary model), I first became interested in Eastern European Studies through the material culture of the region, rather than the other way around. I'm fascinated by (and adamant about) small, seemingly mundane expressions of everyday life and what they can tell us about the past - and the present.

As President of the Romanian Studies Organization at Indiana University, you recently organized the 12th Annual Virtual Romanian Studies Conference. This conference was so much work and it was such a great success! Can you outline what this organization does and what you do?

The Romanian Studies Organization (RomSO) comes from the tireless efforts of Maria Bucur and a number of others at IU who have worked to keep Romanian Studies alive and vibrant at the university for several decades. RomSO is primarily a graduate student organization and generally works to promote Romanian Studies at IU and at the junior scholar level overall. I joined in 2018 as the new president and have helped to co-organize two annual conferences. I have also helped run a small number of events on campus (we hosted the Romanian film critic and translator Irina Nistor last year, for example), and host the weekly Romanian language conversation hour, currently being held via Zoom.

How did you select keynote speaker Bruce O'Neill?

Interdisciplinarity is one of our priorities, so even though RomSO's leadership is made up of historians at present (myself and my colleague, George Andrei), we try to recruit a broad range of keynote speakers to both attract and speak to as diverse an array of participant as possible. I actually discovered Bruce's work when we featured it in the newsletter. His work focuses on urban inequality, consumerism, globalization, and post-communist change, which obviously interest me, but we hoped it would help us attract others working on contemporary subjects. In our initial, pre-COVID call for papers in January, we were delighted to receive a number of submissions to the conference that also dealt with these subjects. During the conference, meanwhile, the subject of archaeology and questions of the subterranean more broadly, the subject of the keynote, became a recurring theme amongst a number of participants, evincing one of the many benefits of an interdisciplinary conference. We are a small conference, but want to offer graduate students in Romanian Studies the opportunity to gain feedback on their work from a variety of established scholars.

An interview with Bruce O'Neill can be found on the next page.

Can you tell us about the transition from an in-person conference to an online one?

The conference was originally to be held in April; in March, it became clear that an in-person conference wasn't going to happen. Over the summer, we began to discuss the possibility of a virtual conference, admittedly with some anxiety and uncertainty. Most of the participants from the original conference were able to commit to a date in October, so we spent the next few months testing Zoom calls and reorienting ourselves to a different type of conference. Rather than try to replicate the in-person conference, we decided to ask presenters to pre-circulate their papers and offer short presentations during the conference, allowing for a more robust, workshop-style set up. The small size of the conference was an advantage here; we were able to really discuss the papers as a group!

What do you find to be the greatest benefit of this conference?

We hope that our conference is an opportunity for graduate students and junior scholars from around the world to present their work, garner constructive feedback, and get to know their peers. I've made a number of connections with other Romanianists in the last two years and am grateful to play a role in supporting emerging scholarship in our field.

12th Annual Romanian Studies Conference

The Romanian Studies Organization (RomSO) at Indiana University held its 12th Annual Romanian Studies Conference for graduate students and junior scholars via Zoom in late October. Bruce O'Neill, associate professor of anthropology at Saint Louis University, served as keynote speaker and is interviewed here.

What were your impressions of the presentations and conversations you heard at the conference last weekend? What are the major subjects, issues, or questions that young scholars in Romanian studies seem preoccupied with? What themes emerged?



The conference itself was a true pleasure. It was refreshingly interdisciplinary, and it opened up an opportunity to see how scholars across disciplines are thinking about Romania in different ways. I was also impressed by the tremendous breadth of topics that was covered: from film to history to the social sciences. Thematically, the conference had several clear points of convergence. Questions of identity, subjectivity, and subject formation resonated across the papers. I was incredibly happy with the exchange of ideas among the participants and was struck by what a supportive and encouraging atmosphere that the conference produced. Collegiality should never be taken for granted!

How has the field of Romanian studies changed since your time in graduate school and immediately after? In particular, how have the interests of young scholars changed?

When I think about the tradition of area studies, certain regions of the world tend to get pegged as sites for asking certain kinds of questions. For a while, I think Romania, and Central and Eastern Europe more generally, has been pegged as a site for thinking through questions about social and economic transformation, upheavals, and so on. These kinds of questions, and the thick literature that they have inspired, have never been more relevant. Questions about precarity and social change strike me as being foundational to understanding this present moment. And so I'm excited about the opportunity to think with, and contributing to, the tradition of Romania studies right now.

As for how the field has changed since I was in graduate school: in the early 2000s, there was a certain sense that Eastern Europe was politically or economically 'anachronistic' and that places like Romania needed to catch up with the so-called West. The movie "Borat," which was actually filmed in part in Romania, played upon that sensibility. However that is no longer the case. I think right now Romania is increasingly seen in the West as being ahead of the curve, so to speak, rather than needing to catch up. I think (perhaps optimistically) Romania serves as a kind of guiding light for the West that now finds itself grappling with problems of political corruption and graft, anti-democratic political figures, and crippling recessions.

This sense of optimism about what Romania has to offer is something that I hear from twenty-somethings in Bucharest today. Fifteen years ago, my conversations revolved around desires to move towards opportunity believed to be present elsewhere in the world. Today, I hear tremendous excitement from college-educated Romanians about the opportunities unfolding in Bucharest. That's an important shift.

12th Annual Romanian Studies Conference

Based on your experience at the conference but also as a professor and a mentor to young scholars, what do you see as the major challenges facing young scholars in Romanian studies today? Alternatively, what advantages might they have in comparison with previous cohorts?

Certainly if one is comparing the experience of “younger” scholars to those of earlier generations, Romania is a much easier place to work, to move around, to ask questions, and to access archives. Reading Katherine Verdery’s remarkable and gripping account, *My Life as a Spy*, makes that point crystal clear. I don’t believe scholars today are subjected to that kind of scrutiny.

As for daunting challenges, I think the ones facing Romanianists are the same ones facing scholars across the humanities and social sciences more generally. Scholars today are having to live through a significant disinvestment in higher education. I share the concern of others that this environment, where support for research and teaching keeps getting more and more precarious, has the consequence of silencing a lot of talented voices who aren’t finding the support needed to get their work out into the world. Intellectually we’re all the poorer because of it.

What advice might you offer to young scholars building research careers in Romanian studies or adjacent fields? What resources were particularly useful to you? What surprised you most in the early stages of your career?

The one helpful piece of advice that I would pass along is to get really good at distinguishing the things that are inside your control from those that are outside of your control. In the academy, there are plenty of things outside of your control that want to distract you or absorb all of your good mental bandwidth. The challenge is to try and focus your energies squarely onto the things that are within your control, because, reassuringly, it’s actually quite a lot. While you can’t control the job market, for example, you can develop your thoughts, advance your writing projects, expand your network, and so on. And of course, as you work on your scholarship, you can also diversify the kinds of opportunities that you pursue within and beyond the academy. Staying focused on the things within your control, I’ve found, makes the work better but also the process a whole lot more enjoyable.

Relatedly, I always encourage junior scholars to be kind to themselves, to take care of themselves, and to make sure that they are really finding fulfillment in the scholarship itself, because otherwise there are plenty of easier ways to earn what the academy is offering these days.

12th Annual Romanian Studies Conference

The 12th Annual Romanian Studies Conference

October 23rd -
24th, 2020

hosted by the Romanian
Studies Organization
(RomSO)
at Indiana University

co-sponsored by the
Russian and East European
Institute (REEI)

Friday, October 23rd

Panel 1: Insecurity, Informality, and Prejudice in Contemporary Romania

Moderator: **Bruce O'Neill** (Saint Louis University)
Presenter: **Tatiana Cojocari**

Panel 2: The Environment in Interwar Romania

Moderator: **Ryan Voogt** (University of Kentucky)
Presenters **Bogdan-Cristian Dumitru** (University
of Florida), **George Andrei** (Indiana University
Bloomington)

Panel 3: Culture and Identity in Early Twentieth Century Romania

Moderator: **Magda Dragu** (Indiana University
Bloomington)
Presenters: **Amelia Miholca** (Arizona State
University), **Cristina Stoica** (Western University)

Saturday, October 24th

Panel 4: Modern Romania and 'The West'

Moderator: **Oana Godeanu-Kenworthy** (Miami
University of Ohio)
Presenter: **Kate Mower** (University of California,
Riverside)

Panel 5: Creating and Resisting State Power in Romania During Communism

Moderator: **Maria Bucur-Deckard** (Indiana
University Bloomington)
Presenters: **Oana Godeanu-Kenworthy** (Miami
University of Ohio), **Ryan Voogt** (University of
Kentucky)

Keynote Address

**"Up, Down, and Away: The Place of
Privilege in Bucharest, Romania"**

Bruce O'Neill (Saint Louis University)

Obituary: Iuliana Conovici

In memoriam Iuliana Conovici (1980-2020)

When I first met Iuliana in the winter for 2005 we were both reading the same book by Daniele Hervieu-Leger, *Religion as a chain of memory*. She was reading the original French and I was reading the English translation. We talked about it and we both agreed that we liked *Le Pelerin et le converti* better with the caveat that my French only allowed a partial understanding and had to take her words for it. When we met, I realized that we were both oddities, women (young) that were working on a very traditional subject, in the Romanian historiography a very masculine subject, church and state in contemporary Romania. We were also believers in a field that was more and more populated with seculars and our belief seemed to have an impact in the way we did research. We struck a bond, although we were personality-wise very different. We became friends.



I still keep in my computer two files called "From Iuliana" and "To Iuliana" filled with photographed books and articles that we sent each-other over the years to supplement bibliographical lists for our research. She later posted most of them in a yahoo group to help other researchers because that was Iuliana, always ready to help, always interested in the plight of the other especially navigating the dearth of specialized information that was Eastern Europe in the mid 2000s.

Her research on post-communist state and church relations that I read over the years and listened to in conferences and workshops became a book that is canonical. She read the most minute interventions of the Orthodox Church in the secular and theological press and catalogued the many reactions both the institution and its people had to the interference of the state and public sphere in the matters of the church in details. When she told me she was publishing the thesis (*The Reconstruction Of the Public Identity Of the Romanian Orthodox Church After 1989*) as is I asked whether it is not too long to have it in two volumes and not in one easy to read abridged version. She told me she trusts her readers. It is by far the best decision she could have made. I've seen it quoted in many articles and books and on many library shelves, some of the same shelves we used to take books to copy and bring back to Romania with us.

I know I should remember also Iuliana working in the State Secretary for Religious Denominations but even there I only remember Iuliana the academic, filled with curiosity about what is being said new in the field and ready to help the student working on subjects related to her own. I know I sent a few in her way she graciously set on the right research path.

Her death caught many by surprise. I guess we all thought she'll always be there to lend a hand, to argue a book thesis, to rage against the secularization thesis. We are poorer without her not only as colleagues but as human beings since she was an example a lot of us aspired to.

Dumnezeu să o odihnească cu sfinții de-a dreapta Sa!

Anca Șincan
Research fellow
University College Cork

SRS Graduate Student Essay Prize

The **Twelfth Annual Graduate Student Essay Prize** of 2020 has been earned by **Cosmin Koszor Codrea**, doctoral candidate in the School of History, Philosophy and Culture at Oxford Brookes University, for his submission entitled “Mismeasuring diversity: Popularizing scientific racism in the Romanian Principalities around the mid-nineteenth century.” This entry merited the award foremost on account of its success at examining a subject that has received scant attention in the literature – the manner in which “scientific racial terminology” was embraced and disseminated publicly in the Romanian Principalities in the early-to-mid-19th century. Koszor Codrea performs this by scrutinizing a number of naturalist case studies, emphasizing the part they played in dispersing race theory to the public domain, a topic hardly of historical gravity alone as we see in the many contemporary reminders of the at times brutal implications of the social and cultural construction of race. The entry also caught the reviewers’ attention by drawing on a range of literature – both domestic and international – in probing this overlooked segment of history, illustrating thereby the value of a broad investigation of scholarship in casting light on a problem. The committee concluded as well that the paper was clearly written and well-organized, characteristics that contributed to it being accessible to non-experts.



An honorable mention is extended to **Cosmin Tudor Minea**, a postdoctoral research fellow at the New Europe College in Bucharest for his entry “Old buildings for modern times: The rise of architectural monuments as symbols of the state in late nineteenth-century Romania.” It was a close runner-up for the prize given its unique contribution to scholarship on the pioneer Romanian architect, Ion Mincu, offering a perspective on his work that has the capacity to upend interpretations prevalent today in art historical and architectural realms, and due to its exploration of national discourse both before and after unification.



SRS Essay Prize Committee Members:

Gerard Weber (Chair), Alexandra Chiriac, and Rodica Milena Zaharia

H-Romania



H-Romania is currently seeking a new book review editor. H-Romania is now in its sixth year of operation, with over 300 subscribers to the network. We publish book reviews in all social science and humanities fields related to Romanian Studies, operate a discussion forum, host links to research and teaching

resources, and disseminate a variety of announcements and calls for papers/applications. While we are happy with our progress thus far, we still have room to grow and improve. We want to encourage SRS members to join H-Romania and publicize the network across the broad field of Romanian Studies. Please feel free to contribute postings and announcements, notify us of any recently published books and calls for papers/applications in your field, and volunteer to review books and report on conferences. And please follow us @HNet_Romania on Twitter. Please contact Chris Davis at R.Chris.Davis@LoneStar.edu if you are interested in joining the H-Romania editorial team.



PLURAL Research Prizes

The [PLURAL Forum for Interdisciplinary Studies](#), a not-for-profit organisation based in the Republic of Moldova, is currently accepting applications for two opportunities for research funding.

Local Archives & Collections Research Prize

In 2020, the PLURAL Forum established the **Local Archives & Collections Research Prize** for original research articles based on archives and/or collections held in Moldova, as well as in the neighbouring regions and counties in Ukraine and Romania. The prize will be awarded every year to one MA2-, PhD-, or postdoc-level student in the field of history, the social sciences, or other humanities. It is intended for persons under 40 years of age, who are still enrolled in a MA2 or PhD programme or who have defended their PhD thesis within the last five years from the date of the beginning of the application period. The author may apply directly or be nominated by a scholar familiar with the author's research and academic background.

Applications can be submitted beginning on December 1 and until January 31. The selection committee will consist of the PLURAL Forum members. The selection will be based on the originality and the coherence of the article. The winner of the prize will be notified on March 31 and announced on this website and on Twitter. The prize amounts to EUR 250. If the article was not originally published in English, the winner is given the opportunity to publish an English version in the PLURAL journal. Please send applications to prize@plural.md.

Bursa Plural

In 2020, the PLURAL Forum also created the **Bursa Plural**, a three-month research fellowship in Moldova.

The grant is awarded every year to one MA2- or PhD-level student in the field of history, the social sciences, or other humanities. It is intended for persons under 35 years of age studying at universities in the EU (excluding Romania), EFTA, UK, US, and Canada. Applications can be submitted between January 1 and March 1. The selection committee will consist of the PLURAL Forum members and selection will be based on the originality and the coherence of the research proposal. The applicant should show at least some background knowledge of the context of his/her intended research subject, and present his/her argument persuasively. In the case of advanced PhD students, his/her previous publication record will be taken into account. The successful applicant will be notified on April 30.

The fellow will be required to spend the three months in residence in Moldova. However, short research trips to Romania or/and Ukraine are allowed. In Chisinau, the fellow may benefit from the support of the local PLURAL Forum members. They will provide relevant logistical and academic advice and assistance. At the end of the fellowship, a report on the fellow's personal experience and research results should be sent to the selection committee. This report should be written in either English or French. It will be published in the PLURAL journal. PhD students are encouraged to submit an article in the field to PLURAL within a year after the end of their fellowship. The grant amounts to EUR 1,800 net, payable in three monthly instalments of EUR 600. There are no additional allowances for international travel, medical insurance, accommodation, and any other living expenses.

Please send your applications to bursa@plural.md.

Perspectives on Romania and Moldova

PERSPECTIVES ON ROMANIA AND MOLDOVA

International Virtual Student Colloquium 2021

Students of all fields are invited to join the International Virtual Student Colloquium organized at the University of Jena. Students are welcome to present and discuss their research related to Romania and the Republic of Moldova with fellow students of the field.

Talks may for example be based on a course project, term paper, or a thesis. We would like to connect students of Romanian Studies from all around the world with this event. Apart from enjoying *interesting talks*, participants will get the chance to connect with fellow students during *Q&A sessions*, in *virtual coffee breaks*, and during the *evening program*. There will also be a *mentoring session*.

Target group:

Students at all stages of their studies (undergraduate, graduate, and PhD)

Date: 19-20 February 2021

Registration: <https://cloud.uni-jena.de/apps/forms/c5E7ptALQ3NF9nH8>

If you would like to give a talk: Please send your abstract (150-250 words) to anna.jorina.fenner@uni-jena.de **until 10 January 2021**. Abstracts may be submitted in English, Romanian, or German and should be in the language of your talk.

The colloquium takes place online and is free of charge.



**FRIEDRICH-SCHILLER-
UNIVERSITÄT
JENA** Philosophische Fakultät
Institut für Romanistik

Contact:

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SRS-Polirom Book Series

SRS-POLIROM BOOK SERIES

Studii Românești - Romanian Studies - Études Roumaines - Rumänische Studien

Series Editors: Irina Livezeanu (irinal@pitt.edu) and Lavinia Stan (lstan@stfx.ca)
Assistant Editor: Narcis Tulbure (narcis.tulbure@gmail.com)

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The series publishes scholarly books in Romanian authored or edited by SRS members. The Editors will consider three types of manuscripts: 1) Romanian translations of scholarly monographs already published in a foreign language; 2) original scholarly monographs written in Romanian; and 3) edited collections of essays dealing with a Romanian Studies theme.

Books in the SRS Romanian Studies series are about Romania and/or Moldova and the populations living on these territories, or with the Romanian and Moldovan diasporas and cultures. Manuscripts should have primarily an academic profile, and a disciplinary, interdisciplinary, or multidisciplinary focus, drawing on history, political science, sociology, anthropology, law, economics, linguistics, literature, art history, or other fields. They should be based on sound and rigorous scholarly analysis, and include references and bibliography. We prefer contributions that are free of jargon and thus more likely to appeal to a wide audience. All proposals, manuscripts, and books offered for translation will be carefully reviewed for publication in the series.

Titles published in the series to date in reverse chronological order are:

- Maria Bucur, *Eroi și victime. România și memoria celor două războaie mondiale* (2019)
- Diana Dumitru, *Vecini în vremuri de restriște. Stat, antisemitism și Holocaust în Basarabia și Transnistria* (2019)
- Cristina Vățulescu, *Cultură și poliție secretă în comunism* (2018)
- Lavinia Stan și Diane Vancea, coord., *România postcomunistă: trecut, prezent, viitor* (2017)
- Alex Drace-Francis, *Geneza culturii române moderne. Instituțiile scrisului și dezvoltarea identității naționale, 1700-1900* (2016)
- Vladimir Solonari, *Purificarea națiunii: dislocări forțate de populație și epurări etnice în România lui Ion Antonescu, 1940-1944* (2015)
- Roland Clark, *Sfântă tinerețe legionară. Activismul fascist în România interbelică* (2015) WINNER OF THE 2017 SRS BOOK AWARD

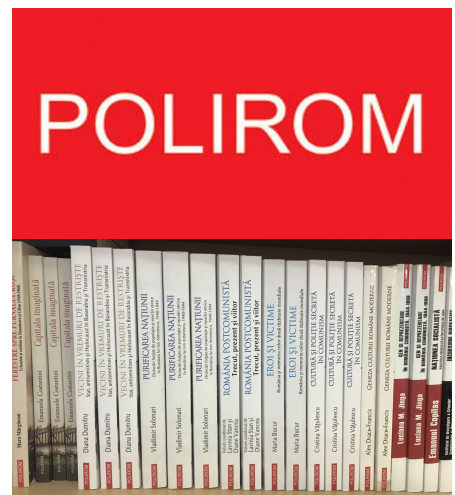
PROSPECTIVE AUTHORS

If you plan to submit a manuscript for the SRS-Polirom book series or if you have a general interest in the series, we encourage you to contact the editors.



www.society4romanianstudies.org

The Society for Romanian Studies



SRS-Polirom Book Series

FORTHCOMING

Cristian Cercel's *Romania and the Quest for European Identity: Philo-Germanism without Germans* (Routledge, 2019) is being translated into Romanian by the author himself and will appear in 2021.

Exploring the largely positive representations of Romanian Germans predominating in post-1989 Romanian society, this book shows that the underlying reasons for German prestige are strongly connected with Romania's endeavors to become European. [...] Cercel argues that representations of Germans in Romania, descendants of twelfth-century and eighteenth-century colonists, become actually a symbolic resource for asserting but also questioning Romania's European identity. Such representations link Romania's much-desired European belonging with German presence, whilst German absence is interpreted as a sign of veering away from Europe. Investigating this case of discursive "self-colonization" and this apparent symbolic embrace of the German Other in Romania, the book offers a critical study of the discourses associated with Romania's postcommunist "Europeanization" to contribute a better understanding of contemporary West-East relationships in the European context." (from the publisher's web page)

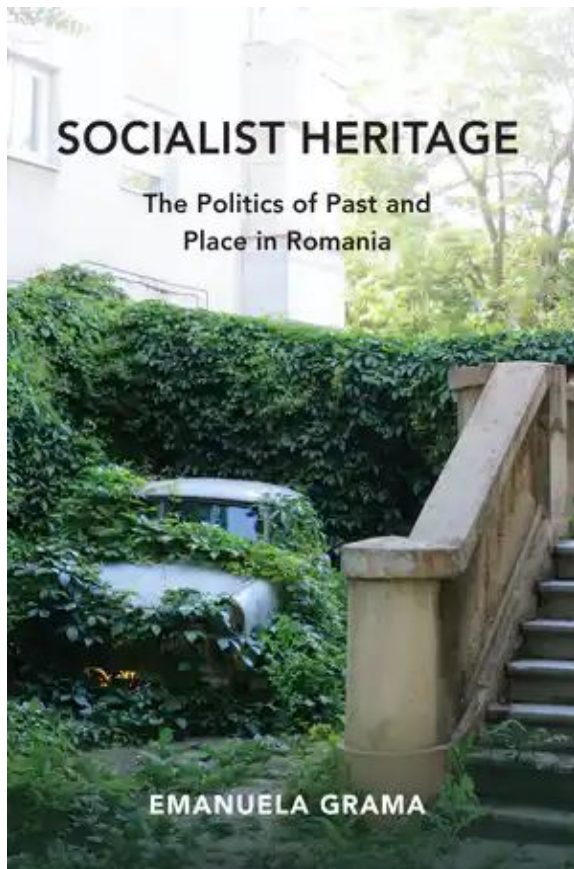
"[The] book [...] marks an important step forward in understanding complex processes such as Europeanization, cultural interaction, and social change. Beginning with the subtitle, Cercel put[s] forward a puzzling problem when it comes to explaining [...] philo-Germanism without Germans in Romania. By emphasizing this issue, Cercel attempts to grasp a very broad perspective by moving from the peculiar electoral curiosity of ethnic Romanians electing a German candidate in a medium-size town in Transylvania, to the way westernization and Europeanization concur in shaping Romanian identity. The preference for an ethnic German candidate in a city almost deserted by its German-speaking citizens sheds light on the broader phenomenon of intimate self-colonization, fueled by a power discourse on the shaping of Romanian identity as forged by numerous interactions and representations in a very complex ethnic, social, and political environment. [...] The current philo-Germanism without Germans is strongly connected with Romanian aspirations toward Europeanization, an effort to overcome cultural, social, and political dilemmas of being caught between east and west." (Dragoş Dragoman, *Slavic Review*)"

"The volume informs [...] readers about the German–Romanian relationship in the turbulent postsocialist years. The richness of detail and their careful contextualization helps readers to form an accurate image of these relationships. [...] Cercel argues that it was the treatment under communist rule that led Germans to acquire an exaggerated sense of victimhood, which after 1990 became the driving force of their 'exodus' from Romania. Deserted Saxon and Swabian villages in Southern Transylvania are proof of this, as is the acute nostalgia expressed in the media by many ethnic Romanian intellectuals. The latter is interpreted by Cercel, throughout the volume, using the theoretical framework of "self-orientalization." With this concept Cercel aims to explain the intellectuals' deep admiration for the Western model of modernization during the 19th and 20th centuries. This idolization then led, he maintains, to their rejecting any model that might have ultimately proven to be better suited to describe Romania's society." (Stelu Şerban, *Südosteuropa*)"

"This is an original work which examines the political and cultural expression of a Romanian nostalgia for the German past and the former presence of Germans in Romania." (Margit Feischmidt, *Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences*)"

Cristian Cercel is currently a researcher with the Institute for Social Movements at Ruhr University Bochum. He has a BA in European Studies (University of Bucharest), an MA in Nationalism Studies (Central European University), and a PhD in Politics (Durham University). Before his current appointment, he held research positions and fellowships at several institutions, including New Europe College (Bucharest), the Centre for Contemporary German Culture at Swansea University, and the Centre for Advanced Study (Sofia). He has published in refereed academic journals such as *Nationalities Papers*, *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, and *History and Memory*. He is also active as a translator from German and Italian into Romanian.

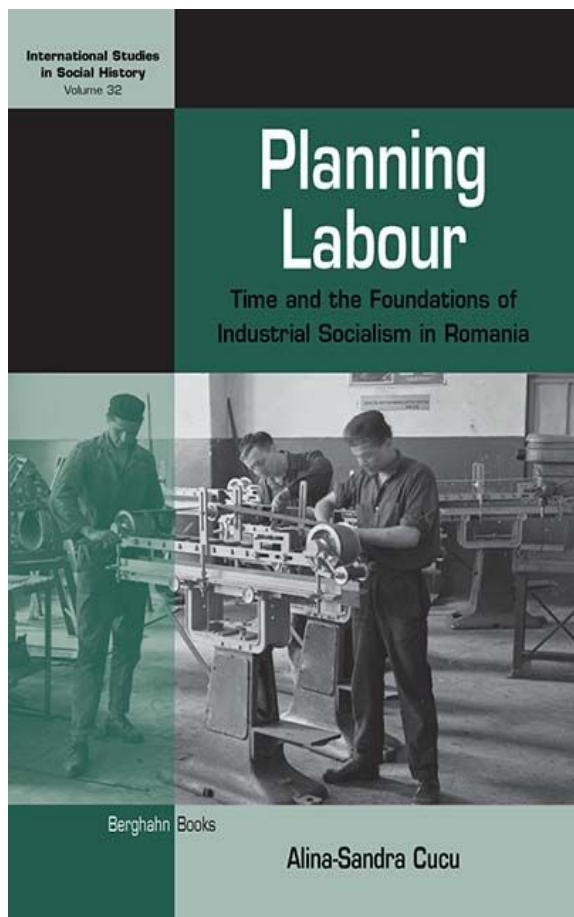
Featured Books



Socialist Heritage: The Politics of Past and Place in Romania
(Indiana University Press, 2019)
by Emanuela Grama

“Focusing on Romania from 1945 to 2016, *Socialist Heritage* explores the socialist state's attempt to create its own heritage, as well as the legacy of that project. Contrary to arguments that the socialist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe aimed to erase the pre-war history of the socialist cities, Emanuela Grama shows that the communist state in Romania sought to exploit the past for its own benefit. The book traces the transformation of a central district of Bucharest, the Old Town, from a socially and ethnically diverse place in the early 20th century, into an epitome of national history under socialism, and then, starting in the 2000s, into the historic center of a European capital. Under socialism, politicians and professionals used the district's historic buildings, especially the ruins of a medieval palace discovered in the 1950s, to emphasize the city's Romanian past and erase its ethnically diverse history. Since the collapse of socialism, the cultural and economic value of the Old Town has become highly contested. Bucharest's middle class has regarded the district as a site of tempting transgressions. Its poor residents have decried their semi-decrepit homes, while entrepreneurs and politicians have viewed it as a source of easy money. Such arguments point to recent negotiations about the meanings of class, political participation, and ethnic and economic belonging in today's Romania. Grama's rich historical and ethnographic research reveals the fundamentally dual nature of heritage: every search for an idealized past relies on strategies of differentiation that can lead to further marginalization and exclusion.”

Planning Labour: Time and the Foundations of Industrial Socialism in Romania (Berghahn Books, 2019)
Alina-Sandra Cucu



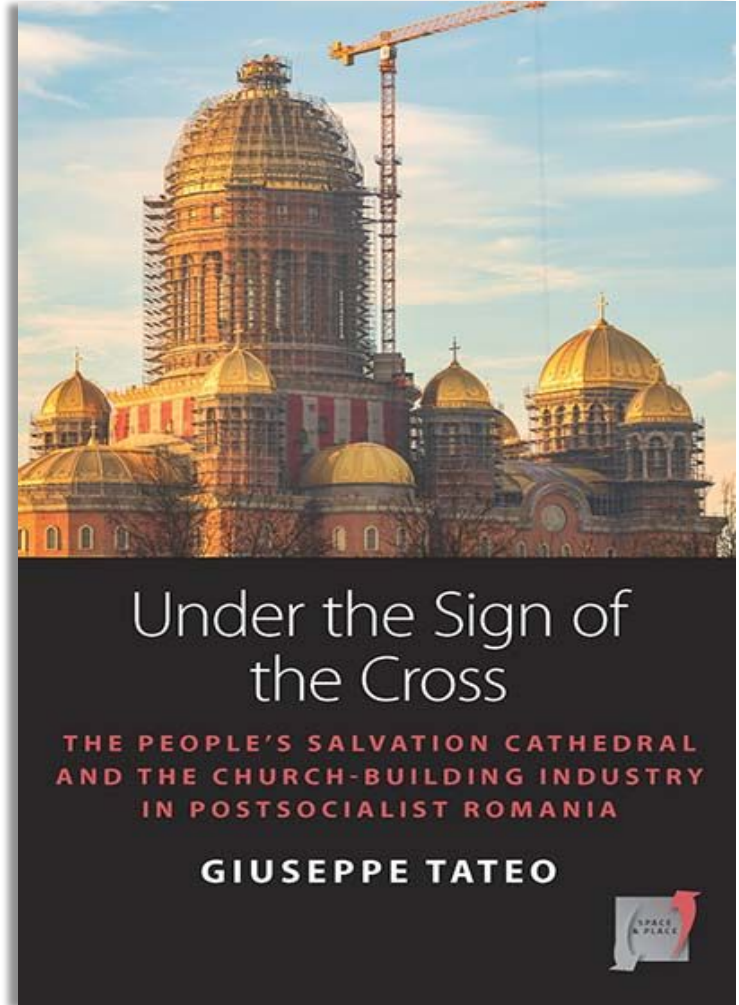
“Impoverished, indebted, and underdeveloped at the close of World War II, Romania underwent dramatic changes as part of its transition to a centrally planned economy. As with the Soviet experience, it pursued a policy of “primitive socialist accumulation” whereby the state appropriated agricultural surplus and restricted workers' consumption in support of industrial growth. Focusing on the daily operations of planning in the ethnically mixed city of Cluj from 1945 to 1955, this book argues that socialist accumulation was deeply contradictory: it not only inherited some of the classical tensions of capital accumulation, but also generated its own, which derived from the multivocal nature of the state socialist worker as a creator of value, as living labour, and as a subject of emancipatory politics.”

Featured Books

Under the Sign of the Cross: The People's Salvation Cathedral and the Church-Building Industry in Postsocialist Romania (Berghahn Books, 2020)

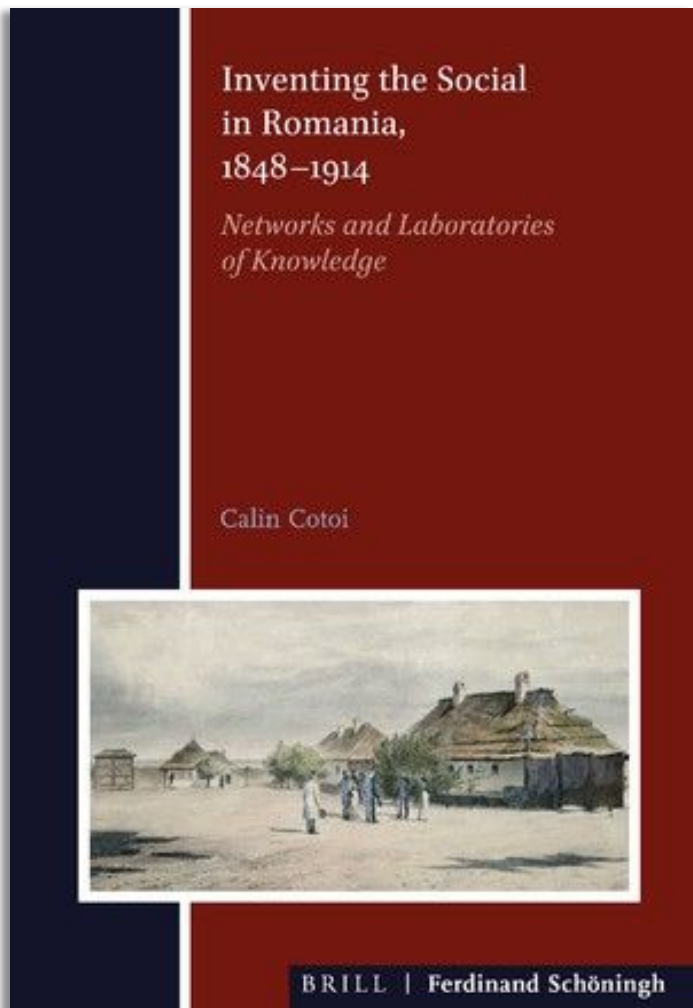
by Giuseppe Tateo

“Based on extensive ethnographic research, this book delves into the thriving industry of religious infrastructure in Romania, where 4,000 Orthodox churches and cathedrals have been built in three decades. Following the construction of the world's highest Orthodox cathedral in Bucharest, the book brings together sociological and anthropological scholarship on Eastern Christianity, secularization, urban change and nationalism. Reading postsocialism through the prism of religious change, the author argues that the emergence of political, entrepreneurial and intellectual figures after 1990 has happened ‘under the sign of the cross.’”



Inventing the Social in Romania, 1848-1914: Networks and Laboratories of Knowledge (Leiden: Brill 2020) by Călin Cotoi

“In *Inventing the Social in Romania, 1848–1914*, Călin Cotoi brings to life several ‘obscure’ anarchists, physicians, public hygienists and reformers roaming the borderlands of Europe and Russia. The book follows individuals, texts, projects, sometimes even bacteria, traveling, meeting, colliding, writing and talking to each other in surprising places, and on changing topics. All of them navigated the land, sometimes finding unexpected loopholes and shortcuts in it, and emerged in different and unexpected parts of the social, political or geographical space. Using materials ranging from anarchists’ letters, to social-theoretical debates and medical treatises, Călin Cotoi points to the larger theoretical and historical issues involved in the local creation of the social, its historicity, and its representability.”

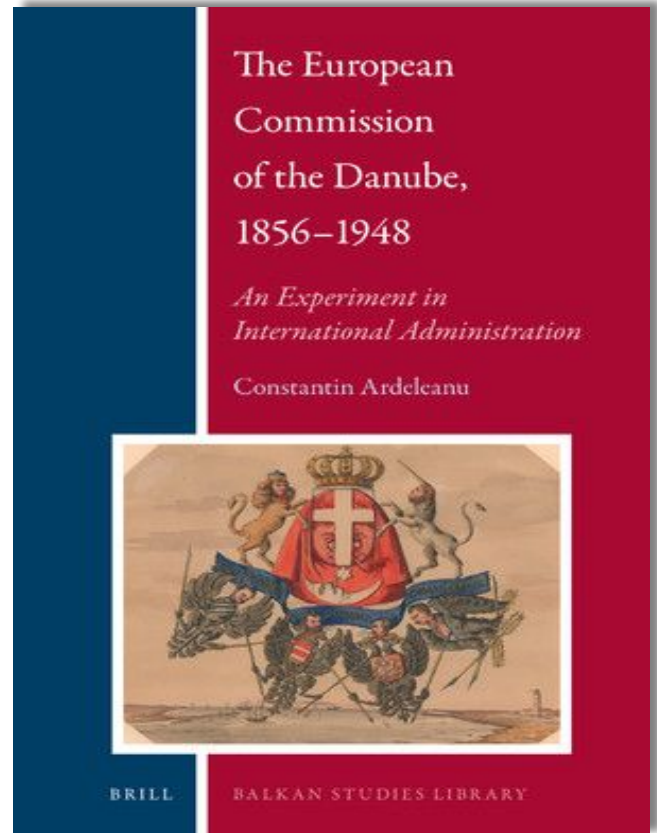


Featured Books

cont'd.

The European Commission of the Danube, 1856-1948: An Experiment in International Administration (Leiden: Brill, 2020) by Constantin Ardeleanu

“In *The European Commission of the Danube, 1856-1948* Constantin Ardeleanu offers a history of the world’s second international organisation, an innovative techno-political institution established by Europe’s Concert of Powers to remove insecurity from the Lower Danube. Delegates of rival empires worked together to ‘correct’ a vital European transportation infrastructure, and to complete difficult hydraulic works they gradually transformed the Commission into an actor of regional and international politics. As an autonomous and independent organ, it employed a complex transnational bureaucracy and regulated shipping along the Danube through a comprehensive set of internationally accepted rules and procedures. The Commission is portrayed as an effective experimental organisation, taken as a model for further cooperation in the international system.”



Repression, Resistance and Collaboration in Stalinist Romania 1944-1964: Post-Communist Remembering (Routledge, 2020) by Monica Ciobanu

“This book examines how the process of remembering Stalinist repression in Romania has shifted from individual, family, and group representations of lived and witnessed experiences characteristic of the 1990s to more recent and state-sponsored expressions of historical remembrance through their incorporation in official commemorations, propaganda sites, and restorative and compensatory measures. Based on fieldwork dealing with Stalinist repression and memorialization, together with archival research on the secret police (Securitate), it adopts an interdisciplinary approach to reveal the resurfacing of particular themes. As such it draws on concepts from sociology, political science, and legal studies, related to memory, justice, redress, identity, accountability, and reconciliation. A study of competing narratives concerning the meaning of the past as part of a struggle over the legitimacy of the post-communist state, *Repression, Resistance, and Collaboration in Stalinist Romania 1944-1964* combines memory studies with a transitional justice approach that will appeal to scholars of sociology, heritage and memory studies, politics, and law.”



SRS Membership

SRS uses member dues to help with monetary prizes for outstanding publications and to budget and pay for the cost of future conferences. In addition, members play a vital role in the Society by supporting our membership program, submitting manuscripts for the new scholarly Journal of Romanian Studies, proposing nominations for the prizes, and voting for officers and Board members.



Contributions from lifetime members are most welcome. In addition, organizational sponsors and patrons may be approved by the Board on a case by case basis. Member organizations do not have a vote but their support will be acknowledged by SRS, including linking to organizational web sites.

You may renew your membership or join SRS via Paypal or credit card on our [website](#).

We also accept dues via mail. Please send mailed dues and/or donations directly by check (made out to The Society for Romanian Studies) to:

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About SRS

The Society for Romanian Studies is an international interdisciplinary academic organization based in the US and dedicated to promoting research and critical studies on all aspects of the culture and society of the diverse peoples connected to Romania and Moldova. The SRS is generally recognized as the major professional organization for North American scholars concerned with Romania and Moldova. It is affiliated with the South East European Studies Association (SEESA); the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES); the American Political Science Association (APSA); the American Historical Association (AHA); the Balkan History Association (BHA); and the Romanian Studies Association of America (RSAA). More information about the SRS, including current officers, the national board, and membership information, can be found on the SRS website. If you have any recent activities to report (publications, conferences organized, etc.) please email such information to the Newsletter Editor, Leah Valtin-Erwin (lvalt@iu.edu).