



TRANSFORM4EUROPE:

THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY FOR KNOWLEDGE ENTREPRENEURS

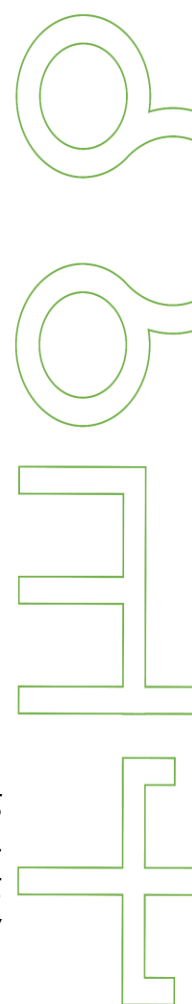
LETTERS. HERITAGE. IDENTITIES

ROUNDTABLE

The Roundtable aims to bring together young and experienced researchers dealing with matters related to cultural, linguistic, supranational, national, ethnic, etc. identities. Together, they will explore the ways arts and media in general (including literature, visual arts, social media, etc.) as well as historical and contemporary narratives shape perceptions of self and otherness.

The Roundtable will be preceded by optional visits to the Prof. Ivan Duychev Centre for Slavo-Byzantine Studies and the Cyril and Methodius National Library on 28 January 2025.

It will also feed into the Matchmaking talks on the 29–30 January 2025.





29.01.2025

**STRAND 1: LANGUAGE. NARRATIVES. IDENTITIES. DIGITALISING
CULTURAL HERITAGE**

Time: 9.00-13.00

**Venue: Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Rectorate Building, 15 Tsar
Osvoboditel Blvd, New Conference Hall, North Wing, Floor 2**

Moderators:

Prof. Dr. Claudia Polzin–Haumann (Saarland University) and Assoc. Prof. Dr.
Nikolina Tsvetkova (Sofia University)

09.00–09.20

Keynote:

Prof. Dr. Vasya Velinova

Prof. *Ivan Duychev* Center for Slavo–Byzantine Studies

Alphabet, History, Identity

The presentation focuses on the provenance of the Cyrillic alphabet in the First Bulgarian Kingdom in the 10th century and its modifications in the diverse Slavonic countries in medieval European history as a marker of ethnic identity.

9.20–11.00

Prof. Dr. Claudia Polzin–Haumann

Saarland University, Germany

Languages and language policies: tensions and challenges

Linguistic and cultural diversity are an essential part of everyday life across Europe. They represent fundamental challenges (not only) to European societies. Although multilingualism (language diversity in society) and plurilingualism (individual language competences) used to be and continue to be normality, they are associated with a variety of tensions and (often polemic) debates. Language–



related questions are often controversial. In my contribution, I will discuss the tensions and challenges related to languages and language policies using examples from various European countries. I will focus on both the societal level (e.g. standard vs. so-called regional or minority languages) and the individual level (e.g. attitudes, language ideologies, language learning and teaching). The contribution illustrates the manifold facets of linguistic research concerning languages and language policies.

Assoc. Prof. Nikolina Tsvetkova, PhD
Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Bulgaria

Bulgarian communities in Ukraine and Transnistria: Identities, Languages and Heritage

Historically, there are significant Bulgarian ethnic communities in Ukraine and Transnistria – descendants of the thousands who fled from the Bulgarian lands during the Ottoman rule more than 200 years ago. The cultural and linguistic situation, identities and identifications in these Bulgarian communities are changing in accordance with the changes in both Bulgaria and in the countries these communities live in.

The presentation is based on ongoing qualitative research – interviews and focus group discussions with Ukrainian and Transnistrian citizens of Bulgarian descent. The data collected so far shed light on the dynamics of the changing perceptions of identities, identifications and cultural heritage of the Bulgarian diaspora in these lands, on the various relations between these communities and Bulgaria as both the historical fatherland and as part of the EU and can be used to suggest practical solutions and to inform policies regarding migrant communities in these specific places as well as more broadly.

Victoria Lekova, Young researcher
Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Bulgaria

Language as a soft power instrument: the case of Francophonie

The paper aims to present from a cultural perspective the role of linguistic influence as an instrument of cultural diplomacy and focuses on the language-culture-soft power nexus. The presentation traces what this influence is based on and how the dissemination of a foreign language works in favour of the national image. *Does language determine the way we think? Is language a boundary in cultural identities or a verbal instrument of influence? What is the reflection of*



culture in language? These are just some of the questions I ask myself and whose answers I seek. This current micro research is part of my dissertation on Cultural Diplomacy on the axis of Bulgarian–French Cultural Relations.

Asst. Prof. Ewa Wylezek–Targosz, PhD
University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland

Heimat, Hajmat, Homeland – How do minorities communicate?

Silesia is a place in southern Poland located in the historic region known as the Upper Silesia (in Polish: Górny Śląsk) that was once one of the world's greatest producers of coal. This peculiar position of the Silesian region, on the one hand, has undoubtedly enriched its inhabitants in cultural and historical ways but, on the other, has enclosed them in a so-called *hajmat* – a term that is understood as a private homeland. Hajmat is based on both – a tangible stratum such as cuisine or card games, as well as on an abstract stratum, such as language and collective memory. Since people think in the language they speak, one can presume the Silesian language expresses a highly personalized reality that is inaccessible to non-Silesians, so called *gorols*. This presentation's objective is to examine ways in which Silesia communicates with the outside world and how the imagined Silesia may be/is translated into non-Silesian Poland. In order to do so, I want to present works by one of the most prominent Silesian painters, Ireneusz Walczak. His canvases, even though beautifully colored, revolve around linguistic signs. The transmogriifier English, Polish, and Silesian into a peculiar, vibrant communique sent from the very heart of the region – a mine.**Asst. Prof.**

11.00–11.30

COFFEE BREAK

11.30–13.00

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Peter Miladinov
Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Bulgaria

Datafication of cultural heritage – a step beyond

The results of digitalization of cultural heritage, especially in Bulgaria, might be questioned due to lack of effectiveness or efficiency. There are many reasons for this, out of which more important are the pricy technology of 3D scanning and



creating digital content requiring careful planning and execution to be effective and engaging for the target audience.

In my presentation I will share my experience in the virtualization of cultural heritage, the problems and successes I have encountered and achieved during my work for the NASLEDSTVO.BG project. Most importantly, I will try to convince you why these processes should not stop and how next generation tech's could contribute more than we can imagine at this point in time.

Sabina Aneva

NALIS Foundation

The Open Source Software – One of the Possible Successful Solutions for Digitization in GLAM Institutions (Based on the Experience of the NALIS Foundation – Bulgaria)

Open source software has been identified as a potential solution to the challenges posed by the digitisation of cultural and historical heritage within GLAM institutions. This paper will review the experience gained by the NALIS Foundation in this area and present the achievements made thus far.

Senior Asst. Prof. Dr. Maria Totomanova–Paneva

Ivan Duychev Slavo-Byzantine Center

Old Church Slavonic Text Corpus and Digital Dictionaries

The presentation will focus on the Histdict platform containing digital tools for presentation of Old Church Slavonic/Old Bulgarian written heritage. The existing text corpus and dictionaries of different types are being continuously enriched and further developed by interdisciplinary teams. The freely available resources are in active use by both researchers, as well as by university students in BA and MA programs in the field of Medieval and Slavonic Studies.

Senior Asst. Prof. Dr. Desislava Karaasenova

Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Bulgaria

Language education and virtual exchange in higher education: reflections on design and execution

The presentation explores the experiences and insights gained from the design and execution of a virtual exchange project in higher education, which is conducted in a language foreign to all participants. In particular, it focuses on:



- the interaction between the instructors by analysing the collaborative dynamics, identifying challenges and proposing improvements for future projects;
- the interaction between instructors and students by evaluating the communication strategies employed and suggesting enhancements to foster better student engagement;
- the interaction between students by assessing the platforms used to facilitate student collaboration and offering recommendations for improving peer interactions;
- student participation by discussing strategies to motivate students and reflecting on their effectiveness;
- selecting students by reviewing the criteria used for student selection and explaining the rationale behind these choices;
- project evaluation by assessing the overall goals and performance of the VE project, highlighting successes and areas for improvement.

Discussion and Rounding Off

STRAND 2: CRITICAL HERITAGE

Venue: Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Rectorat Building, 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd,

Hall 1, Floor 1

Time: 9.00–13.00

Moderators:

Prof. Dr. Irene Lazar, University of Primorska, Slovenia and Prof. Dr. Astrid M. Fellner, Saarland University, Germany

09.00–09.20

Keynote:

Prof. Dr. Tullia Catalan
University of Trieste, Italy



The political use of language in a border area. The case of Trieste during the 20th century.

From the Habsburg Empire to the Cold War period, the national clash in Trieste between Italians and Slovenes took place also through the political and instrumental use of language, which became one of the main tools to stem the influence of the so-called 'other' especially during Fascism, but also after the Second World War, when Trieste became one of the 'hot spots' of the Iron Curtain, which divided Italy from Yugoslavia.

The paper will deal with some key moments related to the relationship between linguistic minorities and the border in the region of Giulia over the long term, analysing the issue of the various forms of erasure of the so-called Slavic languages in the Upper Adriatic territory, especially from the 1920s to the end of World War II. There will also be an illustrative focus on two topics: the role of schools and the role of town odonomastics, arriving in the early 1960s.

9.20-11.00

Prof. Dr. Astrid M. Fellner and Eva Nossem

Saarland University, Germany

"Tilli, Tlapalli / The Path of the Red and Black Ink": Decolonizing Western Heritage in the Americas

This short presentation focuses on alternative literacies in the Americas. It does so through the analysis of the aesthetics of the Mexican-born visual artist Tatiana Parceró, who, in her photographs, pursues a project of uncovering Pre-Columbian visual systems of communication. In her works, Parceró palimpsestically uses a series of anatomical drawings, ancient codices, maps, and chemical constructions, which she projects on the female body, mostly her own. Our contribution shows that Parceró's images reanimate the histories of colonialism, imperialism, and cultural contact in the American borderlands, engaging in decolonial acts of "writing without words" (Hill Boone/Mignolo 1994). Proposing the possibility for undoing modern/colonial power relations, Parceró's works open up a critical space of counter-mapping, in which subaltern Indigenous knowledge can emerge.

**Prof. Dr. Irena Lazar**

University of Primorska, Slovenia

Roman, Slavic, Medieval – which is my/your Heritage?

The area of Slovenia is a crossroad of different cultures and civilisations from the prehistoric period onwards. These reflect today in modern Slovenia in our life and culture, and this diversity of our history and cultural influences can be observed all around us and visited in towns, villages, museums and elsewhere. But what is or was the actual perception of this cultural heritage diversity in our lives? How do we think about Roman, Slavic and Medieval Heritage? What can museum collections tell us about this? With a case study from Celje and its Regional Museum, we will follow how the perception of its rich and diverse heritage formed, developed, changed and what influenced these transformations.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Roberta Altin

University of Trieste, Italy

Subaltern Memories in North–East Italy: a museum case study

The Museum of Blacksmith's Art and Cutlery of Maniago (NE Italy) has started a process of research on the sites of previous phases of work, now mostly used for other functions, in order to create a participatory map of memories with an intersectional approach, which then took the form of a "mobile" section of the museum's permanent exhibition. The aim is to provide a critical assessment, after seven years, of a participatory museum action carried out in an ethnographic museum that is part of a regional ecomuseum network in north–east Italy, in the Friulian foothills of the western Dolomites. The layout and the interactive mode chosen represent a work in progress of anthropology applied to heritage, with a particular awareness of subaltern memories, especially gendered ones, that have not left written traces of heritage.

Prof. Dr. Mira Markova

Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Bulgaria

Intangible Heritage as an example of migrated Local Cultures (through the focus of Anastenaria rite in Bulgaria and Greece)

In the center of the presentation is the Anastenaria rite in Bulgaria and Greece as an example of a "migrated" culture related to the Strandzha mountain region. In many respects, the researched ritual places ritual as dominant over ethnic parameters. The ritual preserves the stability of a local culture, which, despite the



different ethnic environment, retains a similar structure, symbols and suggestions because of the archetype being the same.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boris Kavur
University of Primorska, Slovenia

Archaeology, Past, Cultural heritage

Presentations of cultural heritage today, especially archaeology, are still not liberated today from the burden of frames of reference and rhetoric from the past. Especially the narratives about the migrations of populations of movements of things (and ideas) are instead of demonstrating the interconnected world of the past deepening the divide between regions.

The focus of future archaeological research should critically re-evaluate not only the items, but also the narratives about the past. It should focus on the reconstruction of the processes of communications and mutual exchange of ideas, the creations of past networks that were connecting people and regions of Europe. And it is the framework of the university networks, such as T4EU, that provide fertile grounds for future collaborations, for the integration of different research traditions, for the blending of good practices in the presentations of our common cultural heritage.

11.00–11.30

COFFEE BREAK

11.30–13.00

Dr. Lyubomir G. Kyumurdjiev, researcher
Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Bulgaria

It's Not Our Heritage but It's Our Dream

In many European countries there are organizations whose members are engaged in studying and recreating parts of the history and some traditions of the North American indigenous peoples. These "Indianist" groups are usually perceived as part of the phenomenon of cultural-historical reenactments, which is gaining more and more popularity. However, they also demonstrate a number of differences from organizations dealing with Ancient Greek or Roman history, Middle Ages, Renaissance, and other eras of the European past. This turns them



into a "phenomenon within a phenomenon" and raises a number of questions about their activity, goals, identity, etc. Some Native Americans even accuse them of cultural appropriation. Presenting some facts and opinions gathered in my work as an insider, I hope that they may shed more light on these interesting but complex issues.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Milena Blazhieva

Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Bulgaria

The monument "About the Letters"

The column "About the Letters" by the sculptor Galin Malakchiev, erected 40 years ago, is a sculptural interpretation of the Glagolitic alphabet as an important component of Bulgarian cultural and historical heritage.

The occasion for the erection of the column was the celebration of the 1300th anniversary of the founding of the Bulgarian state, which took place in the early 1980s, during the period of late socialism. These commemorations included a multitude of events held under the auspices of the state and subordinated to a certain ideological programme focusing on the reflections of the past on the contemporary state.

The column is part of the architectural and park complex associated with the most significant project of those years – the National Palace of Culture – a building imposed as an emblem of the achievements of the socialist state.

Galina Malakchiev, however, was an artist who was treated with suspicion by the authorities of the time – he did not fit into the model of so-called socialist realism imposed by the authorities, in which artistic experiments were perceived as ideological betrayal. Despite being included in this large-scale project, the column was perceived ambiguously at the time.

Today Galin Malakchiev is recognized as one of the most significant Bulgarian authors of the second half of the last century. As far as The Column is concerned, it is an example of how, in the conditions of the authoritarian state, some artists manoeuvred in search of an opportunity for creative freedom. However, it is now a monument rooted in the texture of the city.



Aleksandra Kirilova Gogova

Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Bulgaria

The research undertaken by Prof. Dr. Vasil Yonchev, artist, on the epigraphic heritage of the old capitals Pliska and Preslav region and the origin of the Old Bulgarian Alphabets – the Glagolitic and the Cyrillic

The alphabetic truth about the origin of the Glagolitic alphabet in the numerous assumptions of scientists offers diverse sources and indicates probable places. An indisputable truth is the name of the author of the new Slavic alphabet, Constantine the Philosopher – called Cyril. Our attempt to shed light on this truth is connected with the written word of the artist Vasil Yonchev – it begins with his research experience established in his creative practice.

Prof. Dr. Yonchev, without introducing professional bias as an artist, shares the opinion that, in the history of civilization, of art and the history of writing, drawing has deviated from its direct creative essence to become a sign-drawing and later – into a letter-alphabet, through which communication between people changes and the written word preserves memory – a record of time for future generations. By graphically studying the signs and bringing them into a logical order in a unified graphic system, Yonchev shows that the three alphabets: the Pliska Alphabet, the Cyrillic and the Glagolitic alphabets have a common structure and an inextricable connection in terms of graphic and sound features.

Albena Yarcheva, Young researcher

Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Bulgaria

Lace in Art and Art in Lace in the works of PhD Bistra Pisancheva and artist Iliya Yanakiev

Lace, with its delicate forms and intricate texture, is a source of inspiration for artists worldwide. Lace-maker Dr. Bistra Pisancheva and artist Iliya Yanakiev create a bridge between tradition and contemporary art through their work. Dr. Pisancheva innovatively uses traditional bobbin lace techniques to "paint" with threads, turning lace into fine art. Yanakiev, inspired by Kalofer lace, integrates its motifs into paintings and installations that explore the connection between nature and Bulgarian cultural heritage. Their work showcases how lace and visual arts can reveal new aesthetic dimensions.



Radoslava Kuneva, Young researcher
Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Bulgaria

Green Heritage as Shared Responsibility: Exploring Intangible Values and Practices on University Campuses through the Case of Sofia University

The presentation focuses on the concept of green heritage and the potential of the green heritage of the university campuses to develop a shared nature-protective concern both in the students and teachers. The presentation elaborates on the topic of the green heritage from a critical perspective and outlines the case study of Sofia University, discussing only preliminary research findings.

Green heritage is understood as the green infrastructure of the university and more specifically it's intangible character – the emotions, knowledge and values it transmits from one generation to the next. The relationship between citizen and nature are performed daily in urban green spaces. Even though this performance has a mundane character, it has the potential to re-establish the dominant conventional norms. The so-called green heritage has a material expression in the form of green spaces and infrastructure, and intangible, even “invisible” elements in the cultural and social practices of teachers and students. One such intangible feature is the work of student club “SKOREC” which has been involved in conveying values of conservation and preservation of nature, biodiversity, “wilderness” in the modern city.

Discussion and Rounding Off