SOUTH-WEST UNIVERSITY NEOFIT RILSKI

50 YEARS
KNOWLEDGE FOR THE FUTURE

INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY SEMINAR FOR BALKAN STUDIES AND SPECIALIZATIONS

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

SOUTH-WEST UNIVERSITY NEOFIT RILSKI

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INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY SEMINAR FOR BALKAN STUDIES AND SPECIALIZATIONS

OPENING

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

09:30–10:00	Registration Conference Room 114
10:00	Official Opening and Welcome Addresses

PLENARY

10:20–12:30 **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

12:30–13:30 Lunch Break

SECTION 1

13:30–15:30 | 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 the 19th Century
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
	Discussion
15:30–16:00	Coffee Break

SECTION 2

16:00–17:30 | 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

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

Barış Çatal
Düzce University, Düzce, Turkey

Privilege, Merit and the People: Democratic Legitimacy in Sabiha Sertel's Writings of 1919 and 1924

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

Discussion

17:30–18:00 PRESENTATION OF THE SECOND ISSUE (2026) OF BALKANISTIC FORUM JOURNAL

18:30–20:30 Cocktail Reception

SECTION 3

10:30–12:00 | 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
12:00–13:00	Lunch Break

SECTION 4

13:00–14:30 | 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

Vladimir Petkov
Independent Scholar

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

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

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

Discussion

14:30–15:00 Coffee Break

SECTION 5

15:00–16:30 | 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
Radeya Gesheva Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia, Bulgaria	From Aristocracy to Meritocracy: Didactics of Foreign-Language Literature in Bulgaria

Discussion

16:30 OFFICIAL CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE

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

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