

HOSPITABLE SEA, HOSTILE SHORES? DISENTANGLING HISTORIES OF CONNECTIONS AND CONFLICTS IN THE BLACK SEA REGION



Orient-Institut Istanbul
(Şahkulu Mah. Galip Dede Cad. No. 65, 34421 Beyoğlu, Istanbul)



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Oceans, seas, rivers, and other big bodies of water have been taking central stage in recent attempts to reimagine histories of different world regions as parts of the same global story of mobility, connections, and entanglements. Although traditionally overshadowed by the Mediterranean, the Black Sea has also begun to attract scholarly attention. A growing number of studies examine themes of empire, slavery, trade, material culture, and environment with the Black Sea at the heart of their geographic and historiographic frameworks. Apart from Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, this interest has been driven by the post-national and trans-imperial turns in historiography.

The Black Sea was never just a site of imperial rivalry or security concerns, as it is often portrayed in the media and many scholarly works today. While the sea overwhelms individual men and women, it is their personal and collective experiences that make up its history. For this workshop, we ask our participants to share their primary source(s) that illustrate the complexity of the Black Sea region and highlight perspectives of individuals, communities, and minorities caught up in the economic, environmental, and imperial crosscurrents of this strategic body of water from the seventeenth through the early twentieth century.

We want to explore this region as a place of entanglements that enabled close contact between vastly different societies and cultures, alongside such phenomena as war, slavery, and colonialism. We hope that a day of open, collegial discussions across diverse research areas and methodological approaches will be intellectually stimulating and foster new connections between the research networks that may not often intersect. Our source-oriented approach is driven by the desire to contribute to the development of a digital compendium of open educational materials for teaching the region in the future.

This one-day, practical-oriented workshop aims to bridge research and educational agendas by inviting scholars to share their primary sources which can be used for university teaching, while also invigorating methodological discussions centered around the specificity of chosen sources. It aims to develop an open compendium of educational materials for teaching the modern history of the region to be published online on the educational platform REESOURCES.

REESOURCES offers resources designed to decentralize curricula on the history of Eastern Europe by diversifying the sources used in teaching, to spark discussions about established metanarratives, and to foster new approaches to teaching and studying the region. The platform is based on the principles of open access, historical inclusivity (incorporating peripheral and marginalized experiences), and critical engagement with sources. These three concepts form the foundation of the project: creating opportunities to uncover history, explore it, and make educational materials accessible to diverse audiences and communities.

Co-organisers:

- Center for Urban History (Lviv, Ukraine)
- The Research Centre Ukraine / Max Weber Foundation (Lviv, Ukraine)
- Orient-Institut Istanbul / Max Weber Foundation (Istanbul, Turkey)
- Center for Russian, Caucasian, Eastern European, and Central Asian Studies (Paris, France)
- Center for Governance and Culture in Europe, University of St. Gallen (St. Gallen, Switzerland)

Programme

9:15-9:30

Introduction
Ivana Cherchovych, Bogdan Pavlish

9:30-11:00

Bogdan Pavlish
Research Centre Ukraine / Max Weber Foundation
Natalia Królikowska-Jedlińska
University of Warsaw
Veruschka Wagner
Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies
Christiane Czygan, chair
Orient Institute Istanbul

11:00-11:30

Coffee Break

11:30-13:00

Paulina Dominik
Tel Aviv University
Agnieszka Aysen Kaim
Polish Academy of Sciences
Svitlana Arabadzhy
University of Oslo
Iryna Klymenko, chair
Research Centre Ukraine / Max Weber Foundation

13:00-14:00

Lunch / Orient-Institut Istanbul / Max Weber Foundation

14:00-15:30

Masha Cerovic
CERCEC
Meryl Lavenant
Sorbonne University
Anna Sydorenko
Institute for Mediterranean Studies
Sofia Dyak, chair
Center for Urban History

15:30-16:00

Coffee Break

16:00-17:00

Roundtable, concluding remarks

19:00

Dinner / Fiççın Restaurant
Asmalı Mescit Mh İstiklal Cad. &, Kallavi Sk. No:13/1, 34430 Beyoğlu

Participants

Svitlana Arabadzhy

University of Oslo

Historian, researcher at the Department of Archeology, Conservation, and History at the University of Oslo. Dr. Arabadzhy's research centers on the social, economic, and cultural history of the Azov Sea region in Ukraine from the end of the 18th through the beginning of the 20th centuries with a special focus on the history of the Greek minority. Her ongoing research project explores the role of the Greek community in forging transnational flows of capital, goods, and people.

Agnieszka Aysen Kaim

Polish Academy of Sciences

Turkologist, translator, Associate Professor at the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Dr. Aysen Kaim's research focuses on oral literature, epic, and traditional theater of the Middle East, Turkish cinema, contacts between Poland and the Ottoman Empire, oriental influences in the Balkans, conversion and state identities in the Ottoman Empire. Her latest book is *People of Two Cultures: Selected Cases of the Cultural Transgression of Poles in the Ottoman Empire (17th–19th Centuries)* (2021).

Masha Cerovic

CERCEC

Historian, Associate Professor at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, director of Centre d'études russes, caucasiennes, est-européennes et centrasiatiques. Her research focuses on the experience of war in the Russian and Soviet imperial space. Her current projects deal with the German-Soviet war and the 1940s in the Soviet Union as well as Russian imperial expansion into the eastern borderlands of the Ottoman Empire after 1877. Dr. Cerovic's book *Les enfants de Staline: la guerre des partisans soviétiques (1941-1944)* was published by Seuil in 2018.

Ivanna Cherchovych

Center for Urban History

Historian, head of educational projects at the Center for Urban History. Her Candidate of Historical Studies (Ph.D. equivalent) was completed at the Ivan Krypiakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in 2014 with a focus on gender and women's history. Her most recent research interests focus on women's domestic servants and female criminality at fin de siècle Habsburg Galicia.

Christiane Czygan

Orient Institute Istanbul

Ottomanist and Turkologist, research fellow at the Orient-Institut Istanbul, member of the editorial board of the online journal *Zemin*. Her current research project involves the critical edition of one of Germany's most precious Ottoman manuscripts – a poetry collection by Sultan Süleyman from the Hamburg manuscript of 1554. Dr. Czygan's Ph.D. thesis on one of the earliest Ottoman newspapers in exile and its notion of good governance was published in 2012 under the title *Zur Ordnung des Staates: Jungosmanische Intellektuelle und ihre Konzepte in der Zeitung Hürriyyet 1868-1870*.

Participants

Paulina Dominik

Tel Aviv University

Historian, postdoctoral fellow at the Dan David Society of Fellows at Tel Aviv University. Her works at the intersection of global history and area studies, focusing on the connected histories of Central-Eastern Europe, the Ottoman Empire, and the Mediterranean in the 19th and 20th centuries. Her first monograph is titled *Poland and the Middle East during the Age of Empire: A Global Biography of Seyfeddin Thadée Gasztowtt*. Her current research project examines Polish imperial thought, (trans-)imperial agency, and practices of informal imperialism in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Mediterranean.

Sofia Dyak

Center for Urban History

Historian, director of the Center for Urban History. Dr. Dyak's research interests include post-war urban recovery and transformation in Eastern Europe, heritage infrastructures and practices in socialist cities, and their legacies. She is preparing a manuscript with the preliminary title *New Lives in Old Cities: Postwar Lviv and the Power of Accommodation*. Her new projects address topics of the management and infrastructures of the "local turn" in Soviet Ukraine during the late socialism period, and the urban professionals from the areas incorporated into the Soviet and socialist realm after 1945 who were involved in infrastructural projects across Africa and Asia, and how their individual and professional trajectories developed after involvement in such projects.

Iryna Klymenko

Research Centre Ukraine / Max Weber Foundation

Historian, director of the Research Centre Ukraine / Max Weber Foundation. Her research interests include the early modern entangled history of Europe's "East" and "West", as well as interdisciplinary methods of historical research. Her first book, *Semantiken des Wandels. Zu Konstruktion von Veränderbarkeit in der Moderne* (Transcript 2019) is an intellectual history of the concept of societal change from the late Middle Ages to the beginning of the modern era. She is currently completing her second book project, *Körper und Ordnung: Eine Religionsgeschichte von Nahrung und Kleidung in der Frühen Neuzeit*, which explores the role of food and clothing in shaping religious identities among Catholic, Jewish, Orthodox, and Protestant groups in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from 1569 to 1648.

Natalia Królikowska-Jedlińska

University of Warsaw

Historian, Assistant Professor of Early Modern History at the University of Warsaw. Dr. Królikowska-Jedlińska's research interests focus on the history of the Black Sea Region in the modern era with particular emphasis on the Crimean Khanate and the North Caucasus. In recent years, she has also devoted much attention to the activities of Catholic missionaries in the East. She is the author of *Law and Division of Power in the Crimean Khanate (1532-1774): With Special Reference to the Reign of Murad Giray (1678-1683)* (Brill, 2019) and co-editor of *Early Modern Overseas Careers: East-Central Europeans as Jesuit Missionaries and Dutch East India Employees* (CEU Press, 2025).

Participants

Meryl Lavenant

Sorbonne University

Historian, PhD Candidate at University Paris Panthéon-Sorbonne. She holds a BA in Russian Studies and an MA in History. She is currently completing a dissertation on Russian maritime policy in the Black Sea from 1774 to the early 1860s, based on research conducted in European archives. Her work explores a range of topics, including diplomacy, maritime law, commercial policy, port regulations, entrepreneurship, and imperial agents.

Bogdan Pavlish

Research Centre Ukraine / Max Weber Foundation

Historian, postdoctoral fellow at the Research Centre Ukraine / Max Weber Foundation. He specializes in early modern Eastern Europe with the focus on the Armenian diaspora, Catholic missions, and slavery in the Black Sea region. His first book manuscript is titled *Diaspora Disrupted: Armenians of Poland-Lithuania and Short Circuits of Early Modern Mobility*.

Anna Sydorenko

Institute for Mediterranean Studies

Graduated from the Department of Political Science at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. She completed her PhD thesis at the Ionian University (Corfu) entitled *The Economic Development of the Crimean Port-Cities, Second Half of the 19th – Beginning of the 20th Century. Evpatoria, Sebastopol, Theodosia*. She is a postdoctoral researcher in the project *Janissaries in Ottoman Port-Cities: Muslim Financial and Political Networks in the Early Modern Mediterranean* in the Institute for Mediterranean Studies of the Foundation for Research and Technology, Hellas.

Veruschka Wagner

Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies

Historian, research fellow at the Institute of Oriental and Asian Studies of the University of Bonn and investigator at the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies. Dr. Wagner's current research is part of the DFG-funded project *Transottomanica and Deals with Agency and Mobility of Slaves from the Black Sea Region in Istanbul in the 16th and 17th Centuries*. She also leads a project funded by the Volkswagen Foundation on satire and caricature in late and post-Ottoman contexts. Since April 2026, Dr. Wagner has been a non-resident fellow at the Hutchins Center for African and African-American Research at Harvard University.

The workshop is a part of the ongoing programs of the two institutions:

- "Rethinking Areas: Black Sea Region" research area at the Research Centre Ukraine / Max Weber Foundation funded by the German Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR).
- "REESOURCES: Rethinking Eastern Europe" educational platform of the Center for Urban History, in particular, the project "Digital Resources for Teaching the Black Sea Region" supported by the Center for Governance and Culture in Europe at the University of St. Gallen.



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