



Diplomacy, Intelligence, and Influence in the Balkans and Beyond,

17th–19th Centuries

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria

March 24–25, 2026

Organizers:

Aneliya Stoyanova, Aleksandar Zlatanov, Lubomir Krastev

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Venue: [Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Main Building](#)

PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 24.03.2026. (“Prof. Marin Drinov” Hall)

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| 08:30 – 09:00 | Registration |
| 09:00 – 09:30 | Official Opening |
| 09:30 – 10:15 | Keynote Address Arno Strohmeyer Between Publicity and Secrecy: Imperial Diplomacy in Constantinople (16th–18th Century) |
| 10:15 – 10:30 | Coffee Break |

- 10:30 – 11:15** **Panel 1.**
Chair: **Aneliya Stoyanova**
- 10:30 – 10:45** **Michał Wasiucionek**
Translator as a Spy: Samuel Otwinowski and the Polish Lithuanian Intelligence Network on the Polish Ottoman Borderland in the Early Seventeenth Century
- 10:45 – 11:00** **Magdalena Jakubowska**
The Lviv Stauropegion Brotherhood as a key actor in Polish-Moldavian diplomacy in the Early Seventeenth Century
- 11:00 – 11:15** **Vladimir Angelov**
Information on monuments of ancient and medieval culture in the Bulgarian lands in French, German, and Austrian travelogues from the 16th–17th centuries
- 11:15 – 11:45** **Discussion**
- 11:45 – 12:30** **Panel 2.**
Chair: **Konstantin Golev**
- 11:45 – 12:00** **Zsuzsanna Hámori Nagy**
Letters on the Table: Balkans Information Flow and Transylvanian Diplomacy in the Middle of the 1620s
- 12:00 – 12:15** **Gábor Kármán**
Resident envoys of Moldavia and Wallachia at the Sublime Porte (1630–1660)
- 12:15 – 12:30** **Ágnes Szalai**
A "Diplomatic Crisis" in Transylvania: The Escape of Grigore Ghica, Voivode of Wallachia (1664)
- 12:30 – 13:00** **Discussion**
- 13:00 – 14:00** **Lunch**
- 14:00 – 15:00** **Panel 3.**
Chair: **Albena Simova**
- 14:00 – 14:15** **Aneliya Stoyanova**

- Protagonists and Antagonists of the Spanish-Ottoman Truce, 1610s–1620s
- 14:15 – 14:30** **Elisabeth Lobenwein**
Eyes and Ears in Constantinople: Intelligence Practices of Imperial Diplomats in Times of Peace (17th Century)
- 14:30 – 14:45** **Bahri Özel**
Checking the Watch on the Road: Time in Ottoman Ambassadorial Reports to Vienna (1665–1757)
- 14:45 – 15:00** **Yasir Yılmaz**
Habsburg information empire in the Sublime Porte and asymmetrical flow of information from Constantinople to Vienna: Three case studies from 1682, 1699–1700, and 1719–1720
- 15:00 – 15:30** **Discussion**
- 15:30 – 15:45** **Coffee Break**
- 15:45 – 16:30** **Panel 4.**
Chair: **Katalin Schrek**
- 15:45 – 16:00** **Albena Simova**
A Double-Edged Diplomat: Edward Bancroft and the Silas Deane Mission (1776–1778)
- 16:00 – 16:15** **Ü. Serdar Serdaroğlu**
Broker Merchants as Intelligence Nodes: British Levantine Commercial Diplomatic Networks in the Ottoman Balkans (1760–1850)
- 16:15 – 16:30** **Donika Tsanovska–Schneeweiss**
Network of Influence of the Austrian Branch of the Dragoman Family Testa
- 16:30 – 17:00** **Discussion**

Parallel Sessions (“Acad. Ivan E. Geshov” Hall)

- 14:00 – 15:00** **Panel 5.**
Chair: **Lubomir Krastev**
- 14:00 – 14:15** **Alexander Stoyanov**
The Balkans in Napoleon's Foreign Policy Plans (1797–1812)
- 14:15 – 14:30** **Aggelis Zarokostas**
‘Dispatched by General Buonaparte ... for the express purpose of obtaining republican proselytes’: Anglo-French intelligence and competing networks of influence in western Greece during the Revolutionary Wars (1792–1802)
- 14:30 – 14:45** **Margherita Pinzani**
Diplomacy, Exile and Philhellenism: Greek Communities under Tuscan and Ottoman Oversight
- 14:45 – 15:00** **Candan Badem**
Russian military agents in Constantinople in the 19th century
- 15:00 – 15:30** **Discussion**
- 15:30 – 15:45** **Coffee Break**
- 15:45 – 16:30** **Panel 6.**
Chair: **Aleka Strezova**
- 15:45 – 16:00** **Sercan Önder**
Bulgarian Question at the Congress of Berlin (1878)
- 16:00 – 16:15** **Aneta Mihaylova**
Bulgarian-Russian Relations in the First Two Decades after the Liberation through the Eyes of the Romanian Consuls in Bulgaria
- 16:15 – 16:30** **Ergün Hasanoğlu**
The Institutionalization of Ottoman Intelligence and the Position of the Ottoman Commissariat in Sofia in Intelligence Activities (1878–1909)
- 16:30 – 17:00** **Discussion**

Wednesday, 25.03.2026. (“Prof. Marin Drinov” Hall)

- 09:00 – 09:45** **Keynote Address**
Aleka Strezova
 Diplomacy, intelligence, and networks of influence in Southeast Europe during the long 19th century
- 09:45 – 10:00** **Coffee Break**
- 10:00 – 11:00** **Panel 7.**
 Chair: **Aleksandar Zlatanov**
- 10:00 – 10:15** **Gabor Demeter**
 Russian and Austro-Hungarian agents in István Burián’s diary (1886–1895) – the knowledge of consular diplomacy on informal activities
- 10:15 – 10:30** **Katalin Schrek**
 The “Conférence à Quatre”: Austria-Hungary and the Negotiations on the Balkan Railways
- 10:30 – 10:45** **Boriana Antonova–Goleva**
 A Journey of Maps: Machinations, Thefts and Speculations in Ottoman Railway Development
- 10:45 – 11:00** **Nikola Zečević**
 Writing Strategy in Secret: The Intelligence Backstory of Načertanije (1843–1848)
- 11:00 – 11:30** **Discussion**
- 11:30 – 12:15** **Panel 8.**
 Chair: **Boriana Antonova–Goleva**
- 11:30 – 11:45** **Daniel Cain, Adrian Bogdan Ceobanu**
 Some Balkan destinies at the end of the 19th century: Apostol Margarit and Lazar Duma
- 11:45 – 12:00** **Shelby Jones**
 Letters from Herzegovina: William J. Stillman’s Special Correspondence for The London Times (1875–1877)

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| 12:00 – 12:15 | Christo Kostov Folklore, Espionage, and Nation Building: Stefan Verković’s Mission in Ottoman Macedonia |
| 12:15 – 12:45 | Discussion |
| 12:45 – 13:45 | Lunch |
| 13:45 – 14:30 | Panel 9. Chair: Gabor Demeter |
| 13:45 – 14:00 | Lubomir Krastev British Diplomacy and the Crimean War (1853–1856) |
| 14:00 – 14:15 | Aleksandar Zlatanov Russia's Diplomatic Perspective on the Balkans after the Crimean War, 1856-1878 |
| 14:15 – 14:30 | Nadezhda Vasileva Agents of Empire: Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, British Diplomacy, and Intelligence in the Ottoman Balkans (1878–1885) |
| 14:30 – 15:00 | Discussion and Final Remarks |

Parallel Sessions (“Acad. Ivan E. Geshov” Hall)

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| 10:00 – 11:00 | Panel 10. Chair: Lubomir Krastev |
| 10:00 – 10:15 | Volodymyr Poltorak The Czajkowski Brothers in Diplomatic, Intelligence, and Ideological Confrontation in the Balkans |
| 10:15 – 10:30 | Cengiz Yolcu Extraordinary Life of a “Double Agent”: Teofan Raynov as a Spy, Revolutionary, and Agent |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | Anna Chankova Apostol Konkovich ‘No second agent as loyal and sincere as myself’ |
| 10:45 – 11:00 | Silvana Rachieru |

- “I Still Want to Be Useful for the Ottoman Nation – It Is My Only Desire”: the Intelligence Activity of Ernest Efendi in Romania
- 11:00 – 11:30** **Discussion**
- 11:30 – 12:15** **Panel 11.**
Chair: **Nadezhda Vasileva**
- 11:30 – 11:45** **Ediz Hazir**
The Bulgarian Uniate Movement as Vatican Strategy: Pius IX, Religious Diplomacy, and the Reorientation of Catholic Policy in the Balkans (1860–1861)
- 11:45 – 12:00** **Elmira Vassileva**
Religious missions and political influence: American Protestant missionaries in the 19th century Ottoman Balkans
- 12:00 – 12:15** **Mustafa Can Güripek**
Bulgarian-Ottoman Commercial and Diplomatic Relations After the Berlin Treaty: The Transformation of Trade Volume and Commodity Composition (1885–1907)
- 12:15 – 12:45** **Discussion**
- 12:45 – 13:45** **Lunch**