

SOCIETY FOR ROMANIAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER



www.society4romanianstudies.org
Vol 43 Fall/Winter 2021 No. 2

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Roland Clark
University of Liverpool
SRS President

President's Message

A lot has been happening behind the scenes at the SRS over the past few months. Anca Șincan and the rest of the conference organising committee have been hard at work putting together the details for the next SRS [conference](#) in Timișoara on June 15-17, 2022. The theme of the conference is “Borders and Transfers,” and Maria Bucur and Adriana Babeți will be delivering the keynote addresses. Over 200 participants have submitted proposals for what looks like an exciting few days. We are continuing to monitor the COVID-19 situation in Romania and will be taking every measure to ensure that the conference is a safe environment for everyone involved.

To help connect us better between conferences we are establishing a series of thematic working groups, within which members can hold workshops, book talks, or informal gatherings that bring together scholars working in the same field to share ideas and knowledge. Our new Membership Officer, Philippe Blasen, is coordinating these groups so look out for the advertisement on page 5 of this Newsletter.

The latest issue of the [Journal of Romanian Studies](#) should be hitting subscribers' inboxes any day now. It is a special issue on Media and Communication, guest edited by Raluca Radu and Ioana A. Coman, and containing a special tribute to Mac Linscott Ricketts to celebrate his 90th birthday. This is also the last issue of the journal to be published with Ibidem Verlag. As of 2022 the journal will be published with Liverpool University Press with the bonus that individual and discount members will receive both printed copies and electronic access as part of their membership. Liverpool UP are also now helping us process membership dues, providing a wider range of payment options and regular reminders if your membership has lapsed. In other publishing news, Cristian Cercel's [Filogermanism fără germani](#) (Polirom, 2021) is the latest title to appear in the SRS/Polirom *Studii Românești* series, with two more books currently under preparation.

Two SRS prizes have been awarded recently. The 2021 Book Prize went to Roxana-Talida Roman for [The Edge of Europe – Heritage, Landscape and Conflict Archaeology](#) (Bar Publishing, 2020), with honorable mentions to Péter Berta, [Materializing Difference](#) (University of Toronto Press, 2019), and Călin Cotoi, [Inventing the Social in Romania, 1848–1914](#) (Ferdinand Schoeningh, 2020). Alexandra Ciocănel (University of Manchester) won the 2021 Graduate Student Essay Prize for her essay on “Making Markets” and Iemima Ploscariu (Dublin City University) received an honorable mention for her work on “Motley Repertoires and the Performative Power of Music.” Many thanks to the committees that judged these prizes, which this year were chaired by Dragoș Petrescu and Narcis Tulbure, respectively. Thanks to some generous donations, the SRS is also planning to launch a Biennial Dissertation Prize named in honour of the late Professor Keith Hitchins next year.

Finally, the SRS is proud to announce new organisational partnerships with the [American Romanian Coalition for Human and Equal Rights](#) (ARCHER) and the [Immigration Research Forum](#) (IRF), both of which are Romanian organisations based in the United States and focused on sharing knowledge with wider audiences. Thanks to the hard work of Marius Wamsiedel and the rest of the Affiliated Journals Committee, we are also creating a list of peer-reviewed Romanian Studies journals which have received the SRS’s “recommended” seal of approval. The list continues to grow, but currently includes [Hiperboreea](#), [Martor](#), [Plural](#), and [Studia Politica](#). As always, if you are interested in taking part in any SRS activities or would like to get more involved, please drop me an email.



Member News

Monica Ciobanu, Professor at State University of New York in Plattsburgh was selected as one of the 2021-2022 Charles E. Scheidt Faculty Fellow to study atrocity prevention under the auspices of the Center for the Study of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention at SUNY Binghamton.

Rüdiger von Kraus published his Master's thesis, “Artisans and Nobles,” in book form in both Romanian and German: *Nobili și artizani O istorie neștiută a sașilor din Transilvania* (Editura Corint, 2018); *Handwerker und Adlige: Die Fogarascher Familie von Kraus im Laufe von 350 Jahren sozialer Veränderungen und Kriege in Osteuropa* (Schiller Verlag, 2020).

Svetlana Suveica, co-editor of the *Journal of Romanian Studies* and research fellow at the University of Regensburg, Germany, has obtained the Habilitation degree in the History of East and Southeast Europe from the Faculty of Philosophy, Art History, History and Humanities of the same university (November 2021). The thesis, entitled “Ambivalent Reconfigurations of the Post-Imperial Space: A Transnational Design for Post-World War I Bessarabia,” provides evidence of the continuity of empire amidst the emergency of nation-states in Eastern Europe in the turbulent times after World War I. During the Paris Peace Conference, when state legitimacy was closely related to the rejection of the imperial past, the former imperial elite in the borderland region of Bessarabia — united with Greater Romania in 1918 — committed itself to Russian (imperial) revival. By using the ‘Wilsonian moment’ to adjust the principle of self-determination to their own goals, members of the elite succeeded in ‘concealing’ their aim to ‘liberate’ Bessarabia from Romania and return it into a restored (Greater and indivisible) Russia behind the agenda of building a democratic Russia. Together with White Russian political émigrés, they built a transnational network that extended across Europe and gained support inside and outside the region. The participation of marginal actors in the transnational reconstruction of regional borders, though of little significance for the final decision in Paris, fuelled local expectations and impacted personal and group identities, which subsequently shaped the heterogeneous and multidimensional character of Bessarabian/Moldovan society. The book will be published in English in the prestigious book series *Südosteuropäische Arbeiten* with De Gruyter Oldenbourg in 2022.

New Dissertations

Berk Emek, "State-Building in Multi-Ethnic Borderlands: Nationalizing Eastern Anatolia and Transylvania in Interwar Turkey and Romania," Koç University, 2021.

This dissertation examines Turkish and Romanian state-building practices during the interwar years, exposing the major reasons for and consequences of the multiple strategies the two states employed in their efforts to unify and nationalize their territories. Turkey and Romania followed parallel trajectories toward national consolidation in this period while also sharing specific security concerns in their respective regions. In their efforts to create centralized and homogenized nation-states, the ruling authorities chose to categorize certain ethnic minorities as a threat to territorial integrity and national unity. Most prominent among these groups were the Kurds in Eastern Anatolia and the Hungarians in Transylvania, whose demographic concentration in a particular region, linguistic unity, economic control, and capacity to resist the emerging central authority flagged them as potential security risks. These features made the Kurds and Hungarians, respectively, the primary targets of the Turkish and Romanian states' centralization campaigns. This analysis of the relations between the state and aforementioned ethnic communities in Turkey and Romania contributes to and expands on the discussion of factors affecting state-building in post-First World War nation-states. It thus explains how legal frameworks (minority status), state capacities, domestic politics, and international power dynamics were intertwined, and how they played a crucial role in the state's policies, especially in the areas where the central government's jurisdictional power was still relatively weak. Ultimately, this dissertation reveals how the state's initial policies toward certain ethnic groups changed over time in Eastern Anatolia and Transylvania and why the relationships evolved into a large-scale struggle in one case but remained relatively calm and contained in the other. Drawing mostly on primary sources from archives across Turkey, Romania, and the United Kingdom, this comparative research argues that the Turkish and Romanian states' policies in multi-ethnic areas were very much affected by various internal political and socio-economic dynamics, legal measures, international affairs, and kin-state activism. This dissertation also claims that the evolution of state policies did not follow a linear path; rather, they diverged over time in response to domestic and international developments. In this process, regional security risks, inter-state relations, economic dimensions, and internal politics, such as increasing right-wing nationalism, all contributed to the trajectory of state policies toward the selected communities. Hence, the similarities and differences between the nationalizing strategies in Turkey's and Romania's multi-ethnic regions reflect the reasons for the different outcomes while dealing with ethnic groups as a whole.



Berk Emek, Ph.D. in History, graduated from Koç University, Istanbul in 2021 with merit. He received a bachelor's degree in International Relations from Koç University (2012) and a master's degree in Political Science from Central European University (2015). He also spent two semesters in Romania as a research assistant and visiting fellow, respectively at the Babeş-Bolyai University (Fall 2017) and the University of Bucharest (Fall 2019). His comparative studies primarily focus on the nation and state-building strategies, ethnic questions, and minorities in the Balkans during the interwar period. He is among the Ernst Mach Worldwide Grant and DAAD Short-Term Scholarship recipients, awarded by the Austrian and German government agencies.

New Dissertations

Iemima Ploscariu, "A Dappled People: Jewish, Roma, and Romanian Evangelicals Challenging Nationalism in Interwar Romania," Dublin City University, 2021.

Following World War I, Baptists, Brethren, Pentecostals, and Seventh-day Adventists, were among the largest evangelical groups living in the territories of Transylvania, Bessarabia, and Bukovina, annexed to the Kingdom of Romania through the peace treaties. These religious minorities grew exponentially, first among ethnic minorities, and then among ethnic Romanians. Jewish and Roma minorities in Romania, already experiencing discrimination due to the expansion of racist and eugenic policies across Europe, forged ties with these denominations, which also suffered discrimination in the new Romania. Their diverse ethnic, class, and gender composition made them counter-cultural. Soon, these diverse evangelicals, who put faith above the nation, managed to establish themselves as influential religious minorities within Romania, enjoying strong ties with co-religionists abroad and ethnic minority co-religionists within the country.



Romanian leaders perceived this evangelical minority as endangering the construction of a strong post-war national identity. The international and inter-ethnic connections of evangelicals threatened Romania's territorial borders, state sovereignty, and the influence of the Romanian Orthodox Church, which was seen as a unifying institution central to Romanian national identity. By 1940, state authorities outlawed the non-conformist evangelical groups and deported some adherents to the ghettos in Transnistria along with exiled Jews and Roma. Through the study of country-wide demographics, specific Jewish and Roma churches, their struggle through music for legitimacy and space, and their endurance during the Holocaust/Pojarmos, the lived religion of interwar Romanian evangelicals entangles assumptions of national identities and religion. These diverse groups enrich the current discourse on minorities in twentieth-century Europe, through the way they challenged established religion and constructed new identities that crossed boundaries of language, gender, social class, and ethnicity.

Iemima Ploscariu received her PhD in September 2021 from Dublin City University, Republic of Ireland. She completed her MLitt at the University of St Andrews in 2012 and her MA at Central European University in 2015. She received the competitive Irish Research Council Graduate Scholarship to fund her project entitled "A Dappled People: Jewish, Roma, and Romanian Evangelicals in Interwar Romania." She has published articles on religious and ethnic minorities in Romania in *Central Europe*, *Social Inclusion*, *East European Jewish Affairs*, *Journal of Religion in Europe*, among other prestigious journals. She also has a chapter in Adina Babeş-Fruchter and Ana Bărbulescu's *Holocaust in South-Eastern Europe. Historiography, Archival Resources and Remembrance*. Currently based in Barcelona, she is part of Red española de Investigación sobre Europa Central y Oriental and is collaborating with Universidad Autònoma de Barcelona's ISOR (Research in Sociology of Religion) group.

SRS Thematic Working Groups

One of the central aims of the Society for Romanian Studies is to bring together researchers and to promote research. With this in mind, we are establishing a series of **thematic working groups**.

These groups will meet once a year, in the framework of a small online event, which might be a colloquium, a workshop featuring work in progress, an invited lecture, or an informal gathering. These groups – which will be of manageable size – will also provide researchers in one domain with the opportunity to stay in touch with one another between conferences, to receive feedback and support on work in progress, and as a springboard for collaborative projects.

Each group will be headed by a convenor, who will organise events and bring people together for discussion. We are still in the process of forming these groups at present, so please contact Philippe Blasen (blasen@protonmail.ch) if you have any questions or are interested in joining or leading a group.

Some of the working groups and convenors include:

- **Art History** – Alexandra Chiriac
- **Business and Economics** – Rodica-Milena Zaharia
- **Gender Studies**** - Maria Bucur
- **Holocaust and the Second World War*** – Diana Dumitru and Grant Harward
- **Interwar History** – Anca Cretu
- **Literature** – Marina Cap-Bun
- **Pre-1918 History*** – Constantin Ardeleanu and Andrei Cușco
- **Sociology*** – Marius Wamsiedel and Petru Negură
- **State Socialism** – Dragos Petrescu

* Groups with a star are jointly run by the SRS and Plural.

** This group is jointly run by the SRS and Indiana University Bloomington.

Call for Nominations: SRS Board

The Society for Romanian Studies seeks **nominations for four regular members of the Executive Board and two graduate students to serve on the Board**, elected by the SRS membership. The Nominating Committee strives to promote balanced representation in regard to age, gender, professional background, locations of residence, and geographical and disciplinary areas of specialization, but is not bound by any particular formula.

Qualifications include being a member in good standing of the Society and being actively engaged in the field of Romanian Studies. The open positions and a brief description of duties are as follows:

Executive Board Members: Board members are responsible for the administration of SRS affairs. Duties include active participation in Board discussions via email; advising officers on diverse matters involving the Society; serving on committees; and promoting the Society among their academic networks. Whenever possible Board members should attend national and international conferences so as to engage in face-to-face meetings with the officers, other Board members, and SRS members at large. Term: January 2022 - December 2025

Graduate Students on the SRS Board are responsible for the administration of SRS affairs (together with other Board members). Their duties include active participation in Board discussions via email, advising officers on diverse matters involving the Society, especially as these affect junior scholars; serving on sub-committees; and promoting the Society and its activities among M.A. and Ph.D. candidates. Term: January 2022 - December 2023

Please send nominations or self-nominations to the chair of the Nominating Committee, Mihaela Serban (mserban@ramapo.edu), by January 10, 2022.

SELECTION PROCESS

SRS selects Board members through an electronic ballot of all members in good standing. Open balloting will take place from January 15 - 25, 2022 and the results will be announced no later than January 30, 2022.

2022 SRS Conference

Borders and Transfers

June 15-17, 2022

Society for Romanian Studies

hosted by Universitatea de Vest din Timișoara

The Banat is “a reality, and at the same time a myth, situated at the place where borders meet.” Adriana Babeți (2007)

Adriana Babeți, “Le Banat: Un paradis aux confins,” in Adriana Babeți and Cécile Kovacshazy eds., *Le Banat: Un Eldorado aux confins* (Paris: Centre Interdisciplinaire de Recherches Centre-Européennes, Université Paris IV Sorbonne, 2007), 27.

The Society for Romanian Studies invites you to Timișoara in June 2022, where the soup is sweet and it is bad luck to serve chicken on New Year’s Day. Timișoara, and the Banat more generally, has been shaped by the borders of empires and nation-states, by ethnic, religious, cultural, and economic transfers, and by the cultures flowing along the Mureș, Danube, and Tisza rivers. A melting-pot whose local realities reflect transnational influences, Timișoara is an ideal place for us to reflect on how borders and transfers – both real and imagined – shape the culture and society of the diverse peoples connected to Romania and Moldova. Raising and crossing borders is becoming more contentious than ever, and new boundaries are being thrown up around and within communities, both in the region and in its diaspora, yet the transfer of goods and information continues at an unprecedented rate.

Keynote speakers:

Maria Bucur (Indiana University, Bloomington)

Adriana Babeți (Universitatea de Vest, Timișoara)

The official language of the conference is English, but papers, panels, roundtables, and discussions may also be delivered in Romanian. Each panel or roundtable will have only one language (English or Romanian), which will be printed on the official program. At present we are planning to hold the conference face to face, with no hybrid option. If the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic makes this unfeasible we will communicate alternatives as soon as possible.

Conference registration fees:

- \$100 (USD) for scholars from Western Europe, North America, and Australia.
- \$35 (USD) for scholars from Eastern Europe.
- \$20 (USD) for life members and individuals who have already taken out three-year memberships.

All conference registration fees include an Individual Membership to the SRS for 2022 and an electronic subscription to the Journal of Romanian Studies for 2022.

Fee waivers are available for students thanks to generous sponsorship from the [PLURAL Forum for Interdisciplinary Studies](#), Moldova. Please contact the conference organizers for details.

Obituary: Sorin Iftimi (1965-2021)

Writing about the historian Sorin Iftimi in the past tense, assessing his overall activity, is a most unwanted and premature act. At the age of 56, he reached full academic maturity. He managed to share his expertise in museography, heraldry, genealogy, art history, art and architecture monuments and, most of all, in the field to which he was most attached – offered a fresh look on the past of Iași through method and research.

Several paths led to his interest in the history of the city. The first had a sentimental nature: he felt a sense of belonging to it. Though he was born in a village in Botoșani County, Iftimi lived his childhood in Iași; it is here that he was educated, eventually graduating from the Faculty of History at “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University. The second path comprised his undergraduate years when Professor Ioan Caproșu – whose name is also associated with the city’s history – noticed him and agreed to oversee his thesis titled “The Iași Region in the Middle Ages.” The third path was his professional development as a museographer at the History Museum within the National Museum Complex “Moldova” Iași and certification as a movable cultural heritage expert.



As he acquired research skills throughout his career, he extended his areas of interest permanently. He began with administrative history studies, to which he added aulic history research, culminating a doctoral thesis defended in 2006 and published in 2015 as “Queens and Princesses in the History of Romanians. The Queen’s Court in Moldavia and Wallachia.” Simultaneously, as he approached the study of power institutions and manifestations, he fostered insight into fields such as genealogy, heraldry and sigillography. He ultimately became an expert in these fields as a member and a founding member of specialised commissions in Romania and the Republic of Moldova and a member of editorial committees for publications in the fields of genealogy and heraldry. He published his most relevant research in the areas mentioned above in *Arhiva Genealogică* and other specialised periodicals. The most representative of these were included in the volume *Iașii – simbolurile unui oraș simbol* [Iași – the Symbols of a Symbol-City] and *Vechile blazoane vorbesc. Obiecte armoriata din colecții ieșene* [The Old Coat of Arms Tell a Story: Armorial Items in Iași Collections].

Iftimi was also interested in Church history, especially ecclesiastical architecture monuments in Iași. He published *Cercetări privitoare la istoria bisericilor ieșene. Monumente, ctitori, mentalități* [Research on the History of Churches in Iași: Monuments, Founders, Mentalities] in 2008.

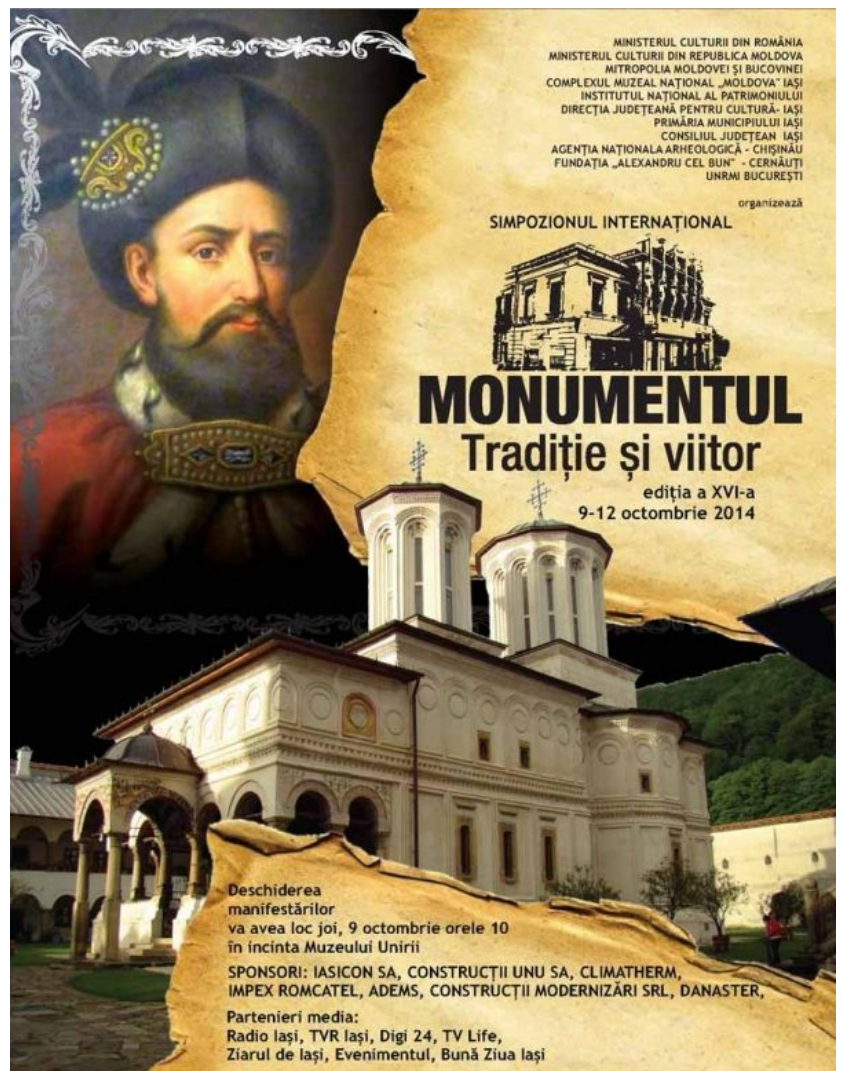
Obituary: Sorin Iftimi (1965-2021)

In close connection with the city's history, he also took an interest in art history, especially city representations: depictions of its people and buildings in drawings, engravings and paintings. He produced studies of painters such as Giovanni Schiavoni, Nicolo Livaditi, Anton Kauffman, Ioan Balomir and analyzed portraits of personalities such as the Serbian prince Miloš Obrenović, Smaranda Manu, Prince Alexandru Moruzi, Natalia Suțu-Mavrocordat (most of them within the pinacotheca of the Art Museum in Iași). Evincing his passion for inventorying the city images, the volume *Orașul Iași în imagini Vechi* [*Iași in Old Images*], a bilingual album in Romanian and English, was published in 2020. In the category of old images, cartographic in this case, one may also note his interest in the old city plans. In such work, he identified and interpreted panoramic, artistic, and cartographic images, studying the past of the city meticulously (step by step, place by place, building by building).

Hence, he penned numerous studies, many of them published in the volume series titled *Monumentul - Tradiție și viitor* [*Monuments – Tradition and Future*]. The volume surveys ecclesiastical and civilian architecture monuments (from princely palaces, boyar houses, inns and merchant stores to the public squares of the city and the public forum monuments that they furnish). Wishing to disseminate his investigations into the personalities, monuments, and representative places of the city, he authored and co-authored several albums, also had an active presence in the national and local audio-visual media.

Upon a retrospective outlook on his activity, it is worth stating that Iftimi became synonymous with the encyclopaedia of the city's history, which he recounted animatedly on every occasion. The acknowledgement of the value acquired through work and passion by both history experts and others interested in the field made him a coveted presence in the pages of scientific publications (general and specialised), on editorial boards, and in radio and television. In all these fields, he was very active; he accepted all requests generously, and took everyone on an exciting journey through the city of Iași.

Unexpectedly and unbearably for all who knew, read, and heard him, there is now only silence where there would have been so much more to say.



Marius Chelcu, Scientific Researcher II, "A. D. Xenopol" History Institute,
Romanian Academy - Iași Branch

Obituary: Christina Zarifopol-Illias (1944-2021)

Christina Zarifopol-Illias was the heart and soul of Romanian language studies at Indiana University for almost three decades. She arrived here in 1980 and in 1994 received a PhD in Classical Studies from IU. Author of several works in the fields of Classical Studies and Romanian Studies, she served as an Associate Professor of Classical Studies and Romanian Language until her retirement from active teaching in 2019 due to health complications from a serious spinal cord injury.

Professor Zarifopol-Illias was appointed at a time when interest in Eastern Europe was growing in the United States, and travel became easier to places like Romania as a site for research and learning about that part of the world. She offered generations of undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to learn the language and at the same time become immersed in the cultural specificities of Romania. Her courses were as much a political and literary salon, especially for students in the more advanced classes, as they were an opportunity to understand and master Romanian grammar, vocabulary, and syntax.



Her students have ranged from linguistics to political science, anthropology, and history. Many of them came to IU initially during the summer, as students in the IU summer language program. They hailed from Georgetown, University of Illinois, Harvard, Oberlin, and many other public and private universities in the U.S. Some returned for more language training or to pursue graduate studies here. Professor Zarifopol-Illias played an essential role in shaping their academic path. Starting in the early 2000s, Professor Zarifopol-Illias took a leading role in developing a Romanian Studies fellowship at Indiana University, as a means to further advance the school's appeal for exceptional graduate students. After several years of negotiation with the Romanian government, the fellowship was approved and four recipients of this fellowship completed either an MA or a PhD with a focus on Romanian studies.



With David Ransel, Director of the Russian and East European Institute, IU, Emil Constantinescu, President of Romania, and Maria Bucur, Professor of History, IU

On campus, she was active in inviting prominent scholars, politicians, and cultural figures from Romania, opening wonderful networking opportunities for our students in their professional development. Emil Constantinescu was a guest at the invitation of Professor Zarifopol-Illias just days before announcing his candidacy for President, which he subsequently won.

Her service to making Indiana University better known in Romania through her actions is equally notable. She will be greatly missed by all who had the chance to experience her generous spirit and erudition.

In 2000, Professor Zarifopol-Illias helped bring to light an impressive collection of letters between the most prominent poet of Romania, Mihai Eminescu, and his best-known love interest, Veronica Micle. The volume *Dulcea mea Doamnă/Eminul meu iubit* brought great accolades to Professor Zarifopol-Illias and much deserved visibility in every type of mass media in Romania. For her efforts to support Romanian culture, she was awarded the Romanian National Order "Faithful Service" the same year.

Maria Bucur, John W. Hill Professor of History and Gender Studies, Indiana University

Graduate Student Essay Prize

The Thirteenth Annual Graduate Student Essay Prize of 2021 is awarded to Alexandra Ciocănel, a doctoral candidate in social anthropology at the University of Manchester with the dissertation “Making Futures through Assets: Navigating Housing Market’s Timescapes in Bucharest.” Alexandra’s winning essay, „Making Markets,” traces the making of the residential real estate and mortgage markets in postsocialist Romania focusing on the privatization of the state-owned housing sector during the 1990s, the expansion of the mortgage market with the privatization of and Romania’s accession into the European Union during the early 2000s, and the reorganization of the real estate market involving both tighter regulations and state-guaranteed mortgages after the financial crisis of 2008. Given the growing importance of housing’s exchange value in contrast with both its use-value and financial value, the paper suggests assetization as a better conceptual frame than that of financialization that is pervasive in the recent social analyses of real estate markets.

The Committee concluded that Alexandra’s essay is topical, well-informed, and maintains a good critical outlook on both the social processes analyzed and the theories invoked. Alexandra demonstrates a good command of the existing literature, familiarity with the economic and political history of the period and a good capacity to theorize based on empirical research. She unveils one of the most pervasive processes playing into the formation of the middle class in postsocialist Romania. Alexandra’s dissertation shows the promise of high intellectual achievement and genuine critical thinking and is the deserving winner of this year’s competition.

The committee awarded an **Honorable Mention** to Iemima Ploscariu who got her PhD in history in 2021 from Dublin City University with the dissertation *A Dappled People: Jewish, Roma, and Romanian Evangelicals Challenging Nationalism in Interwar Romania*. Iemima’s essay, “Motley Repertoires and the Performative Power of Music,” is a thoroughly researched and wonderfully written historical account of the role of church music in the articulation of evangelical communities in interwar Romania. Informative, engaging and very pleasant to read, the essay teaches the reader about the overlapping religious, ethnic and gender identities and the circulation of music and believers across social domains during a period when Romanian authorities emphasized the national dimension of identity.

Alexandra Ciocănel is profiled on the next page. Iemima Ploscariu’s recently completed dissertation is featured on page 4.

SRS Graduate Student Essay Prize Committee:

Corina Doboş

The Research Institute of the University of Bucharest (ICUB)

Simona Livescu

Academic Advancement Program, University of California, Los Angeles

Narcis Tulbure (chair)

Department of Finance, Bucharest University of Economic Studies

Graduate Student Essay Prize

Alexandra Ciocănel, winner of the **Thirteenth Annual Graduate Student Essay Prize**, is a PhD Candidate in Social Anthropology at the University of Manchester and a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Bucharest.

Her research projects have been focused on time and temporal agency, examining various sociocultural processes through which time acts as a medium for experiences and practices and as a social construction and means of orientation. She is particularly interested in understanding how different future orientations shape present-day decision-making processes and various forms of social action.

Her current PhD project examines temporal agency in the context of assetization of housing. Based on one-year ethnographic research in Bucharest, Romania, the thesis explores how temporal agency is constructed in processes of house-buying, mortgage application and living with a mortgage and how this might take different shapes when considering intra-middle-class differences. By looking at the temporal conceptions, temporal investments, and future orientations involved in such processes, the thesis points to a reconfiguration of homeownership as being primarily an asset with the effect of reshaping class positions and social reproduction. Currently, Alexandra is also part of the project research team for SKEPSIS - The manufacture of doubt on vaccination and climate change. A comparative study of legitimacy tactics in two science-sceptical discourses (University of Bucharest). By taking a cross-national approach, her contribution looks at various forms of climate change scepticism and examines their discursive structure and rhetorical persuasiveness in terms of argumentative time-work. Her academic trajectory includes a PhD in Sociology (University of Bucharest, 2019), a MA in Anthropology and Development (University of Bucharest, 2015), a BA in Sociology and Anthropology (University of Bucharest, 2013).



Alexandra Ciocănel

“Making Futures through Assets: Navigating Housing Market’s Timescapes in Bucharest”

Abstract: For several decades, housing price inflation has become the backbone of a new logic of inequality in many large urban centres which is shaped by owning assets that appreciate at a faster rate rather than wages. Asset ownership is not only a phenomenon of the 1%, but also a determinant of class positions and life chances, reshaping the middle class through a growing importance of intergenerational transfers and in-vivo inheritance and of access to credit. Drawing on an ethnographic study on homeownership and mortgages, this thesis explores how this phenomenon unfolds in Bucharest, the capital city of the EU country with the highest rate of outright homeownership. I examine how middle-class members navigate between different future horizons through their house choices and reasonings, pointing to how temporal agency is constructed along processes such as home-buying, mortgage application, and living with a mortgage. I argue that temporal agency is exercised through strategies that involve navigating between different future horizons, various forms of synchronizations, and conjectures on future value in order to secure a “better future”, playing with a complex legal and bureaucratic infrastructure that opens its opaqueness only in moment of crisis. I propose the notion of liquid homeownership to draw attention to the reconfiguration of property in restructuring class positions and social reproduction. This happens not necessarily through owning the object per se but through its possible convertibility in an indeterminate future into money that can assure the fulfilment of various life projects.

Book Prize

Roxana-Talida Roman received the **Sixth Biennial SRS Book Prize** for her book *The Edge of Europe – Heritage, Landscape and Conflict Archaeology: First World War Material Culture in Romanian Conflictual Landscapes* (Bar Publishing, 2020)

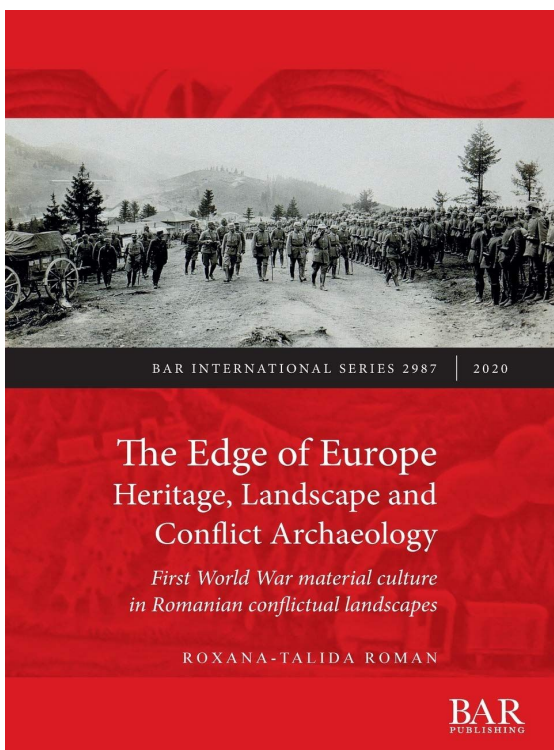
You hold a PhD in Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology from the University of Birmingham and specialize in history, conflict archaeology, heritage and material culture and work as a counsellor at the Public and International Relations Bureau of the County Council of Maramureş. Please tell us a bit about yourself and your professional background.

I chose the public sector because this institution and position functions as a link between citizens, state, various institutions/organizations, and academia at both the national and international level and therein allows me to build bridges between otherwise mostly disconnected entities and make things happen in fields that are still problematic at national level in Romania. As a public servant my job is to serve the masses and to pursue the greater good for the people. I am trying to achieve this by working to convince institutions to change their perspectives and adopt new approaches to engaging with citizens. I am especially passionate about making scientific research accessible to the general public, as research is meant to foster evolution and progress, which can only be achieved by implementing and promoting it – and that is what scientific research is supposed to be, but it remains a futile investment if we don't learn to overcome its niche tendency and render it socially applicable. We need to start asking about the social utility of such things, otherwise we risk wasting resources on vain ambitions.



Roxana-Talida Roman

Your book, *The Edge of Europe*, was recently awarded the 2021 SRS Book Prize. Congratulations! How did you come to focus on the First World War, material culture, and sites of remembrance?



For a number of reasons, Romanian war sites have been neglected so far both by researchers and public authorities charged with the preservation of heritage. The centenary of the Great War brought about the question of approaching sites of conflict as potential heritage objects, especially in countries, such as Romania, that were born in the context of WWI. Sites of conflict reveal stories of international relations, societies, cultures, mentalities, traditions, institutions and people against the background of the land, all of which come together, intersect, and inhabit the same space.

Work conducted so far on both the Eastern Front and secondary fronts fails to capture the heritage and remembrance dimension of war sites. The historical circumstances of the Galician Front nations negatively impacted the research capacities of the Eastern European states. At international level, there seems to be a significant difference between the low visibility of the Eastern Front compared to the prominence of the Western Front. While large-scale works have been conducted for the Western Front, in terms of memory and memorialisation, we lack similar knowledge of the Eastern Front.

Book Prize

The centenary of the end of the Great War underscored the necessity of approaching WWI remains, and their adjacent war sites, as potential heritage objects. My work, which was conceived as a pilot project for the heritage management of the WWI remains on the Eastern Front (acknowledging both historic peculiarities and the contemporary political similarities between the countries of the region), is designed to contribute to the work of the authorities with the legal responsibility of preserving or dismantling these sites. Therefore, the focus of my work derived from the need to fill a gap in our overall knowledge of the war and its adjacent fields.

What can you tell us about the research you did for this book project? What archives and collections did you consult? What advantages or challenges face a historian interested in material culture and/or physical space?

The need to understand the memorial-symbolic value of the war sites necessitated a rigorous exploration of the socio-political background of WWI in Romania. In order to capture the symbolic value of the war sites the work had to engage not just with military history, the documentation of the war effort and the main political documents produced at the time of the 1918 Great Union but with the study and analysis of ethnographic collections including songs, the national anthem, poetry and literature. My work explored the intangible dimensions of the war remains, which constitute a fundamental component of heritage value. I analyzed historical documents and narratives to understand the contemporaneous meanings of the Great War in the Romanian context, which have continued to be held over the past hundred years.



WWI Austro-Hungarian badge depicting the heights of Prislop, the WWI military railway, and the train defying all odds travels across the rough mountain terrain with high declivities and curves

A preliminary mapping of the sites was made using historic maps, topographic elevation maps, and aerial photography. The data was processed with the aid of GIS software with the purpose of recomposing the front-line landscape within the research area. Datasets created through archival research allowed the exact location of some of the features of the front-line area to be traced and enabled the generation of a map that was used during the field survey. Front line photographic collections pertaining to the research area were traced and selected from international archives and private collections. Analysis of old historic photographs illuminated prominent landscape features that were used as waypoints in the field surveys. Insights gained, with the aid of these sources, into aspects of the front line, such as logistics and environment, also enabled comparison of the data against information from the written sources, in order to test its veracity. Beyond the typical archival research necessary for any work dealing with the study of the past, I also consulted ethnographic collections of WWI songs, poetry and literature to capture the spirit of the researched time frame. The resulting data was mapped on the ground and an extensive GIS database was built which led to the construction of the first gazetteer of East European material culture of war from a heritage perspective. The absence of a catalogue of Romanian war sites meant I needed to create a gazetteer before conducting any further work, since consideration of the places of war in a heritage perspective is dependent upon the existence of a database containing information about the material remains.

Book Prize

The work was thus iterative, starting with the historical context and then moving to identification of the material remains that represent historical accounts on the ground. The resultant gazetteer, besides documenting and characterising war materials, incorporates the national, regional and international layers of memorial-symbolic significance of the registered remains.

The novelty of my work consisted also in integrating documentary sources with material culture of war and therefore implying extensive campaigns of field work meant to document the war sites. The study of material culture is a very complex field which travels across a plurality of disciplines, which have multiple layers, angles, actors and consequently is quite a handful for any researcher. Nevertheless, this sort of work is vital for the study of the world wars, as it allows the emergence of historic plurality and hence the reintegration of the war accounts, which fosters a better understanding of phenomena as complex as the world wars.

You argue for the significance of what you call ‘conflictual landscapes.’ What do you mean by this? What role does material culture play in creating or shaping ‘conflictual landscapes’? How does material culture help us understand the history of violent conflict in twentieth century Europe?

The concept of conflictual landscape denotes a land that has been influenced throughout time by conflict, and visibly shaped by it; a land that has been historically disputed and contested due to its position or geography and which, as a result of that historical conflictual state, was mutilated during the world wars, produced a reinvented landscape. The world wars’ projection of violence onto the land, the traces of which (trench systems, bomb craters, bunkers, etc.) over time became markers of those wars, created a conflictual landscape that not only preserved the traces of a very particular kind of war in a unique spatial context, but also highlighted how the land itself was the agent of conflict and the object of rivalry that fueled the war.

Conflictual landscapes are landscapes inhabited/made up by material culture of war. They hold the potential to highlight the morphology of the war architecture and the management of space during conflict, building up

particularly rare cases that, up to the moment, remain unapproached on any large scale. An individual approach to war remains, such as isolating various features of the war sites and treating them separately, can convey specific aspects of war such as bunkers, common graves, military cemeteries, etc, but will never reveal all the knowledge and symbolism that integral conflictual landscapes hold.



Soldiers of Prislop near the railway on the high curves near Prislop Pass train station during WWI.

Book Prize

Hence, where material culture is still available on the surface of the ground, war sites should be approached at the landscape level because it is within this dimension that all the other dimensions come together, allowing the emergence of more meaningful war accounts. The great diversity of war remains indicate categories of war heritage that are still unexplored. So little is known about what the war sites could reveal, justifying preservation of the war sites at landscape level. Conflictual landscapes hold a great deal of significance at local, regional, national or international level by anchoring an entire archive of war phenomenology that concurrently shelters the actions, goals, mentalities, the dreams and dramas of individuals, institutions, nations and supranational alliances. The war sites simultaneously encapsulate the human dimension of the war, the technological breakthroughs and innovations, the war typology and military specificity, the historical military and political personalities relegated to the place, the fall of the great empires, the reconfiguration of international balances of power, the fight for freedom of Eastern European nations, the international affirmation of the principles of nationality and self-determination and hence the roots of a new international mentality and world order.

That, in the aftermath of WWI, nationalistic master narratives limited war commemoration to the realm of the state and thereby prioritized remembrance by means of large-scale memorials is widely known. It is also known that, in time, this practice translated into ostracisation of other memorial forms and remembrance categories, leaving no space for the consideration of actual war sites as holding potential monumental value. Nonetheless, genuine WWI sites, that is, those not created to serve national reconstruction needs and propaganda purposes but generated by the war and during the war for various practical needs and functions, elude the representation issues posed by standard war memorials. The war sites provide an authentic war memorial category which does not celebrate militarism but stands as a memento of what occurred, comprising an entire archive of material culture and memory and thus holding universal scientific value beyond the latent memorial–symbolic value.

What makes this a Romanian story? To what extent are the themes and conclusions of your book applicable to other settings in Europe?

It is a Romanian story because it is about sites of conflict that are physically located in Romania and because this war has a strong resonance in Romanian national history, but it has first and foremost global implications because it narrates the roots of the world we live in, of our global reality.

Of course, my research has more direct connections and exerts more implications for the Eastern Front, but then again dividing the Great War into a Western Front/Eastern Front narrative distorts the war phenomenon.

So yes, the themes and conclusions of my book are definitely applicable in Europe and beyond. They are also applicable to secondary fronts and are not limited to the places where the battles actually occurred. My research offers evidence of the many dimensions and layers of significance which hold importance to several categories of actors at several levels and which, if approached holistically, inform a broader understanding not just of the war phenomenon but also of the contemporary European identity.

“The war sites are authentic forms of expression of all dimensions of the war that generated them. They hold great importance for understanding the war phenomenon, its causes, and its implications. They constitute earth documents and live testimonials, unaltered by human propagandistic intentions or the needs of social reconstruction, and reflect the condition of a given territory at a given time and its interconnections with other places against the background of a conflictual state.”

Book Prize

Furthermore, my research highlights how the inclusion of WWI sites in the World Heritage List would aid understanding of other World Heritage properties such as the Wooden Churches of Maramureş. WWI sites can also be approached as markers of historically contentious territories, clearly one of the causes of the war, complementing the understanding of other forms of heritage in their proximity and of course of the local identity that was frequently developed in reaction to conflict as means of coping with distress.

Metaphorically speaking, my work, dedicated to unravelling these legacies in a heritage perspective, could be extended and applied to other categories of heritage in an attempt to provide space for expression to a plurality of unheard voices from the past. Hence, my work not only assessed the significance of Romanian WWI sites as places of remembrance and heritage giving voice to yet untold stories of the Great War, but also channelled other submerged forms of heritage to a potential point where they could speak out loud to those willing to listen. This opens the door to a whole new line of research.

What possibilities do you see for further research in the relationship between material culture and memory or heritage, whether in Romania or more generally? What do you see as promising avenues for future projects in this field?

In my opinion, heritage is memory and material culture combined, and in the specific case of war sites or conflictual landscapes, heritage is history encapsulated in land and mind, a snapshot of the past projected by the material culture and displayed by memory. Thus, this research was ideated as a long time project that is to be approached in gradual stages. On the one hand, it aimed to create a pilot project that could be applied in countries facing similar difficulties in managing their war heritage and on the other it aim to build a network of

war sites/conflictual landscapes at least at the European level, and for the submission of a proposal to UNESCO. The research has implications for the recognition of the war sites with World Heritage status, by providing evidence of their heritage worth in accordance with the World Heritage List standards and procedures. The war sites have international significance as WWI was a global event that influenced the course of history by posing an end to a world order and setting the foundations of another.



WWI photo depicting the heavy shell canon of Carlibaba, near Prislop Pass

Although WWI turned out not to be the war to end all wars, it did certainly redefine warfare, ended one age of human history and introduced another ruled by different laws and beliefs, both in peace and war. By reshaping the international balances of power, the Great War crafted the foundations of the world we live in, providing the conditions for the manifestation of heritage as a global concern. The framework of the international heritage conventions stands as proof, as many such conventions were adopted in reaction to the utter violence and destruction of the new forms of conflict that stemmed from the total war.

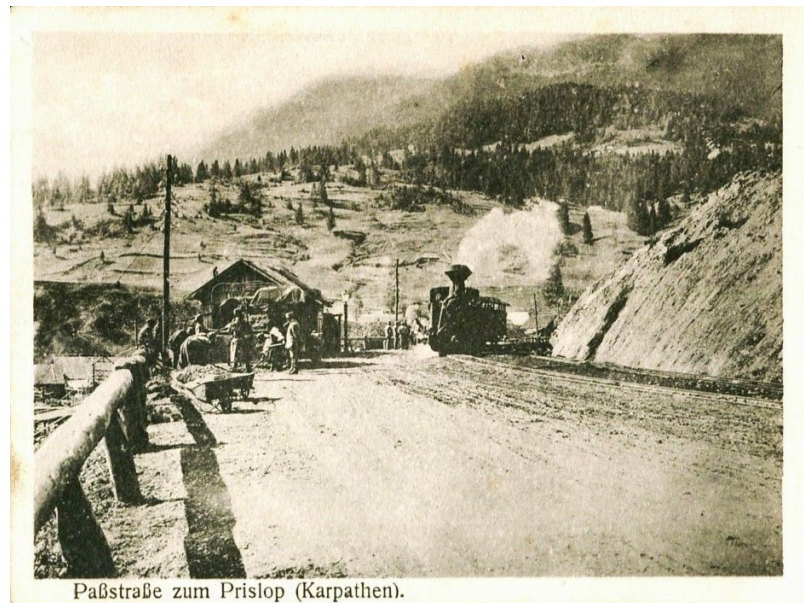
Book Prize

What makes this war unique is that, in addition to being the first global conflict, WWI brought to conclusion a previously matured historical process triggering the formation of our world. Hence it is widely relevant, because it was not significant for merely one or two states, although the level of significance might vary from one place to another, but it holds global significance due to the collateral implications it exerted even on states and cultures that were not directly involved in the conflict. It follows that all these aspects entitle the material culture of WWI to the title of World Heritage status in line with its overall complex significance and this opens a window to the need of furtherly perusing this work at international level.

At stake is not just the proper understanding of the Great War but also the global need to understand where we come from in order to understand our culture and the price that the world payed for freedom, human rights and all other great things that we are so accustomed to and which we tend to take for granted. I strongly believe that in order to cherish peace new generations have to learn about the implications of war, about that social dimension of history which unfortunately is so rarely taught, about the extensive human costs of conflicts and hence about the respect for diversity which emerges from being informed, as knowing is understanding! The world heritage status would make it accessible to the general public worldwide.

What are you working on now?

At the moment I am implementing the first part of my project and actively engaging to get Prislop Pass conflictual landscape recognized as heritage at national level and hence receive legal protection and therefore set the background for its preservation. There are lots of legal aspects/procedures that must be done and the preparation of the file is challenging as it is the first case to be approached nationally. There are lots of systemic rigidities and incoherencies that must be overcome, but I believe it to be at a promising stage. Once this stage is concluded, I plan on building a network of international partnerships to support the second stage of this project, which as I mentioned previously comprises a joint UNESCO submission.



Train arriving in Prislop Pass station, 1917

I like to call this stage the historical emancipation project, because it is meant to allow the manifestation of unrestrained, plural, integrated history and provide a space of expression for the historically silenced voices. As I write in the acknowledgements of my book, this work is also a tribute to all those who died for the ideal of a better world and to whom we owe the privilege of freedom, the liberty of an untamed mind, and the blessing of free will.

What emerges from the work I conducted so far is that the inclusion of WWI sites in the World Heritage List would assure a reasonable representation of the complexity of the war and allow its proper understanding by providing a mosaic of cultural traditions, national interpretations and historical accounts. In doing so it would reflect the global dimension of the war, avoid the international proliferation of unequal war accounts, prevent mutilation of the overall significance of the war phenomenon by means of over-representation of certain fronts and under-representation of others, and avert the alienation of the intimate interconnections between the fronts.

Book Prize

Moreover, it is only recently, as a consequence of the new international ethos that the world has rejected war as a primary tool of international relations. Wars, especially wars-of-conquest, were the norm throughout historic times and only having witnessed the price of the new wars persuaded humanity's most belligerent nations to convert to pacifism. Denying the universal heritage value of war sites on account of their supposedly promoting militarism not only contradicts the legal prescriptions of World Heritage but also deprives humanity of reiterating a fundamental page of its recent history that should never be forgotten, especially as memory becomes an historical domain.

Furthermore, although it is widely accepted that architecture mirrors its emanation source, the study of WWI architecture as footprint of the generative society had not been approached scientifically, leaving unexplored an entire archive of meanings embedded in buildings and earthworks that narrate a story about the actions, goals, dreams and dramas of the war actors. The architectural structures produced by the industrialised war form an architectural style representative of a highly peculiar age of human history, in addition to encapsulating warfare knowledge and remembrance value, that constitutes a yet to be filled gap in our knowledge.

History is always plural, therefore when dealing with war remains, memory, conflictual landscapes or simply world wars studies there is always an ineluctable need for pluri-perspectivism. This necessitates that we collaborate internationally.

The relevance of this project emerges from the fact that with the passing of time the conversion of social memory into cultural memory brought about new memorialization needs for new generations. Against the background of the international recognition of human rights, a plurality of voices historically silenced demand to be heard. Hence the official recognition of the heritage value of the material culture of war also confers space of expression to the unheard voices of the past. It infers that, for the moment, it is up to scholars and responsible heritage professionals to deal with the issue of war sites as places of remembrance and heritage, fill the existing gaps and hence tend to the arising social needs.



10th Bavarian Division on the Prislop Pass, 1916.

Soundbite from Romania

“Clanul Marelui Alb” and the Romanian Orthodox Church’s Wealth

Since 1989, scores of studies have focused on the majority Orthodox Church in Romania without being able to explain how that denomination accumulates or uses its enormous assets. To understand the mechanism through which the Church accessed public funds for the construction and repair of its many worship places, including the monumental Cathedral of National Salvation, journalist Victor Ilie conducted an eight-month long investigation. A movie based on the information he unearthed, titled “Clanul Marelui Alb,” was released on October 12, 2021. The movie was viewed over three million times within ten days after its release, attesting to the enormous public interest in the matter.



Lavinia Stan
Department of Political Science
St. Francis Xavier University

In an interview, Ilie said he was interested not in the Orthodox Church but in its use of public funds with impunity and without accountability. Despite initial willingness to disclose the amount of donations collected for the new cathedral, viewed as the Church’s most important modern project, the church hierarchy has refused to disclose the Church’s finances, the subsidies received from the government, or the ways the money is spent. Anticipating resistance from Church leaders, Ilie assumed a false identity to infiltrate the tight-knit group of church leaders, state officials and private businessmen who, behind closed doors, facilitate the transfer of funds from state coffers to the Orthodox Church and then to private pockets.

For the cathedral, the government awarded 11 hectares of land in downtown Bucharest, valued at 180 million euros. Since 2010, it has offered the project another 120 million Euros which the Church spent, without transparency, on contracts awarded to well-connected individuals, including politician and marble magnate Adrian Videanu. Since Daniel Ciobotea became its Patriarch, the Orthodox Church has increased its assets 80 times, to a total of 820 million Lei (that is, 165 million Euros), coopting politicians who have championed legislation advantageous to the majority religion in exchange for votes and popularity with the faithful. The cathedral is just one among many assets the Church manages with considerable business acumen.

The investigation claims that a pyramid of greed, clientelism and silence tightly run by Patriarch Daniel helps the Church access state funds. A handful of Church leaders work with and report directly to the Patriarch, and interact with politicians, party leaders and public officials well-disposed toward the Church. The lowest level of the pyramid includes businessmen whose companies gain the tenders for the construction and repair of Church property without much competition and at highly inflated prices. Church leaders pass project proposals and expressions of interest from businessmen directly to Patriarch Daniel, known informally as Marele Alb (“the Great White” - a nickname alluding to the Patriarch’s white religious clothing.)

Once the Patriarch gives his blessing, a company joins the handful of preferred businesses that can exclusively dip into the state subsidies received by the Church and work at the cathedral and other Church buildings. Building, repair, and maintenance tenders are published in *Lumina*, the official Orthodox Church bulletin. Their publication formally fulfills the need to allow any interested company to bid, while the fact that *Lumina* is distributed solely to parish priests guarantees that only hand-picked companies know of the tender. This way, the selected company becomes the only bidder, ensuring its success in a race without competitors. The whole selection process has a predetermined outcome, but formally the Church and the companies can claim they fulfill the law. For smaller parishes, the construction company writes subsidy requests in the name of the Church and submits them directly to the local government.

Soundbite from Romania

The movie convincingly illuminates the iron triangle of Church figures, public officials and private company owners involved in the money transfer. This arrangement is shocking because of the preferential treatment Church leaders receive from obedient politicians and public officials and give to well-connected private businessmen. The process lacks transparency, as tenders are treated as private matters of no public concern. Instead of accountability, checks and balances, and ways to ensure that public funds are used efficiently, the pyramid prioritizes clients and patrons who get a cut for their services. The Orthodox Church fulfills its construction ambitions without having to use its money or fundraise further. The public officials ally themselves with a powerful social actor that can make or break political careers. The businesses have guaranteed contracts at inflated prices. The losers of this whole process are the taxpayers, whose contributions are lavishly wasted at a time when the health care system faces the coronavirus crisis.

This is not the first time that chronic waste of public funds and political clientelism come to the attention of the public. But it is the first time that investigative journalists have convincingly connected them to the Orthodox Church, which for years has been criticized for its lavish spending and unwillingness to account for state subsidies. With the exception of some clumsy denials, the Church has again chosen to remain silent as though to suggest that its relationship with the faithful, especially those who would like it to align to more democratic and transparent practices, is less important than its pharaonic building ambitions.

View the film [here](#).



Soundbite from Romania

Romania Between Two Public Health Regimes: Vaccine Skepticism and Some Modest Hope

In 2016-2018, before COVID-19, Romania experienced a measles outbreak, with cases concentrated in the western part of the country. The measles vaccine was introduced in 1979. In 2015, due to a lack of trained medical personnel, the vaccine delivery was transferred to health centers, rather than schools. Almost 18,000 people, mostly unvaccinated small children, were infected and 59 died. In order to maintain an efficient coverage against measles, a vaccination rate of at least 95% must be achieved. During the 2016-2018 epidemic, the coverage was between 29.7 and 53.1% (Dascalu, 2019; Habersaat and al. 2020).

After WWII, an international model for the governance of public health emerged. It was centered on the role of the nation state in the politics of eradication and compliance with the protocols and policies of the World Health Organization. All this changed quite radically in the 1980s, when a new regime of control was put into place. Jean-Paul Gaudillière calls this “global health governance” (2014). The contemporary global health regime is based on sets of standardizations and regulations that have been modelled on market-based regulations. Public-private partnerships, and health risk calculations became central components. Diseases were transformed by a massive increase in the usage of instruments of medical and economic evaluation, by the introduction of an audit culture (Strathern 2000), and the generalization of the paradigms of risk and risk assessment. Chemical-therapeutic interventions were preferred to large scale investments in comprehensive state-based health care systems, and global, standardized drug trials research and business have been increasingly both replacing and using the resources created by preexisting large-scale medical systems. (Petryna, 2009; Koch, 2006).

The COVID-19 pandemic inherited two different health governance regimes, and two forms of social, medical and epidemiological thinking and intervening. The “international governance model,” based on regularly occurring events that can be calculated via probabilities (built on known historical patterns) and managed through statistical distribution, works mostly for the non-infectious causes of illness and death in the “modern” world: cardiovascular diseases and cancer. The second global health regime is based on the model of “preparedness” and takes into account new epidemic waves (HIV, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, avian and swine flu). It points to unprecedented events and zoonotic diseases that cross the border between non-human animal and human lives, whose consequences are to be managed through methods of imaginative enactment, enabling planners to mitigate vulnerabilities. (Lakoff, 2017; Lakoff and Collier, 2008).



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Darie Cristea

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Soundbite from Romania

The post-socialist¹ areas – such as Romania – remained marginal to the creation of the new global health system both as sources of expertise, and as special, usually post-colonial, experimental areas.² Resources and competences connected with the socialist system became obsolete after 1990. The growth in social insecurity and poverty, combined with the partial disaggregation of the state-based medical system, transformed Romania into a producer of diseased bodies and patients, and much less a producer of experts and expert systems. This rupture, we argue, is a main component of the distrust plaguing the governmental COVID-19 vaccination efforts. The ambiguous landscape of public health, punctuated by a recent streak of fires in hospitals, created new thresholds for negotiating not only the borders of the biological and the social (Koch, 2013) but also the trust in public institutions and the transparency of the acts of governing (Dunn, 2008).

After the 2016 measles scandal hit the news, there were a flurry of surveys regarding vaccination. In 2017, a survey revealed that 29% of the population believed that adverse reactions to the vaccines were higher than the benefits, but also showed trust (83%) in the National Vaccination Program for children.³ In 2020, when COVID-19 was already present but vaccination was not yet available, 43% responded that they would not get vaccinated anti-Covid19.⁴ In November 2020, as the first Covid19 vaccines were being approved in the European Union, 25% responded that they would refuse to be vaccinated, while 36% would want to wait for others to be vaccinated before they made up their minds.⁵ In January 2021, as the government vaccination program was already under way, approx. 30% were refusing vaccination outright, and 40% were not yet ready to get their shots (Darie et al. 2021).⁶

As infection rates dwindled during summer, and the President and Prime Minister declared the pandemic 'defeated', the vaccination rate was stuck at around 30%. In the autumn, infection rates soared and the vaccination program was revived, but struggled to surpass the 30-35% threshold. Fractures between vaccinated and non-vaccinated, transparency and obscurity, trust and distrust in various associations of science and power – were rekindled in fights and polemics about the 'two Romanias'- the enlightened and unenlightened - with various bursts of indignation for the groups of trespassers between the two.

As the rate of vaccination remained exasperatingly slow, vaccine skepticism has been grouped under the larger categories of ignorance, irrationality, superstition, conspiracy theory or, when an intentionally mischievous objective seemed to be present, fake news. It is hard not to give way to these categorizations, especially as we feel our lives to be at stake and under threat, because of our 'irrational' neighbors. Nevertheless, we argue that the focus on 'communication' and/or some form of quarantine, as acts of governance supposed to bring a high enough rate of vaccination, has proven contradictory: how to convince the 'irrational' if they are truly irrational? On the other side, the apparent irrationality of long- and short-term governmental approaches to the pandemic only reinforced the obscurity and seeming aloofness of all the workings of power that have a direct and sometimes devastating impact on the lives of people.

The landscape of public health in present-day Romania, with its inconsistencies and dangerousness stemming from both global and local worlds, are the background of the lives of both 'peoples' – the vaccinated and unvaccinated alike. The optimism one can harbor is not so much one of radical enlightenment of the other half – sometimes sliding into utter despise – but the more modest one of the advancements of the vaccination rate coupled with the 'biocultural hope' (Kirksey, Shapiro, Bodine 2013) of being able to live together with vaccines, anti-vaxxers, and various non-human beings – such as viruses.

Soundbite from Romania

Notes

1. For a discussion on 'post-socialism' see, among others, Chari and Verdery 2019 and Douglas 2010.
2. For the importance of experimental post-colonial areas in the creation of global public health templates, see Gradmann 2019.
3. IRES, Percepții publice privind proiectul legii vaccinării-sondaj de opinie, April 2017, available at https://ires.ro/uploads/articole/ires_perceptii-publice-privindproiectul-legii-vaccinarii_sondaj_aprilie-2017_site.pdf
4. IPSOS, July-September 2020. <https://www.ipsos.com/ro-ro/romanii-pe-ultimele-locuri-lume- ceea-ce-priveste-intentia-de-vaccinare-anti-covid-19-daca-vaccinul>
5. Avangarde national opinion survey, November 2020.
6. Avangarde, Barometru național. Percepții: epidemie, școală, sănătate, privatizare, January 2021, available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WMXOORGCzVDQjzpz3oshYY24RVeC8HRe/view> and IRES, Vaccinarea anti covid-19 în România - percepții, atitudini, comportamente (sondaj de opinie), January 2021, available at VACCINAREA ANTI COVID-19 ÎN ROMANIA (ires.ro).

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Soundbite from Romania

Zoë Aqua is a violinist and music educator, currently based in Cluj-Napoca and studying Transylvanian Music Pedagogy.

You are a musician and music educator specializing in the tradition of Klezmer music. Please tell us a bit about your professional background and how you came to these fields. Where have you studied? What organizations have you been involved with?

I studied classical music through college and earned an undergraduate degree in violin performance and music education from the University of Michigan. After graduating in 2012, I moved to Brooklyn and taught elementary general music full-time for 5 years in the South Bronx. I also completed a masters degree in music education from Ithaca College through their summer masters program. I've spent the last four years balancing part-time teaching with an active schedule as a gigging violinist, one highlight of which was performing on Broadway in 2017 as the full-time violin understudy in "[Indecent](#)".



Zoë Aqua
2021-22 U.S. Fulbright Grantee
Babeş-Bolyai University of
Cluj-Napoca

My familiarity with klezmer music started as a child— my father, [Hal Aqua](#), is a klezmer musician and aficionado in Denver, Colorado, where I was born and raised. However, I didn't focus on klezmer in any type of focused way until around 2015, when I was living in Brooklyn, and met the musicians who would become [Tsibele](#), a band I co-founded. Attending [Klezkanada](#) for the first time that summer helped me find mentors and supportive network of colleagues.

Over the past few years, I've focused more on klezmer pedagogy, directing the klezmer program at the Brooklyn Conservatory and founding the [Klezmer New Leaders Fellowship](#) in partnership with the Brooklyn Conservatory and the Felzen Foundation. KNLF is a training and mentorship program for women and non-binary players in the klezmer scene.

You were awarded a Fulbright research grant for the 2021-2022 academic year to study Transylvanian music pedagogy in Cluj. How did you become interested in music education in Transylvania?

My duo partner in the band [Farnakht](#), Mattias Kaufmann, introduced me to Transylvanian music when we started playing together in 2016. We attended folk music camps together in the summer of 2018— [Métatábor](#) in Karád, Hungary and Kalotaszentkirály in Sâncraiu, Romania. Both of those camps are connected to the táncház movement, the folk music revival which began in Hungary and Transylvania in the 1970s.



György Moldován "Ilka Gyurika" and Zoë playing in Sic, October 11, 2021. Photo by Attila Fenyvesi.

Soundbite from Romania

Participating in these camps was a good introduction to the scene, and inspired me to explore a wider view of Transylvanian folk music pedagogy, which is what my Fulbright research project is about. Over the grant period (October- June), I will work with Romanian, Roma and Hungarian folk musicians in Transylvania with the goal of finding teaching methodologies that can be applied to teaching klezmer music in the States.

Tell us about your research in Cluj over the last few months. What does an average day look like?

Who are you working with?

What kinds of ideas are coming to the fore? What are you learning from living and working in Romania?

I've been fortunate to spend much of the last couple of months on the road. My goal for this first segment of my grant period has been to make initial contacts with musicians in different villages in Cluj county and the surrounding counties, in order to get a general idea of who I might be able to work with and to get a sense of which relationships I'll attempt to deepen over the course of my nine months here.

I've met musicians in the villages of Sic, Ceuaş, Mociu, Palatca, Beica de Jos, Sucutard, and Budeşti. I also ventured a bit further afield to the cities of Miercurea Ciuc and Odorheiu Secuiesc, in Harghita county.

When I'm on the road, a somewhat-typical day usually consists of meeting up with a folk musician and engaging in some combination of the following activities: listening to them play, taking a lesson from them, interviewing them about their experiences learning and/or teaching folk music, and observing them teach a student or class of students. For formal interviews, I'm using the help of translators, although my Romanian language skills are slowly improving!

When I'm back in Cluj, a typical day consists of listening to and labelling field recordings I've made, practicing the music I've learned in lessons, transcribing musical pieces and interviews, and writing blog entries. In the evenings, I often go to events at Tranzit House, an arts space housed in a decommissioned synagogue. Tranzit House was founded by one of my advisors here, dance anthropologist Csilla Könczai.

One thing that has made a deep emotional impact on me over the past couple of months has been meeting older musicians, some of whom are the last of their generation left in their villages. Hearing them play feels like being in a time machine, and it's amazing to talk to them about their early experiences playing and learning music. I can sense the important role that folk music used to play in everyday life in Transylvania, and have been thinking about that a lot.



Tincuţa and Calin Mezei and their daughter Melodi, Ceuaş, October 22, 2021

Soundbite from Romania

How does Jewish music inform our understanding of contemporary Transylvania, Romania, and/or Eastern Europe?

I'm fascinated by Transylvania's history as a crossroad of cultures where Romanians, Hungarians, Roma, Jews and Saxons co-existed. Klezmer musicians were historically part of the professional musician class in Eastern Europe, along with Romani professional musicians, some of whom are known as *lăutari*. Roma musicians still play an important role in Transylvania of preserving local village styles of playing, and there are still some musical family dynasties that have survived here where the tradition of father-to-son dissemination of musical knowledge is still intact (this was also common in historical klezmer bands in Europe). Learning from the "tradition bearers" of these musical families is a great honor and a privilege, and gives me some insight into parallels of the Jewish musical culture that used to exist in Eastern Europe.

Where should readers look to learn more about Jewish, Klezmer, or folk music pedagogy in Eastern Europe?

Bob Cohen's [blog](#) is a very entertaining place to start.

Bob is a Hungarian-Jewish-American klezmer musician based in Budapest who founded the band [Di Naye Kapelye](#). Zev Feldman's book *Klezmer: Music, History, and Memory* is another good resource.

What else are you working on? Any upcoming projects? Where can people find more information about your work?

If you'd like to follow my research, check out my [blog](#). You can also find more information there about recordings I've made with Tsibele and Farnakht. I'm currently working on an ongoing project with artist [Talva Feldman](#) and educator/historian [Rachel Spicker](#) (both based in Germany) which will involve making music in Jewish cemeteries which have been vandalized.



István Jámbor "Dumnezeu" in Ceuaș, October 16, 2021.

Conference Reports

Iași, 1941-2021: Remembrance, Acknowledge or Oblivion

'Elie Wiesel' National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania

„Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași

Iași, Romania

June 28-29, 2021

June 2021 marked the 80th commemoration of the Iași Pogrom, the main outbreak of anti-Jewish violence perpetrated under Romanian authority prior to Romania's entering the Second World War. To mark this event the 'Elie Wiesel' National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania together with the 'Alexandru-Ioan Cuza' University, organized the international conference, *Iași, 1941-2021: remembrance, acknowledge or oblivion* (28-29 June 2021). The conference was hosted by 'Alexandru-Ioan Cuza' University and brought together historians, political scientists and sociologists from Romania and abroad. The meeting was structured in three panels: 1) *Political and cultural antisemitism in interwar Romania*; 2) *Pogroms and massacres in the summer of 1941*; 3) *Holocaust memory, antisemitism and right-wing extremism in contemporary Europe*.

The first panel put the emphasis on the pre-war period aiming both to contextualize Romanian antisemitism and to underline its specificities. The second panel discussed the violence unleashed against the Jews in the summer and autumn of 1941 either on the Romanian territory or in the Eastern-European region. A special place was dedicated to the Iași Pogrom. The last panel approached the fate of Holocaust memory and the rise of far-right narratives in contemporary Europe. The rich conclusions of this two day academic meeting were synthesized and further developed in the concluding remarks offered by Radu Ioanid.

Ana Barbulescu



**IAȘI, 1941-2021:
REMEMBRANCE, ACKNOWLEDGMENT, OBLIVION**

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE | JUNE 28-29, 2021

Conference Reports

Nationalism from Below in Bessarabia, Transnistria, Moldova

Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (IOS)

Regensburg, Germany

October 1-2, 2021

Our workshop was about “Nationalism from Below: Popular Responses to Nation-Building Projects in Bessarabia, Transnistria, Moldova.” We did not choose this geographical area by accident, since the three organizers come from the Republic of Moldova. One could say that such an event is a typical example of methodological nationalism. However, this colloquium is not strictly about Moldova or ONLY about Moldova. If we speak about Bessarabia and Transnistria, we must also take into account the political contexts (imperial, national, federal) of which these regions were part during the 19th and 20th centuries: the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire, Romania, the Soviet Union, and the Republic of Moldova. As border areas, and therefore marginal and frequently inarticulate, Bessarabia and Transnistria were hardly suitable as fields for coherent and meaningful local history studies. Also, nationalism and nation-building is a theme that opens up international and transnational dimensions and spaces, despite the efforts of national historiographies to straitjacket it into national spaces. There is nothing more international than the creation of national identities, as Anne-Marie Thiesse, my PhD supervisor, used to say. Thus, studying nationalism from a nationalist perspective was, for the organizers (Svetlana Suveica, Andrei Cușco and I), a contradiction in terms. The fact that researchers from various parts of the globe and a range of academic disciplines took part in this conference is further proof that the conference organizers had at least tried to overcome their internalized methodological nationalism.

Nations and nationalism are not a new theme in the humanities. However, the “top-down” approach, from the perspective of states and elites, remained privileged in the study of nationalism. The popular masses, the main collective protagonist in national narratives, remained for a long time a regrettable absence in nationalism studies. Our workshop is another attempt to give a voice to those silenced by both national historiographies and modernist studies of nations and nationalism. The conference was based on the postulate that the popular classes, the non-elites, so to say, were a fundamental actor in all nationalizing projects, even when the “ordinary people” treated these elite-driven projects with indifference or when they resisted them outright. However, when ordinary people appropriate national or nationalist discourses, they adapt and use their contents creatively and opportunistically.

Most of the papers at this conference followed a historical approach. It is important to understand both the nation-building processes and the popular responses to them in the long run, but also at various points in time. Also, several researchers in social sciences took part in this workshop: anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists; they analyzed some recent cases and events. There was, therefore, an interdisciplinary discussion on nationalism in Bessarabia and Transnistria. Regardless of academic discipline, all speakers equally favoured a social, “bottom-up” approach to nation-building projects and processes.

Conference Reports

We would like to thank the Leibniz-Institute of Eastern and South-Eastern European Studies for kindly agreeing to host this event. Special thanks should go to Ulf Brunnbauer for his constant support. Professor Brunnbauer was the one who encouraged me and Svetlana Suveica to find a topic of interest related to our region. We are glad that the idea we proposed was welcomed and supported by the IOS. We also thank Ambassador Oleg Serebrian for agreeing to take part in this event. We also express our gratitude to Prof. Irina Livezeanu for agreeing to give a keynote speech at our colloquium. Irina Livezeanu is the pioneering scholar who placed Bessarabia, Transnistria and Moldova on the map of Central and Southeastern European studies. For this reason, her participation as a keynote speaker is essential and emblematic for us. Last but not least, we thank all the participants in the colloquium for their active and stimulating participation.

Petru Negură



WORKSHOP

Nationalism from Below: Popular Responses to Nation-Building Projects in Bessarabia, Transnistria, Moldova

The Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies, Regensburg

1-2 October 2021

Hybrid event (in person and online via Zoom)

***Note:** When we were in the final stages of preparations for the conference, the FC Sheriff-Tiraspol football team won its match against one of the most famous and venerated football teams in Europe, Real Madrid, on the latter's own field. One can surmise that many people have been looking for Moldova and the city of Tiraspol on the map these days. Sheriff-Tiraspol and its recent fame epitomize the post-modern dimension of national belonging and identities in a globalized world, Sheriff Tiraspol officially represents the Republic of Moldova but is based in Tiraspol, in an unrecognized state, which is non-existent de jure, albeit existing de facto. In addition, this Moldovan team does not have a single Moldovan player (most of the players are from African and Latin-American countries). The team is financed by an obscure company of the same name that controls the entire economy and, as rumours would have it, Transnistrian politics... Anyway, Moldovans from right-bank Moldova and the Transnistrian enclave now feel proud, together, of 'their' football team in the Champions League. Moldova, the poorest country in Europe, nearly became the world champion!*

Conference Reports

Image and Memory: Jews, Antisemitism, and the Holocaust in Romania

University of Pittsburgh

November 12, 2021

On November 12 the Jewish Studies Program at the University of Pittsburgh hosted a Festveranstaltung to celebrate Irina Livezeanu's 34 years of teaching. Irina taught at Colby College (1987-91), Ohio State University (1991-94), and the University of Pittsburgh (1994-2021), finally hanging up her cap and gown this year. The event included fourteen speakers



organised into four roundtables, together with scores of other attendees who logged in over Zoom or made the trip to Pittsburgh for the occasion. Many of the speakers were Irina's former students or collaborators, and the themes discussed reflected various aspects of her writing and teaching. The first panel on Jewish Lives examined photographs and oral histories of four Holocaust survivors who had lived in Romania before the war. The second, on Jews and the Romanian Avant-Garde, discussed the lives and work of four Romanian artists who had a major impact on the international art scene. The third looked at Romanian fascist photo albums from 1936 and 1940, and at photographs taken by Holocaust perpetrators. Finally, the last panel talked about Radu Jude's 2018 film, *I do not care if we go down in history as barbarians*. Discussions were animated throughout the day, with both participants and audience members suggesting provocative and insightful interpretations of these visual sources. A recording of the event is available from the [website](#) of the Jewish Studies Program.

Roland Clark

IMAGE AND MEMORY

JEWIS, ANTISEMITISM, AND THE HOLOCAUST IN ROMANIA

A Festveranstaltung for Irina Livezeanu



Jewish Studies Program

University of Pittsburgh

Location: Cathedral of Learning 501/[Zoom](#)

Date: Friday, November 12, 2021



Center for Russian, East European
and Eurasian Studies
University Center for International Studies



Journal of Romanian Studies

The Journal of Romanian Studies is pleased to announce the release of its special fall 2021 edition, examining issues in media and communication, guest edited by Raluca Radu and Ioana Coman. Paolo Mancini explores the breakdown of institutions and the construction of utopia and dystopia in the age of the digital revolution. Andrei Richter discusses the rise of autocratic leaders and their relationship with the media. Alla Roșca considers the relationship between mass media, public opinion, and foreign policy in Moldova. Marius Dragomir, Manuela Preoteasa, Dumitrița Holdiș, and Cristina Lupu explore trends in recent journalism funding. Onoriu Colăcel and Radu Silaghi-Dumitrescu focus on conspiracy theories and pseudo-science, respectively. Finally, Lucian-Vasile Szabo and Antonio Momoc discuss journalism and the public sphere. This issue also includes a collection of dedications to Professor Mac Linscott Ricketts and book reviews by Roland Clark, Dana Domșodi, R. Chris Davis, and Anca Șincan. 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 subscriptions@liverpool.ac.uk.

Journal of



Vol. 3, No. 2 (2021)

ibidem

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The Journal of Romanian Studies seeks submissions for the Fall 2022 issue. 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.

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)

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

The Editors welcome proposals for new titles in our series! You can nominate the work of a colleague or former student, or present us your own book already published abroad. We also welcome and hope to publish in the series book manuscripts written in Romanian directly. You can find details about what needs to be included in a book proposal [here](#).

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 they may deal with the Romanian and Moldovan diasporas and their 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.

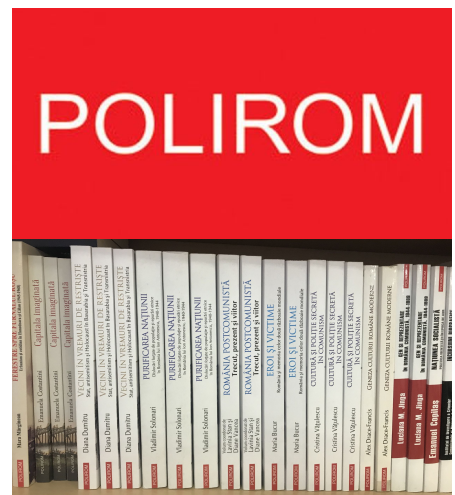
Titles published in the series to date in reverse chronological order are:

- Cristian Cercel, *Filogermanism fără germani. România în căutarea europenității* (2021)
- 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



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The Society for Romanian Studies



SRS-Polirom Book Series



REVIEWS OF PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS

A much welcome review of Maria Bucur's Romanian version of *Heroes and Victims*, published in the SRS - Polirom Book Series, in 2019 by Andrei Cușco appeared in PLURAL earlier this year. See Andrei Cușco. "Maria Bucur, *Eroi și victime: România și memoria celor două războaie mondiale*, Traducere de Roxana Cazan, Ioan Bucur și Dan Bălănescu, Iași, Polirom, 2019, 357 pp.". PLURAL. History. Culture. Society. *Journal of History and Geography Department*, „Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University 1:204212. Available [here](#).

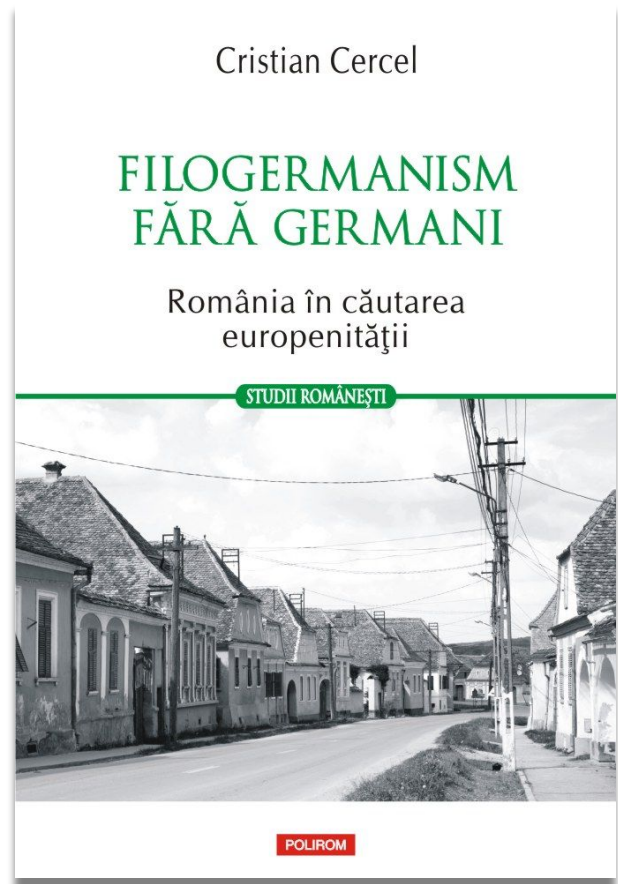
RECENT PUBLICATION

The most recent book in our series is Cristian Cercel's *Romania and the Quest for European Identity: Philo-Germanism without Germans* (Routledge, 2019), translated by Cornelia Marinescu, 288 pp.

FROM THE REVIEWS

"*Romania and the Quest for European Identity: Philo-Germanism without Germans* is one of the most important scholarly contributions to the investigation of Romanian identity in the last couple of decades, and will hopefully spur scientific debate and a more reflexive approach to the processes, inter-ethnic-and class relations, and democracy and politics whose main driving forces it tries to deconstruct." (Tibor Toró, *Intersections: East European Journal of Society and Politics*, 2020)

"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)



SRS-Polirom Book Series

FORTHCOMING

Emanuela Grama's *Socialist Heritage: The Politics of Past and Place in Romania* (Indiana University Press, 2019) is currently being translated into Romanian and will appear in our series in Spring 2022. The book is the winner of the 2020 Ed Hewett Book Prize offered by the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies.

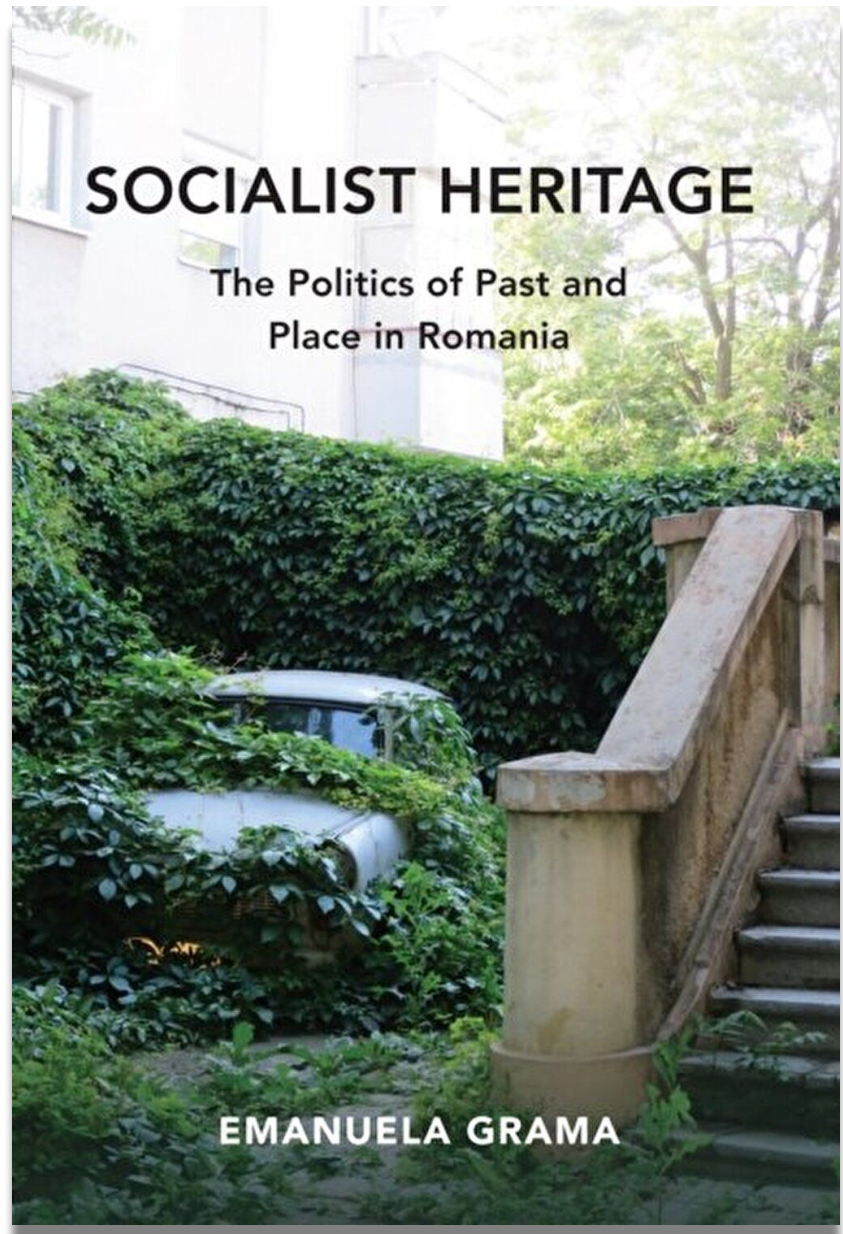
WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT IT

"This is an impressive piece of scholarship. The strengths of this book are the breadth of the data sources, which have enabled the author to uncover in detail how change in a particular historic urban landscape is shaped by broader issues of power and identity (in both socialist and post-socialist contexts). *Socialist Heritage* will be of interest to postgraduate students and academic researchers in disciplines such as history, anthropology, human geography, urban studies and sociology. For anybody wanting to understand Bucharest's Old Town there is no better source available."

- Duncan Light, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*

"Bucharest is not a historic city, but it is rich in history. The distinction turns out to be important not just for our understanding of Romania, but of politics and historiography more generally. Emanuela Grama uses the politics that surrounded the Old Town of Bucharest over the past century to force us to reconsider the constitution of the state, the relationship between identity and ideology, and the balance in historical development between grand narratives and incremental change. Moreover, she does all this by demonstrating that the study of history and the stuff of history are rarely, if ever, the same. [...] Grama does a brilliant job bringing [this] story to our attention and explaining why we should care about it. Her book deserves to be widely read."

- Erik Jones, *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*



SRS-Polirom Book Series

FORTHCOMING

Giuseppe Tateo's *Under the Sign of the Cross: The People's Salvation Cathedral and the Church Building Industry in Postsocialist Romania* (New York: Berghahn, 2020). It will be translated into Romanian by Miruna Voiculescu and will appear in our series in the second half of 2022.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT IT

"The book significantly advances our understanding of Orthodox Christianity and its post-socialist revival, contemporary East European society, the social life of architecture, and urban spatial symbolism and contestation."

- Christoph Brumann, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

"Drawing upon detailed ethnographic research, leavened with an impressive command of theoretical literature on the social life of architecture and urban special symbolism, the author examines the development of religious infrastructure in Romania [...]."

At the same time, Tateo's book offers an analysis of secularization and urban change, and their impact upon the course of nationalism in the country. In doing so, he provides signposts for the study of these phenomena within eastern Christianity as a whole. In reading postsocialism through the lens of religious practice, the author argues that political and cultural discourse has been conducted 'under the sign of the cross.'

- Dennis Deletant, UCL SSEES

Find more extensive presentations of the forthcoming books on the SRS [website](#).

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.



Under the Sign of the Cross

THE PEOPLE'S SALVATION CATHEDRAL
AND THE CHURCH-BUILDING INDUSTRY
IN POSTSOCIALIST ROMANIA

GIUSEPPE TATEO



Book Review

Andrei Ursu, Roland O. Thomasson, in collaboration with Mădălin Hodor, *Trăgători și Mistificatori, Contrarevoluția Securității în decembrie 1989* (Polirom, 2019)

review by Ruxandra Petrinca

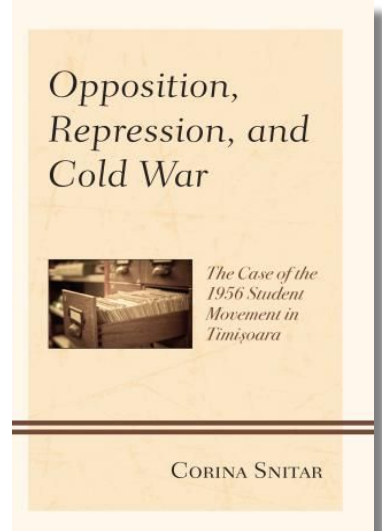
This book refutes the arguments put forward by the military prosecutors who exonerated the Securitate for its role in the Romanian Revolution of 1989. With thorough research into newly unearthed documents at Consiliul Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității (CNSAS) and careful analysis of testimonials from participants, the authors answer key questions that remain unaddressed more than thirty years after the events: who fired on civilians after Nicolae Ceaușescu and his wife Elena were arrested? Who were the terrorists? This book's innovative approach places the Securitate at the centre of historical analysis, proving that specialized groups from within the dreaded institution acted as a stay-behind army actively engaged in a counter-revolution that killed hundreds of civilians after the dictator's demise. The authors further observe that, at present, the official view is based upon fabricated narratives that the Securitate developed and disseminated in order to conceal the truth about its own involvement. The book's final "Addenda" offers a critical analysis of primary sources in view of arguments blaming the Soviets for the December 1989 casualties or viewed them as a diversionist ploy orchestrated by the post-revolutionary government leaders. The authors explain that the terrorists were not the product of collective imagination, but individuals who worked for the Special Counter-Terrorism Unit (USLA) and Directorate V (Direcția a V-a) and who were tasked with the protection of top communist dignitaries. Responsibility for the extreme violence perpetrated after December 22 lies with the Securitate agents, who carried out special military operations similar to guerilla warfare in the hope of keeping the Ceaușescu regime alive.



Featured Books

Corina Snitar, *Opposition, Repression, and Cold War: The Case of the 1956 Student Movement in Timișoara* (Lexington, 2021)

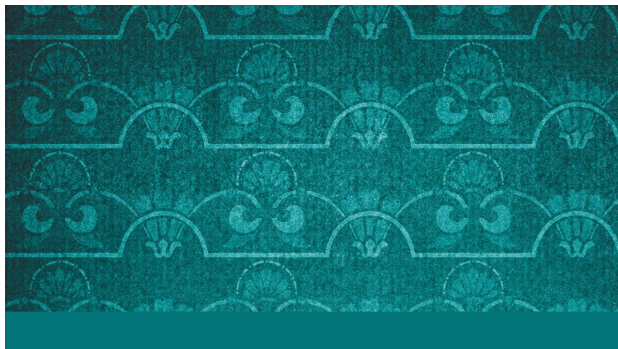
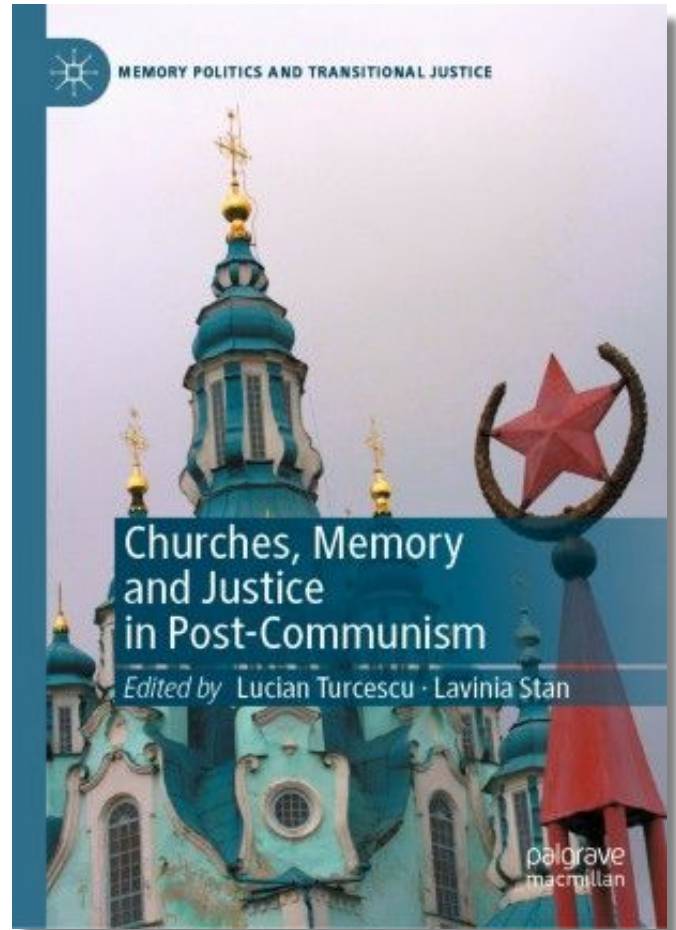
Corina Snitar examines the student protests in Timișoara in 1956 following the Hungarian uprising of the same year. Snitar analyzes the students' demands regarding Soviet occupation, the situation in Hungary, and insufficient student accommodations. This book shows how the Hungarian revolt was the catalyst for opposition during a time of social duress. Snitar examines the methods of repression against real and imaginary opposition to the Communist rule and shows how the fates of students were tied to the political goals of the Romanian leadership.



Featured Books

Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu eds., *Churches, Memory and Justice in Post-Communism* (Palgrave, 2021)

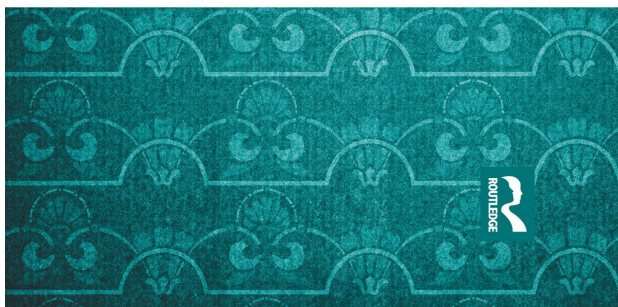
This book is the first to systematically examine the connection between religion and transitional justice in post-communism. There are four main goals motivating this book: 1) to explain how civil society (groups such as religious denominations) contribute to transitional justice efforts to address and redress past dictatorial repression; 2) to ascertain the impact of state-led reckoning programs on religious communities and their members; 3) to renew the focus on the factors that determine the adoption (or rejection) of efforts to reckon with past human rights abuses in post-communism; and 4) to examine the limitations of enacting specific transitional justice methods, programs and practices in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union countries, whose democratization has differed in terms of its nature and pace. Various churches and their relationship with the communist states are covered in the following countries: Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and Belarus.



A HISTORY OF ROMANIAN THEATRE FROM COMMUNISM TO CAPITALISM

CHILDREN OF A RESTLESS TIME

Cristina Modreanu



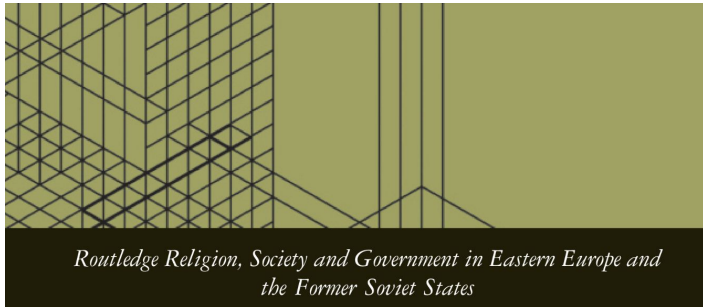
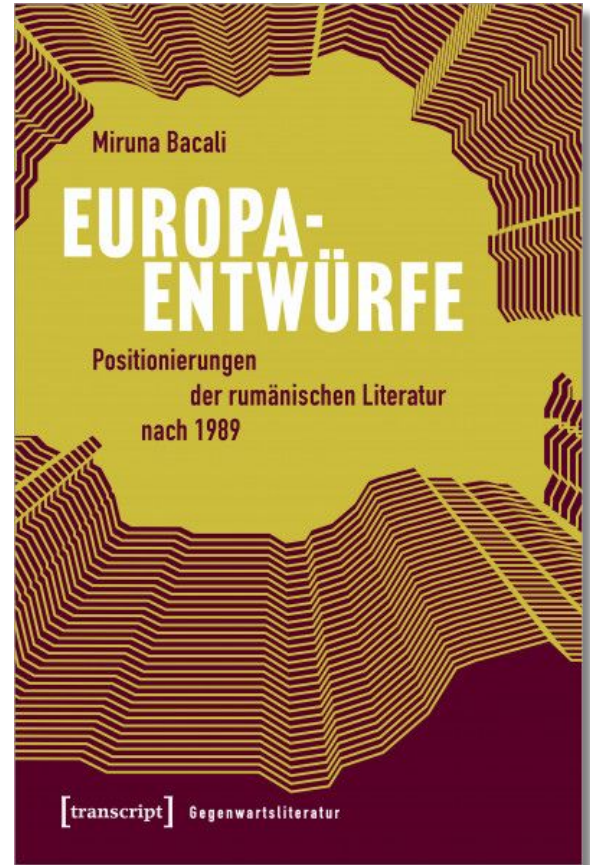
Cristina Modreanu, *A History of Romanian Theatre from Communism to Capitalism: Children of a Restless Time* (Routledge, 2020)

A History of Romanian Theatre from Communism to Capitalism analyses the last three decades of Romanian theatre and connects it to the international stage. Cristina Modreanu questions the relationship between artists and power, both before 1989, behind the Iron Curtain, and in the current global political context, with nationalism manifesting itself in Eastern Europe, as seen in the critical work of Romanian theatre makers. This study covers the complex cases of theatre makers such as Lucian Pintilie, Liviu Ciulei and Andrei Șerban, who built their international careers in exile, and the most innovative Romanian artists of today, such as Silviu Purcărete, Mihai Măniuțiu, Gianina Cărbunariu, Radu Afrim, and Bogdan Georgescu, who reached the status of transglobal artists. Filling a considerable gap in Romanian theatre discourse, this book will be of a great interest to students and scholars of contemporary theatre and history.

Featured Books

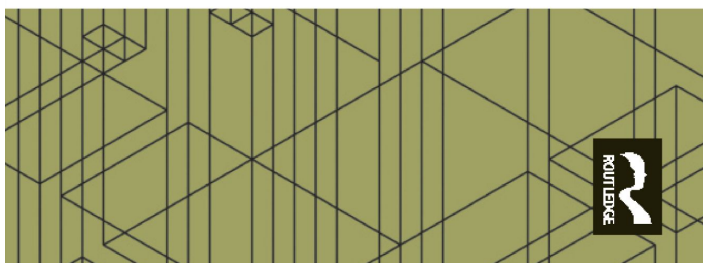
Miruna Bacali, *Europaentwürfe – Positionierungen der rumänischen Literatur nach 1989* [(Re)Imagining Europe: Romanian Writers and their Self-Positioning after 1989] (Transcript, 2021)

After the fall of the communist dictatorship in 1989, followed by a new societal order, Romanian literature became an ideal scene for discussing and imagining Europe. Debates centering on cultural values and orientations intensified, finding new means of expression, and the questions of how and why Romania should (re)position itself within Europe's cultural landscape became increasingly important – especially in the context of the subsequent EU integration. Drawing on theoretical approaches from sociological, cultural and literary studies, Miruna Bacali analyzes how Romanian-speaking writers and intellectuals define Europe and Europeaness and position themselves within it.



THE SECRET POLICE AND THE RELIGIOUS UNDERGROUND IN COMMUNIST AND POST-COMMUNIST EASTERN EUROPE

Edited by
James A. Kapalo and Kinga Povedák



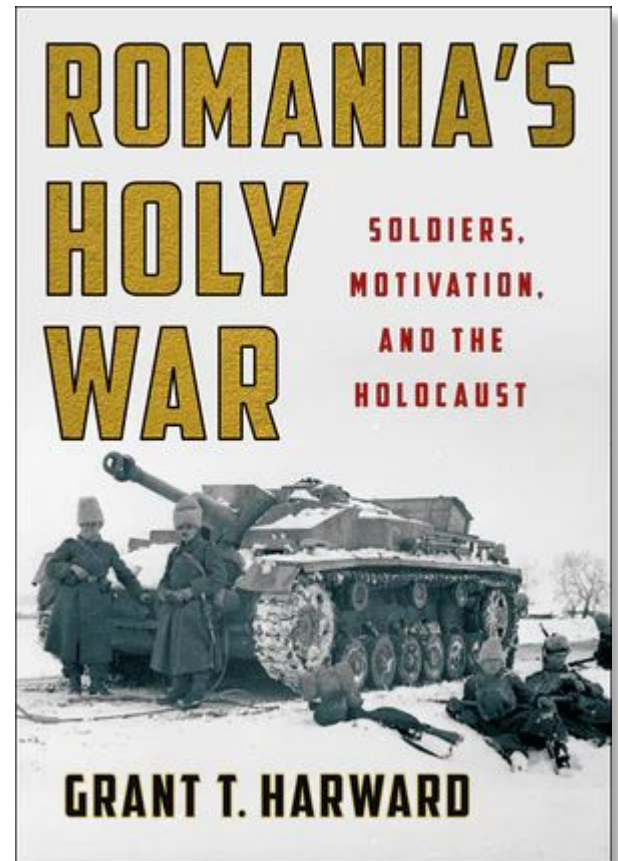
James Kapalo and Kinga Povedák eds., *The Religious Underground and the Secret Police in Communist and Post-communist Eastern Europe* (Routledge, 2022)

This book addresses the complex intersection of secret police operations and the formation of the religious underground in communist-era Eastern Europe. It discusses how religious groups were perceived as dangerous to the totalitarian state whilst also being extremely vulnerable and yet at the same time very resourceful. It explores how this particular dynamic created the concept of the "religious underground" and produced an extremely rich secret police archival record. In a series of studies from across the region, the book explores the historical and legal context of secret police entanglement with religious groups, presents case studies on particular anti-religious operations and groups, offers methodological approaches to the secret police materials for the study of religions, and engages in contemporary ethical and political debates on the legacy and meaning of the archives in post-communism.

Featured Books

Grant Harward, *Romania's Holy War : Soldiers, Motivation, and the Holocaust* (Cornell University Press, 2021)

Romania's Holy War rights the widespread myth that Romania was a reluctant member of the Axis during World War II. In correcting this fallacy, Grant T. Harward shows that, of an estimated 300,000 Jews who perished in Romania and Romanian-occupied Ukraine, more than 64,000 were, in fact, killed by Romanian soldiers. Moreover, the Romanian Army conducted a brutal campaign in German-occupied Ukraine, resulting in the deaths of thousands of Soviet prisoners of war, partisans, and civilians. Investigating why Romanian soldiers fought and committed such atrocities, Harward argues that strong ideology—a cocktail of nationalism, religion, antisemitism, and anticommunism—undergirded their motivation. *Romania's Holy War* draws on official military records, wartime periodicals, soldiers' diaries and memoirs, subsequent war crimes investigations, and recent interviews with veterans to tell the full story. Harward integrates the Holocaust into the narrative of military operations to show that most soldiers fully supported the wartime dictator, General Ion Antonescu, and his regime's holy war against "Judeo-Bolshevism." The army perpetrated mass reprisals, targeting Jews in liberated Romanian territory; supported the deportation and concentration of Jews in camps or ghettos in Romanian-occupied Soviet territory; and played a key supporting role in SS efforts to exterminate Jews in German-occupied Soviet territory. Harward proves that Romania became Nazi Germany's most important ally in the war against the USSR because its soldiers were highly motivated, thus overturning much of what we thought we knew about this theater of war. *Romania's Holy War* provides the first complete history of why Romanian soldiers fought on the Eastern Front.



H-Romania



[H-Romania](#) is currently looking for a new group of editors to take over the running of the list management and book reviews. H-Romania is now in its seventh year of operation, with nearly 400 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.

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