

# Abstracts

*Daniela-Maria Mariş*

## **Four and a Half Elections – How the Super Election Year in Romania Was Extended**

2024 was not only a super election year worldwide, it was also a super election year for Romania: with the local and European elections combined in summer, the parliamentary and two rounds of presidential elections by the end of 2024, Romanians were called to the polls a total of five times. While the results of the local and European elections were not surprising, the parliamentary and especially the presidential election shocked Romania, as the first round of the presidential elections were unexpectedly won by the ultra-nationalist Călin Georgescu. His campaign, run mainly on TikTok, stunned many as he was not expected to make the top five according to previous polls. Due to the obscurities of his campaign, the constitutional court annulled the results of the first round of the presidential election, so that it will have to be repeated entirely in 2025. The unprecedented political situation in Romania poses a threat to Romanian democracy and raises questions about how resilient democracies really are.

*Olga Bostan*

## **Timely Matter – On Water, Nostalgia, and Materiality in a Moldovan Village**

In rural Moldova, access to drinking water remains a significant challenge, with many communities relying on private wells and surface water due to the absence of centralized infrastructure. Based on ethnographic research in Văldineşti (pseudonym), this article explores how locals engage with water beyond its material role as a life-sustaining resource. Water quality, often assessed through sensory perceptions of taste, colour, and smell, becomes a focal point for reflecting on the past, present, and future. The study highlights how nostalgic narratives and sensory experiences of water's changing properties offer a lens to understand the temporal dynamics of rural life in the post-Soviet space. Through these interactions, water not only shapes villagers' daily practices but also acts as a medium for negotiating political and social concerns, revealing how affective responses challenge linear conceptions of time and reflect broader struggles concerning environmental and infrastructural precarity in the area.

**Kateřina Králová**

## **Jewish Forced Labor in Karya – An Analysis in the Context of the Berlin Special Exhibition**

The in-depth analysis of the special exhibition “Karya 1943 – Forced Labor and Holocaust,” curated by Iason Chandrinos and Iris Hax at the Documentation Center for Nazi Forced Labor, examines the historical context of the German occupation of Greece and forced labor in Karya. This exhibition, presented simultaneously in Berlin and Athens, sheds light on previously overlooked aspects of this dark history. The Interdisciplinary Research Group on Conflict Landscapes (IAK) at Osnabrück University (2023, under the leadership of Christoph Rass) documented key historical events related to Karya forced labor, including geoarchaeological research.

While highlighting the role of scholarly research and public history in confronting and re-interpreting difficult legacies, this article reflects on the broader implications of the exhibition for the culture of remembrance in Germany and Greece. The study suggests that transnational approaches, such as this kind of exhibition, play a crucial role in fostering collective memory and raising awareness of the Holocaust.

**Alexander Bräger**

## **Harry Potter, Chechnya and the Khazar Khaganate – Serbia and Kosovo in New Russian Orthodox Publishing**

The return of the Russian Orthodox Church into Russia’s public life led to the emergence of a vibrant literary scene, particularly during the 2000s. Many texts from this era prominently feature narratives of Russian exceptionalism and victimhood, and frequently display strongly antisemitic and Islamophobic sentiments, as well as conspiratorial thinking regarding the West. Despite providing many insights into the radicalization of Russian orthodox discourse specifically, and Russian society as a whole, this era and its tropes have remained largely underexplored in Western scholarship. This article focuses on analyzing conspiratorial rhetoric in the most prominent texts by orthodox authors Nikos Zervas, Elena Chudinova, and Tatyana Gracheva, particularly regarding their depictions of the break-up of Yugoslavia and the war in Kosovo as part of a world-wide anti-Russian (and in a lesser extent anti-Serbian) conspiracy.