



INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY SEMINAR
FOR BALKAN STUDIES
AND SPECIALIZATIONS



SOUTH-WEST
UNIVERSITY "NEOFIT
RILSKI"

50
YEARS
KNOWLEDGE
FOR THE FUTURE

36th International Scientific Conference



Aristocracy and Meritocracy – The Balkans and the Black Sea Region



5–6 November 2026

South-West University "Neofit Rilski"
Blagoevgrad

PROGRAMME

OPENING

Conference Room 114 • Building 1 • 66 Ivan Mihaylov St.

- 09:00–09:30

Registration
Conference Room 114
- 09:30

Official Opening and Welcome Addresses

PLENARY

- 10:00–13:00

Chairs: Snezhana Dimitrova, Iliya Nedin
South-West University “Neofit Rilski”, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

Victor Neumann West University of Timișoara; The National University of Arts, Bucharest, Romania	The Elites and the Problem of Romania’s Modernization
Branimir Jankovic University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia	The Revival of the Aristocracy in Post-Habsburg and Post-Communist Croatia
Ivanka Petrova Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria	The Formation, Professional Establishment, and Social Mobility of a Meritocratic Elite: An Ethnographic Study of a Member of Bulgaria’s Intellectual Elite (1930s–1980s)
Ana Luleva Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria	The National Round Table of 1989: The Elite Pact and Its Consequences. An Anthropological Interpretation
Georgios Agelopoulos Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece	The discourse of meritocracy in present-day Greek academia
	Discussion
13:00–14:00	Lunch Break

SECTION 1

14:00–16:30 | Chairs: Ioannis Carras, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece
Boyka Ilieva, South-West University “Neofit Rilski”, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

Umit Eser Department of History, Necmettin Erbakan University, Turkey	Where Was the Christian Aristocracy? Phanariotes and the National Reinvention of the Ottoman Balkans
Oliver Schulz Clermont-Ferrand-Regensburg LEA; Département d'études germanophones	Managing a delicate balance: Austria-Hungary and the political and economic elites in Eastern Rumelia (1878–1885)
Erkjad Kajo Aix-Marseille Université, TELEMMe, Aix-en-Provence, France	To Be, Not to Seem: Mid'hat Frashëri and the Invention of a Meritocracy Without Aristocracy in Interwar Albania
Sorin Ciutacu West University of Timișoara, Timișoara, Romania	From Merchant Capital to Service Nobility. The Rise of the Mocioni Family in the Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Banat Seen through the Lens of Conceptual History
Vladimir Janev; Dragan Zajkovski Institute of National History, Skopje, North Macedonia	The Allatini family as representatives of the secular Jewish bourgeoisie in Thessaloniki in XIX century

Discussion

16:30–17:00 Coffee Break

SECTION 2

17:00–18:30 | Chairs: Roman Hadjikosev, South-West University “Neofit Rilski”, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria
Ivo Topalilov, Institute of Balkan Studies and Centre of Thracology “Prof. Alexander Fol”, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia; South-West University “Neofit Rilski”, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

Alexandros Balatsoukas Center for Transimperial History, Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan	Aristocrats of Merit: Phanariot Elites and the Persistence of an Imperial “Old Regime” in the Greek Nation-State
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Salvine Markosyan, Nelli R. Khachaturian Department of Diaspora Studies; Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, NAS RA, Yerevan, Armenia	The Making of a New Merit-Based Intellectual Elite: Hrant Dink and the Transformation of Armenian Public Life in Turkey
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Barış Çatal Düzce University, Düzce, Turkey	Privilege, Merit and the People: Democratic Legitimacy in Sabiha Sertel’s Writings of 1919 and 1924
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Discussion

19:00–19:45 PRESENTATION OF THE SECOND ISSUE (2026) OF BALKANISTIC FORUM JOURNAL

20:00–22:00 Cocktail Reception

SECTION 3

09:30–11:30 | Chairs: Yanko Hristov, Diana Ivanova
South-West University “Neofit Rilski”, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

Alexandar Arroyo
EHESS, CETOBaC, France

Serbian officers’ role and the problem of
military discipline in the Greater War
(1912–1918)

Vlasios Vlasidis,
Giorgos Sakagiannis
University of Macedonia,
Thessaloniki, Greece

Aristocracy or Meritocracy: The Greek 20th
Century Veteran Case

Medea Imnadze
Batumi State Maritime Academy,
Batumi, Georgia
Nino Tebidze
BAU International University, Batumi,
Georgia

From Aristocracy to Meritocracy:
Communication Competence as a
Determinant of Patient Safety in Maritime
Medical Practice

Elena Azmanova
South-West University “Neofit
Rilski”, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

Aristocracy and Meritocracy on the Bulgarian
Black Sea Coast: Literature, Resort Loci, and
Cultural Memory

Discussion

11:30–12:00 Coffee Break

SECTION 4

12:00–13:45 | Chairs: Umit Eser, Department of History, Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, Turkey
Elena Azmanova, South-West University “Neofit Rilski”, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

Ivo Topalilov

Institute of Balkan Studies and
Centre of Thracology “Prof.
Alexander Fol”, Bulgarian Academy of
Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria; South-West
University “Neofit Rilski”,
Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria

The 2023–2024 Archaeological Excavations in
the Episcopal Complex at Parthicopolis:
Results and Perspectives

Vladimir Petkov

Independent Scholar

Denitsa Petrova

Institute for Historical Studies,
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia,
Bulgaria

Mediaeval Balkan rulers – saints and heroes

Bartłomiej Rusin

Independent Researcher; Jagiellonian
University, Kraków, Poland

Romanian diplomats in Bulgaria in the years
1878–1916

Discussion

13:45–15:00

Lunch Break

SECTION 5

15:00–18:30 | Chairs: Stiliyan Stoyanov, South-West University “Neofit Rilski”,
Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria
Erkjad Kajo, Aix-Marseille Université, TELEMMe,
Aix-en-Provence, France

Boyka Ilieva South-West University “Neofit Rilski”, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria	Aristocratic and Meritocratic Models in Translated Literature of the Bulgarian National Revival
Nadezhda Alexandrova Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Sofia, Bulgaria	Moral Merit, Sociability and Utopia: The First Bulgarian Translation of Oliver Goldsmith in the 19th century
Maria Pileva, Nikoleta Patova Institute for Literature, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria	Dr Petar Beron as a European Scholar in the Collections of the British Royal Society
George Gotsiridze NNLE – Teaching-Research Institute for Interdisciplinary Humanities, Georgia	From Noble Privilege to Public Responsibility: The Social Mission of the Georgian Nobility in the Writings of Nineteenth-Century Georgian Intellectuals
Kristian Stefanov Institute for Population and Human Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria	The Influence of Evangelicalism on the Education of Roma Students: The Case of 94 School in the Hristo Botev Neighborhood
Lela Turmanidze, Nana Mazmishvili Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Batumi, Georgia	Meritocracy in Discourse and Practice: A Critical Study of Higher Education Reform in Georgia
Radeya Gesheva Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Sofia, Bulgaria	From Aristocracy to Meritocracy: Didactics of Foreign-Language Literature in Bulgaria

Discussion

18:45–20:00 DRINKS AND OFFICIAL CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE

International University Seminar for Balkan Studies and
Specializations "Prof. Iliya Konev, DSc (Philology)"

South-West University "Neofit Rilski"



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