

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

Central and Eastern Europe in the Early Modern World (c. 1500–1800)

28-30 September 2026

Faculty of Culture and Arts, University of Warsaw
Warsaw, Poland



Scientific Committee and Organisers

Prof. Giancarlo Casale, Department of History, European University Institute

Prof. Igor Chabrowski, Faculty of History, University of Warsaw

Dr Klaudia Kuchno, Faculty of Culture and Arts, University of Warsaw

Dr Natalia Woszczyk, Berlin Centre for Historical Research, Polish Academy of Sciences

Dr Jan Błoński, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences

Accommodation

Accommodation for participants who requested it has been arranged at **Motel One Warsaw–Chopin (Tamka 38)**. Rooms are booked under each participant's name for 28–30 September 2026 (two nights), with breakfast included. For the most up-to-date information on check-in and check-out times, breakfast hours, and other practical details, please consult the hotel's website.

Venue

All conference panels, coffee breaks and lunches will be held at the **Auditorium (Sala Wykładowa) of the Faculty of Culture and Arts, University of Warsaw**. The building is located at Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28, within the University's main campus in the heart of the Old Town.

Getting There

The conference venue is located on the main campus of the University of Warsaw, at Krakowskie Przedmieście. From Motel One Warsaw–Chopin (Tamka 38), the campus can be reached on foot in approximately 10–15 minutes.

The nearest **metro station is Nowy Świat–Uniwersytet (M2 line)**, a few minutes' walk from the university's main gate. Several tram and bus lines also serve the area—look for stops near *Krakowskie Przedmieście* or *Uniwersytet*. The main gate to the university is clearly marked, and **the Auditorium (Sala Wykładowa) is located on the ground floor** of the Faculty of Culture and Arts building.

Conference Dinner

Speakers and moderators are warmly invited to the conference dinner on Tuesday, **29 September, at 19:00**, at **Cinema Paradiso, Krakowskie Przedmieście 21/23**. The organisers will cover the cost of the meal and water. Any additional alcoholic or non-alcoholic drinks should be paid for individually. Please confirm whether you would like to attend the dinner and let us know about any dietary requirements.

Contact

globalconnections.waw26@gmail.com

PROGRAMME

MONDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2026

16:30-17:00 | Registration

17:00-18:30 | Keynote Lecture

Tomasz Grusiecki, *The Last Aurochs: A Global History of Extinction before Extinction*

18:30-19:30 | Welcome Drinks

TUESDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2026

9.30-11.00 | Panel 1: Spatial Entanglements of Central and Eastern Europe

Chair: TBC

Yulia Koniva, *Mapping Eurasian Connectivity: Tatar Routes and the Global Connections of Early Modern Ukraine*

Michał Pospiszyl, *New Boston on the Warta: Escape Ecologies and the Colonial Frontier in Eastern Europe, c. 1750–1800*

Filip Emanuel Schuffert, *East Central European “Large” Cities as Nodes in Early Modern European and Global Urban Networks*

11:00-11:30 | Coffee Break

11.30-13.00 | Panel 2: Central and Eastern Europe in the Information Networks

Chair: TBC

Zsuzsa Barbarics-Hermanik, *Writing Central and Eastern Europe into the Global History of News*

Alena Bagro, *From Italian Treatises to Podolian Masonry: The Circulation of Fortification Knowledge and Guild Technologies in Early Modern Ukraine (ca. 1500–1800)*

Janka Kovács, *Translating the Mind: Cultural Translation and the Circulation of Psychological Knowledge in the Late Enlightenment Habsburg Monarchy*

13:00-14:30 | Lunch Break

14.30-16.00 | Panel 3: Mediating Power and Diplomacy in Central and Eastern Europe

Chair: TBC

Illia Rudyk, *The Patriarch in the King's Realm: Constantinople's Authority in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth*

Alexandr Osipian, *Connecting the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the global market: Armenian merchant communities facilitating international trade and Polish diplomatic ties with the Middle East*

Eros Calcara, *An Ambassador's Dress: Diplomatic Fashion in the Europe of Modern Age (16th–17th Centuries)*

WEDNESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2026

9.30-11.00 | Panel 4: Natural Worlds of Central and Eastern Europe

Chair: TBC

Andrzej Staniszewski, *Baltic, Waterways And Shaping Of The Global Imagination In 16th And 17th Century Poland*

Christina Anne Stackpole, *In Search of the Magna Bestia: The Elk and the Sixteenth-Century Imagination of "Eastern" Europe*

Katarzyna Pekacka-Falkowska, *Global Nature in a Baltic Hub: Local and Exotic Plants in the Material and Scientific Culture of Gdańsk/Danzig (1650-1764)*

11:00-11:30 | Coffee Break

11.30-13.00 | Panel 5: Central and Eastern Europe as a Hub of Global Markets

Chair: TBC

Leonhard Engelmaier, *Local Leaves, Global Flavours: The Making of Central and Eastern European Tobaccos*

John Freeman, *Eastern Baltic Interest in Trade to the Coromandel Coast of India: Two Alternative Approaches from the Seventeenth Century*

Lucrezia Eritrei, *Collecting Power: Diplomatic Networks and the Roman Art Market between Poland and Russia*

13:00-14:00 | Lunch Break

14.00-15.00 | Panel 6: Global World in Central and Eastern European Perspectives

Chair: TBC

Stefano Gulizia, *The Invention of the Chinese Past: Martini Rewrites Alsted*

Anastasia Tenchurina, *India and Its Inhabitants in German Translations of English Enlightenment Texts*

15:00-15:30 | Final Remarks

ABSTRACTS

Keynote Lecture

Tomasz Grusiecki

The Last Aurochs: A Global History of Extinction before Extinction

From the sixteenth century onward, Jaktorów Forest in Mazovia, Poland, became the final refuge of the aurochs, a now-extinct species of long-horned wild bovid. Despite the Polish kings' sustained efforts at conservation, the last recorded specimen perished in 1627 under the watchful eye of King Sigismund III. Yet this terminal event did not register as extinction in any modern sense; rather, it unfolded within an epistemic horizon in which species loss remained largely unthinkable. A providential worldview resisted the notion of disappearance, and extinction as a scientific concept would only cohere in the nineteenth century. The aurochs may have vanished from Jaktorów Forest, but it was presumed to persist elsewhere—its local absence did not yet amount to species-level loss.

This lecture treats the aurochs as a case study in what might be called extinction before extinction: a condition in which terminal decline, epistemic opacity, and geographic displacement intersect. On this reading, a forensic engagement with early modern accounts traces the aurochs across a dispersed and unstable archive, leading to the Americas, Muscovy, and the Arctic, and indirectly even to Africa and India. It also draws into its orbit animals now understood as taxonomically distinct—such as the wisent and the bison—as well as mythical creatures like the unicorn and the griffin.

By situating the aurochs within these unsettled regimes of knowledge, the lecture reconsiders early modern ideas of scarcity, finitude, and loss, asking how the condition of being “the last” was apprehended in the absence of a stable concept of extinction. It further argues that early modern natural history—often read as a precursor to modern science—can instead be understood as a form of proto-planetary reasoning, in which local disappearance is mediated through global conjecture, and absence becomes legible only through expansive, and often speculative, geographies.

Tomasz Grusiecki is Associate Professor and Bader Chair in Northern Baroque Art at Queen's University, Kingston, Canada. His research centres on artefacts that register cultural mediation, human–nonhuman entanglement, and the ways material things attune us to the world we inhabit. He works on the material and visual cultures of Germanic and Slavic regions of northern Europe, though the scope of his research often exceeds those geographies. He is the author of *Transcultural Things* and *The Spectre of Orientalism in Early Modern Poland–Lithuania* (Manchester University Press, 2023), and is currently at work on a second monograph, *The Last Aurochs: Art-Making, Zoopolitics, and Early Modern Extinction*.

Panel 1: Spatial Entanglements of Central and Eastern Europe

Yulia Koniva

Mapping Eurasian Connectivity: Tatar Routes and the Global Connections of Early Modern Ukraine

This paper examines the network of Tatar routes that crossed Ukrainian lands between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as corridors of Eurasian connectivity linking the Ottoman Empire, the Crimean Khanate, Muscovy, and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. While early modern Ukraine has often been interpreted as a frontier zone shaped by military confrontation and imperial competition, this study argues that the region should also be understood as a space of mobility and exchange embedded in wider transregional networks.

The paper draws on David Christian's framework of trans-ecological routes, pathways that crossed and connected distinct environmental zones, and engages with the recent reassessment of the Silk Roads as a historiographical construct (Khazanov, Jacobs) to reframe Ukrainian steppe corridors within broader debates about Eurasian connectivity. Rather than treating individual routes as isolated pathways of military movement or peripheral appendages to dominant narratives of long-distance exchange, the paper conceptualizes them as components of an extensive communication system that linked steppe, forest-steppe, and forest zones across Eastern Europe and the northern Black Sea region.

Drawing on cartographic sources, administrative documents, and travel accounts, the paper reconstructs the geography and functions of major Tatar routes traversing Left- and Right-Bank Ukrainian lands, - the Muravskiy, Iziumskiy, and Kalmiushki routes east of the Dnipro, and the Chorniy, Kuchmanskiy, and Volos'kiy routes west of the Dnipro. Beyond their military functions, these corridors served as arteries of economic exchange, carrying salt, grain, and captives to Kaffa, while Ukrainian chumak traders adapted them into commercial routes linking inland settlements with Black Sea ports. By placing Tatar routes at the center of analysis, the paper challenges narratives portraying early modern Ukraine as a peripheral borderland, highlighting instead the region's role as a nodal space within Eurasian networks of movement and exchange that connected Eastern Europe to global early modern histories.

Dr Yuliia Koniva is a Ukrainian historian and associate postdoctoral researcher at the Groupe de Recherche d'Histoire (GRHis, UR 3831), Université de Rouen Normandie, France. Her research focuses on early modern Eastern European history, with particular emphasis on road networks, border development, and steppe mobility in Ukrainian territories during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Her book *The Roads of Sloboda Ukraine in the 1700s–early 1800s* was published in 2020, and her article on communication routes in Sloboda Ukraine appeared in *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* in 2024. Her current research addresses broader questions of Eurasian connectivity and trans-ecological steppe mobility. Her research interests include the history of roads, border studies, historical cartography, and historical geography. She does not intend to publish the paper following the conference.

Michał Pospiszyl

***New Boston on the Warta: Escape Ecologies and the Colonial Frontier in Eastern Europe,
c. 1750–1800***

Histories of the partitions of Poland-Lithuania (1772-1795) usually remain within a European frame of dynastic diplomacy and the balance of power. This paper instead reads them as an episode of eighteenth-century globalization, in which the Commonwealth came to be imagined and treated as Europe's internal colonial frontier – a “Canada of Europe.” Working from estate inventories, village court books, royal-court decrees, vagrant interrogations, colonization maps, and travel writing, I advance three connected arguments.

First, that Prussia's eastward turn drew, in part, on its disenchantment with maritime empire: after the collapse of its Emden-based overseas trading companies, Frederick II redirected colonial ambition inward, recasting the draining of the Warta and Netze wetlands as a substitute conquest – “a province won in peacetime.” Second, that this internal colonization borrowed openly from the American one. Prussian colonists founded villages named Philadelphia, Quebec, New Boston, and Maryland; pamphleteers, echoing Buffon, branded Poles the “orangutans of Europe”; and the reclamation of “illegible” landscapes was imagined as the civilizing of a New World wilderness. Third, I argue that alongside climate, grain, and high diplomacy, a less visible factor shaped the partition conjuncture: mobility. The flight of deserters, religious dissenters, and serfs into the Commonwealth's forests, marshes, and wastelands turned these “escape ecologies” into refuges that absorbed fugitives from across the partitioning states and repeatedly frustrated the cordons, decrees, and biopolitical instruments meant to fix populations in place.

Read together, these threads recast partition less as a single drama of territory or grain than as one outcome of an entangled, globally connected frontier – where colonial ambition, environmental improvement, and the everyday disorder of escape pulled against one another.

Michał Pospiszyl is an Assistant Professor of History at the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences and at the Institute for Advanced Study at Central European University in Budapest. In the academic year 2026/27, he will be a fellow at the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute (HURI) at Harvard University. He was the principal investigator on two grants from the National Science Centre and has held fellowships at the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) in Vienna, as well as visiting fellowships at New York University, Yale University, and MIT. He also holds a fellowship of the Minister of Science and Higher Education for outstanding young scientists (2025–2028). Pospiszyl work has appeared or is forthcoming (2026) in *American Historical Review*, *Journal of Modern History*, *Journal of Social History*, and *Environmental History*. He lives in the Białowieża Forest.

Filip Emanuel Schuffert
East Central European “Large” Cities as Nodes in Early Modern European and Global Urban Networks

In 1750, the controversial yet ambitious Saxon prime minister Heinrich von Brühl praised his newly acquired and extensively upgraded town of Pforten/Bródno with the words that it would become “known in the world.” The ambition is clear: a small Lusatian border town was to become an urban place of supra-regional, indeed global, radiance, reflecting the rank and splendour of its owner.

Metropolitanity and world renown were closely linked in the early modern period. Contemporary and historical metropolitan research draws on Immanuel Wallerstein’s world-system theory and understands cities as nodes within vertical and horizontal networks of entanglement. Cities of the same order are horizontally connected; smaller cities are more strongly embedded in regional contexts, while metropolises or “global cities” claim to bundle supra-regional, imperial, or worldwide functions. Yet such views of urban hierarchies and entanglements had already been formulated by early modern thinkers.

This paper reconstructs early modern notions of European and global urban systems on the basis of modern metropolitan research. It focuses on authors such as Giovanni Botero, Stanislaus Reinhard Acxtemeier, and Denis Diderot, whose texts describe cities not only as administrative or economic centres, but also as switching points of political order, cultural communication, and spatial entanglement. Acxtemeier in particular designed a network of metropolises in the seventeenth century, which he projected onto the world of Alexander the Great. In this conception, the metropolis appears as a point of connection between continents and empires.

In a second step, the paper asks how Poland-Lithuania was embedded in such early modern urban networks. Using the Polish-Lithuanian urban landscape as an example, it examines how cities such as Gdańsk, Kraków, and Warsaw were presented in learned, political, and descriptive texts as places of supra-regional and global significance. The focus is less on the actual success of such attempts at enhancement than on the actors, media, and forms of argumentation through which a globally perceptible surplus of significance was to be produced.

Filip Emanuel Schuffert studied History, East European History, Sociology, and Slavic Studies at Justus Liebig University Giessen. He completed his studies with award-winning theses, including the Polish Ambassador’s Main Prize and the Schroubek Young Scholars’ Award. In addition to project positions at the Institute for Saxon History and Ethnology in Dresden and later at the University of Vienna, he worked as a research associate at the University of Regensburg. There, he completed his dissertation, *Metropolitane Transformationsprozesse Warschaus im 18. Jahrhundert*, which was awarded *summa cum laude*. He has received scholarships from the German Academic Scholarship Foundation, the Institute for Comparative Urban History in Münster, and the German Historical Institute Warsaw. Since 2025, he serves as co-spokesperson of the Young German Association for East European Studies. Schuffert is currently an affiliated researcher at Justus Liebig University Giessen.

Panel 2: Central and Eastern Europe in the Information Networks

Zsuzsa Barbarics-Hermanik, University of Vienna

Writing Central and Eastern Europe into the Global History of News

The paper challenges the marginalisation of Central and Eastern Europe in global history scholarship by examining the role of handwritten newsletters in transcontinental and transcultural networks of communication and exchange during the early modern period. Based on a comparative study of collections that emerged in territories under the control of the Austrian Habsburgs and the Ottomans in the region during the 16th-18th centuries, the paper outlines how, when and why this region became part of this worldwide communication network at an early stage. In doing so, it demonstrates that Central and Eastern Europe was indeed involved in global connections, circulations, and entanglements via news. It also asks what it meant for the collectors and other individuals in the region to regularly receive information about events and developments taking place simultaneously not only in different parts of the European continent but also around the world. How did they experience this contemporaneity, and how were they shaped by these processes of exchange spanning continents? The paper argues that participation in a shared present in the 16th-18th centuries was not the exclusive privilege of individuals in the western part of the European continent. In many cases, individuals in our region of investigation did effectively facilitate this participation for 'Western Europeans'.

The paper also explores the methodological challenges of researching these sources in the archives and manuscript collections of libraries. It sheds light on the defining features of handwritten newsletters, traces their emergence and development as an independent medium and emphasises that they mirror the first steps in the globalisation of communication from the 16th century onwards.

Zsuzsa Barbarics-Hermanik is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of History and the Institute of Austrian Historical Research at the University of Vienna. She is specialised in late medieval and early modern cultural and media history, with a focus on the territories of the Ottomans and the Austrian Habsburgs, as well as the Ottoman-Habsburg-Venetian contact zones in Central- and Southeast Europe. She has published extensively on the history of communication via manuscript and print media, the history of the book, and the images and memories of the 'Turks' in early modern and modern Europe.

Alena Bagro

From Italian Treatises to Podolian Masonry: The Circulation of Fortification Knowledge and Guild Technologies in Early Modern Ukraine (ca. 1500–1800)

How did Early Modern European theoretical developments in military engineering and geometry circulate, adapt, and transform when implemented by local construction guilds and stonemasons in the Podolian region (modern-day Western Ukraine)? Specifically, how did abstract architectural knowledge from printed books bridge the gap to practical, localized construction techniques in non-central regional fortresses?

Main Sources: The study relies on a cross-disciplinary array of primary sources. These include architectural and military treatises, ranging from the manuscript works of Francesco di Giorgio Martini housed in the Medici Archive in Florence to mid-17th-century printed books in the Polish language, such as Józef Naronowicz-Naroński's *Architektura militaris, to jest budownictwo wojenne* (1659). These theoretical texts are cross-referenced with regional narrative materials and judicial records (acts books) of the Podolian region (centered in Terebovlia, modern-day Ternopil oblast) from the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine in Lviv. This archival data is critically integrated with physical evidence from field research: photographic documentation of masonry styles at fortification sites (Lviv, Terebovlia, Kamianets-Podilskyi, Zbarazh, Buchach) and a comparative material analysis of four historical limestone quarries in the Ternopil region.

The paper applies an interdisciplinary methodology at the intersection of historical science, technology studies (construction history), and art research. It combines archival textual analysis with material culture approaches. Furthermore, it utilizes comparative structural and field methodology informed by modern experimental archaeology (reconstruction models like Guédelon, France) and geodetic analysis in collaboration with Lviv Polytechnic National University. This paper argues that Early Modern Central and Eastern Europe was deeply entangled in global intellectual transfers, where military and geometry concepts did not merely flow top down but were actively localized. It contends that a dense network of castles in the Ternopil region, built concurrently within a short timeframe, demonstrates a highly specialized, bidirectional exchange. Local craftsmen and builders translated Western European theoretical treatises into a distinct Podolian school of masonry, optimizing global engineering knowledge using regional materials and vernacular stone-cutting traditions.

Alena Bagro is an independent scholar, PhD, and Board Member of the European Federation of Fortified Sites: Ukrainian Initiative (EFFORTS: UA). Her professional activity combines archival research, field exploration, and the coordination of international projects, contributing to the documentation and preservation of early modern military infrastructure and cultural heritage. She has held research fellowships at the New Europe College in Bucharest (2024–2025), and the German Historical Institute in Warsaw, where she organized a major international conference on transcultural knowledge exchange in defensive architecture (2023). Currently, she is the principal investigator of the US-funded AVISTA START Grant (2026), focusing on medieval construction technologies and castles in Ukraine.

Janka Kovács

Translating the Mind: Cultural Translation and the Circulation of Psychological Knowledge in the Late Enlightenment Habsburg Monarchy

This paper examines the circulation and transformation of psychological and medical knowledge in the Kingdom of Hungary between roughly 1770 and 1830 through the lens of cultural translation. Focusing on Hungarian-language translated and compiled medical works, it explores how concepts associated with empirical psychology and the emerging medical interpretation of mental illness were adapted from German, French, English, and Italian scholarly traditions within the multilingual environment of the Habsburg Monarchy. Rather than treating the Hungarian reception of Enlightenment medicine as a delayed imitation of Western European models, the paper argues that the period between 1770 and 1830 constituted a distinct phase of late Enlightenment intellectual transformation, during which imported concepts were selectively reformulated to fit local linguistic, institutional, and social realities. Translators and compilers did not merely transmit knowledge but actively participated in reshaping medical and psychological terminology, negotiating between scholarly discourse, confessional traditions, and the practical demands of vernacular communication. Drawing on Hungarian-language medical translations, compilations, and popularizing texts, the paper reconstructs the mechanisms through which psychological knowledge circulated across imperial and linguistic boundaries. Particular attention is paid to strategies of vernacularization, conceptual adaptation, and linguistic innovation surrounding notions of the soul, madness, sensibility, and mental pathology. By foregrounding translation as a process of intellectual transformation rather than passive reception, the paper contributes to recent efforts to integrate Central and Eastern Europe into connected and transnational histories of knowledge. It argues that the Habsburg Monarchy functioned not as a peripheral recipient of Enlightenment thought, but as a dynamic intermediary space in which medical and psychological ideas were continuously reinterpreted and localized.

Janka Kovács is currently a research fellow at the ELTE Research Center for the Humanities, Institute of History. She received her PhD from Eötvös Loránd University in 2022 with a dissertation exploring the early discourses of the psy-sciences in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Hungary, with particular focus on knowledge transfers and the local adaptation of scientific knowledge. Since then, she has worked on postdoctoral projects focusing on the early institutionalization, professionalization, and bureaucratization of psychiatry in Hungary.

Panel 3: Mediating Power and Diplomacy in Central and Eastern Europe

Illia Rudyk

The Patriarch in the King's Realm: Constantinople's Authority in the Early Modern Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth

This paper will examine how the authority of the patriarchs of Constantinople was understood in the Polish–Lithuanian state. In the seventeenth century, the Commonwealth was one of the few polities in Europe where several Christian traditions coexisted under a single political authority, sharing political and social institutions yet divided by competing visions of ecclesiastical order and doctrine. The Ecumenical Patriarchs occupied a distinctive place in this landscape. Although geographically far from the Commonwealth and rarely involved directly in its internal affairs, they served as points of reference for local actors in numerous controversies over church and political matters.

The patriarchs themselves were subjects of the Ottoman sultan, operating within an ecclesiastical order shaped by that sovereignty, while the Orthodox communities under their canonical authority lived under a Catholic monarch and existed in a broader multiconfessional society. These circumstances made patriarchal power a genuinely contested category: on what grounds could patriarchal actions be regarded as legitimate, how were they perceived within the legal system of the region, and according to what criteria were individual patriarchs accepted or challenged. By analyzing official acts, polemical literature and correspondence, this paper argues that patriarchal authority as a category was never fixed by canon law; rather, it was fluidly redefined by local elites.

Illia Rudyk: I am an independent researcher specializing in the history of religion with a focus on the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and its complex religious landscape. I am particularly interested in how different Christian communities interpreted and engaged with religious authority both within and outside their own tradition. I completed my PhD (2026) at the Institute of History, University of Wrocław, with a dissertation examining how Orthodox elites of the Polish–Lithuanian state perceived the role of Eastern patriarchates in matters of jurisdiction, doctrine, and church governance. My research has been supported by fellowships at the Leibniz Institute of European History in Mainz, the Gotha Research Library, and the University of Vienna.

Alexandr Osipian

Connecting the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the global market: Armenian merchant communities facilitating international trade and Polish diplomatic ties with the Middle East

History of Armenian diaspora in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is misinterpreted as history of tolerated ethnic minority which was finally assimilated. No one in Poland is examining Armenian merchant network as a subject of its own right – as economic force compared with simultaneous western phenomena – the Levant Company or the East India Companies.

The main purpose of this paper is to study Armenian merchants as active agents of Polish foreign trade and foreign policy. By the turn of seventeenth century Armenian merchant network based in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth maintained commercial ties with Amsterdam, Lisbon, Venice, Moscow, Isfahan (Persia), Istanbul and multiple cities in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, Armenian merchants facilitated cultural exchange and knowledge transfer between the Middle East and East-Central Europe.

Furthermore, when they were in Istanbul, Armenian merchants provided Polish ambassadors with indispensable information and advice, which helped to establish more informal contacts with the Ottoman statesmen. And the merchants provided Polish ambassadors with loans necessary to make these informal contacts successful. In this way Armenian merchants were able to defend their commercial interests in the Polish-Ottoman treaties.

Acting as interpreters, couriers, and envoys employed by the royal chancellery, Armenian merchants had permanent access to the highly restricted information they were able to use in their commerce. First-hand knowledge of Polish-Ottoman relations helped to make their long-distance trade more predictable.

Because of their indispensable diplomatic services Armenian merchants enjoyed regular and trustworthy relations with the king, royal chancery, and high-ranking statesmen. The merchants used that access to get more commercial privileges in Poland-Lithuania and to ask for protection every time when their rights were restricted by the municipal authorities.

Dr. Alexandr Osipian is a Research Fellow at the Leibniz-Institut für Geschichte und Kultur des östlichen Europa, Leipzig. His current research project “Armenian Merchant Networks and Long-Distance Trade between Poland-Lithuania, the Ottoman Empire, Persia and Russia in the Early Modern Period” is supported by the DFG (Forschungsprojekt OS 652/2-1). In 2014–2015 he took part at the Harvard University research project “From Riverbed to Seashore. Art on the Move in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean in the Early Modern Period.” In 2025-2026 he served as Professor of the Entangled History of Ukraine at the Europa-Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt(Oder). In 2021-2022 he was a Research Fellow at the Osteuropa-Institut, Freie Universität Berlin. In 2018-2019 he served as Professor of the History of Ukraine at the Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen.

Eros Calcara

An Ambassador's Dress: Diplomatic Fashion in the Europe of Modern Age (16th–17th Centuries)

Ambassadors' attire between the 16th and 17th centuries played a central role in the construction of the political and cultural image of European courts. In an era when diplomacy was increasingly formal and ritualistic, fashion became a symbolic tool capable of expressing power, prestige, and national identity. This article analyzes the role of diplomatic dress as a vehicle for political and cultural messages, focusing on the materials, colors, accessories, and dress codes that governed ambassadors' public presence. Through the examination of documentary sources, official portraits, and accounts of diplomatic missions, it highlights how dress served as a mediator between the individual self and the sovereign authority it represented. Specifically, it explores the differences in fashions among the major European courts and the way ambassadors adapted their appearance to local norms without renouncing the distinctive signs of their rank and origin. The article therefore proposes a reading of diplomatic fashion as a language of visual negotiation, highlighting its contribution to the formation of European diplomatic etiquette and to the definition of political representation in the Modern Age.

Eros Calcara is a PhD student in "Historical Heritage" at the Department of Modern History of the University of Córdoba. In 2023, he was a research fellow for the University of Palermo (Italy) in the Department of Modern History at the University of Seville. He collaborates with Hacı Bayram Veli University in Ankara on the project "Ottoman Wars: Army, Logistics, Organization, 16th-20th Centuries," which aims to reconstruct all aspects of warfare in the Ottoman context. His main research interests are the elites of the Ottoman Empire and the cultural and political history of the Mediterranean in the Early Modern period. His current doctoral research focuses on the nobility of the Kingdom of Sicily between the 16th and 18th centuries and on the manifestations of power, such as food and fashion, in the noble circles of Sicily and the city of Palermo. His publications include: "Symbols and Objects of Desire: The Ottoman Fashion between representation of the Turk and manifestation of power in the Italian Renaissance Peninsula"; "Europe as a Model. Regulation and modernization of Ottoman fashion in the 19th century" and "Turks and Turquerie. A paradox between representation and imitation of the enemy in the West (16th-18th centuries)".

Panel 4: Natural Worlds of Central and Eastern Europe

Andrzej Staniszewski

Baltic, Waterways And Shaping Of The Global Imagination In 16th And 17th Century Poland

Bodies of water evoked very ambiguous feelings in early modern people, serving both as a vital communication routes and important sources of energy as well as representatives of an environment alien to human life, dangerous and precarious. Arguably this ambiguity conveys not only the universal fears of mankind but also distinctly early modern mixture of enthusiasm and apprehension towards the new role of waterways – particularly oceans and seas – as conduits of global trade, networking the rapidly expanding planet. Proposed presentation would focus on how this ambiguity functioned in the Polish writings from the 16th and 17th century, particularly texts focused on the Baltic Sea and its crucial role in the early modern Polish-Lithuanian state. Taking page from blue humanities – particularly Steve Mentz and his idea of naufragocen, shipwreck narrative as wider paradigm of chaotic early modern experience – paper will examine what those Baltic-centric narratives could tell us about shifting ideas about the place of Polish-Lithuanian state and its inhabitants in the rapidly changing world, relationship between people and nature (both seen as source of resources and independent being) and, lastly, role of these texts in envisioning and processing the idea of a new, truly ‘global’ environment. In order to do so, paper would focus on a wide array of works of both literary (like Flis (1595) by Sebastian Fabian Klonowic or Jan Kochanowski’s poetry) as well as non-literary (like travel narratives by Jerzy Ossoliński, Jan Rybiński and other authors) kind, exploring in the process the complex ideas inhabitants of early modern Polish-Lithuanian state could held towards both their place in Europe and in a wider world.

Andrzej Tadeusz Staniszewski, PhD (b.1987), works at the Faculty of Polish Studies, Jagiellonian University in Kraków. His research interests include early modern popular literature in Poland and Europe, 16th-18th century Kraków, literacy and reading studies, cultural role of animals in the Renaissance Europe. Between 2016 and 2019 principal investigator in NCN’s PRELUDIUM grant devoted to popular literature in early modern Kraków. He presented his research during international conferences and workshops in Kraków, Glasgow, Toronto, Birmingham and London and published his work in “Terminus”, “Konteksty Kultury”, various post-conference volumes (recently: chapter in *Writing Early Modern Loneliness*, eds. Thomas Clifton and Hannah Yip, Palgrave-Mcmillan 2025). In 2020, he published his first book, *Historyje krakowskie* [Stories of Kraków], devoted to the popular literature in Renaissance Kraków.

Christina Anne Stackpole
***In Search of the Magna Bestia: The Elk and the Sixteenth-Century Imagination of
“Eastern” Europe***

The publication of Conrad Gessner’s zoological encyclopedias (c. 1551-1558) exposed international readers to the elk (*Alces alces*, colloquially “magna bestia”), the mysterious beast of the northeast with the power to cure epilepsy contained in its hooves. In the last two decades of the sixteenth century, five authors published zoological and medical treatises dedicated solely to the elk: Apollonio Menabeni’s *De Magno Animali* (1581), Rembert Dodoens’s *De Alce Epistola* (1581), Johann Wigand’s *De Alce Vera Historia* (1582), Severin Goebel’s *Historia seu Brevis Descriptio Animalis Alcis* (1595), and Andrea Bacci’s *De Magna Bestia* (1598).

While single-species monographs became popular in the seventeenth century, there are very few examples from the sixteenth, making the rapid concentration of several works on the elk a literary novelty and formative moment for natural history. The treatises are exemplary of several features of this transitional period, exposing tensions between classical learning and eyewitness information, “professional” versus amateur or folkloric sources, Galenic medicine and empiricism, “western” and “eastern” Europe as perceived by early moderns, and the ubiquitous liminal space between the indigenous and the alien.

This paper begins with an overview of the five authors: the circumstances surrounding their treatises, their intended audiences, and their own proximity (or lack thereof) to eastern Europe. Then, it compares and contrasts the how they engaged with various sources and each other, and negotiated a canonical description of the elk. Finally, it explores the ways in which the treatises traverse the boundaries of European cultural geography, interact with indigeneity, and shape the image of the elk as an exemplary animal of northeastern Europe, thereby creating an image of the region for foreign readers.

Christina Anne Stackpole is an Assistant Professor of Art History at the University of Warsaw. She received her BA in History from McGill University, her MA in History from University College London, and her PhD in History from Leiden University. Her monograph *The Woven Crown*, based on her doctoral research on the Genesis tapestries of Sigismund II Augustus of Poland, is forthcoming from Purdue University Press. Her chapter on the tapestries was published in *Interregnum: Reassessing “Decline” and “Rebirth” in Late Sixteenth-Century Poland-Lithuania* (Brepols, 2026). She has presented her work at multiple conferences and radio appearances in the United States and Europe. Currently, as part of an ERC Advanced Grant, she is researching the elk as a conduit for visual and textual knowledge about Eastern Europe in the 16th/17th centuries.

Katarzyna Pekacka-Falkowska

Global Nature in a Baltic Hub: Local and Exotic Plants in the Material and Scientific Culture of Gdańsk/Danzig (1650-1764)

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Gdańsk (Danzig) functioned as a primary gateway between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the burgeoning global markets. While its role in the grain trade is well-documented, the city was also a vital node in the early modern Green Exchange, the circulation of botanical specimens, seeds, and naturalistic knowledge. This communication explores the entanglement of local flora and exotic species within the city's urban and intellectual landscape, moving through three distinct spaces: the meadow, the garden, and the wardrobe. By analyzing contemporary botanical treatises, herbals, and inventories, among others, this study examines how exotic plants arriving from overseas were integrated into local practices. In the "meadow," local biodiversity was categorized alongside newly introduced species; in the "garden," exotic plants were acclimatized, serving as status symbols for the patrician elite and subjects of scientific inquiry; and finally, in the "wardrobe" (referring to both cabinets of curiosity and domestic storage), plants were preserved as *materia medica*, dried specimens, or visual/textual representations. The paper argues that the presence of exotic flora in Gdańsk was both a matter of luxury consumption and a manifestation of the region's active participation in global scientific networks. By bridging the gap between local environmental knowledge and global botanical discoveries, Gdańsk's scholars and merchants contributed to the early modern conceptualization of a global world.

Katarzyna Pekacka-Falkowska is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Her research focuses on the history of science, medicine, and natural history in the early modern period, with a particular emphasis on Polish Prussia and its connections to the European Republic of Letters. Her current projects investigate the material culture of science and the transfer of naturalistic and medical knowledge through Baltic maritime networks.

Panel 5: Central and Eastern Europe as a Hub of Global Markets

Leonhard Engelmaier

Local Leaves, Global Flavours: The Making of Central and Eastern European Tobaccos

Import substitution and imitation have been important aspects of studying the economic conditions leading to the emergence of global divergences becoming apparent by 1800. One important explanatory factor here has been the production of practical knowledge which allowed manufacturers in early modern Europe to achieve certain material characteristics of products desired by consumers around the world. This is of course best researched for cotton. The early modern 'colonial groceries', sugar and tobacco, were however also highly manufactured products. While the raw materials for refined sugars and cotton fabrics were cultivated outside of Europe at the time, leaving processing to the metropole, tobacco cultivation's seventeenth-century global expansion included Europe, too. By the middle of the eighteenth century, cultivation regions in the Habsburg Monarchy's Central and Eastern European territories supplied a local tobacco manufacturing industry. This paper asks which kinds of finished tobacco were produced by manufacturers in this region in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and in which ways these products' qualities related to those of imports. Subsequently, it explores the processes of knowledge circulation allowing manufacturers to make finished tobaccos adapted to the tastes of consumers in the monarchy's various polities. To this end, the paper compares trade dictionaries and receipts of tobacco purchases with sources from manufacturing sites, such as inventories, lists of ingredients, recipes and worker's instructions. Studying these questions will shed light on the global entanglements of economic development in this region often considered a Hinterland to early modern globalization. In order to supply the Monarchy's market, I expect to find that tobacco manufacturers had to make global products from local produce.

Leonhard Engelmaier: I am currently a second-year PhD student at the European University Institute in Florence, working on a thesis on the making of tobacco growing and manufacturing knowledge in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Habsburg Monarchy. Prior to beginning my PhD, I completed an MA in history at University of Vienna's department of Economic and Social History with a thesis on late medieval economic change. I have thus been specializing in premodern economic history with a particular focus on agricultural history but expanding also into commodity history and the history of knowledge. My overall research interest is in the history of capitalism.

John Freeman

Eastern Baltic Interest in Trade to the Coromandel Coast of India: Two Alternative Approaches from the Seventeenth Century

The Duchy of Courland, a vassal of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, is remarkable for its attempts to establish an Atlantic colonial presence. Short-lived outposts in Tobago and the Gambia demonstrated ducal ambitions to trade in sugar, tobacco, gold and slaves. Such aspirations were not limited to the Atlantic, however. In 1652, the duke and duchess were approached by Andrew Cogan, the co-founder of the English East India Company's base in Madras on the Coromandel Coast of India. Cogan's letters, reveal the schemes of a disgraced maverick, who enticed the ducal couple with diamonds, but repulsed Courland's Amsterdam representative with his expensive ideas and anti-Dutch attitude.

Cogan's correspondence contrasts with another appeal made to Courland a few years earlier. The court of Elector Friedrich Wilhelm of Brandenburg-Prussia wrote to several Baltic powers, encouraging participation in Indian Ocean trade. The letters called for Baltic rulers to support Hamburg ships by letting them sail under their flags to the Danish fortress of Tranquebar, established on the Coromandel Coast in 1620. The suggestion was indicative of the Brandenburger approach at the time, which favoured pan-Baltic collaboration in accessing extra-European trade.

Although both endeavours were rejected, they demonstrate lively Baltic interest in direct entanglement with the Indian Ocean, specifically the Coromandel Coast. They also reveal two approaches for achieving this aim. One prioritised cooperation between Baltic polities and merchants. The other involved the schmoozing of a duke by a foreign merchant who had fallen out of favour at home. Using documents from the Couronian ducal archive in Riga, the paper challenges the notion that eastern Baltic figures lacked agency in devising long-distance trading ventures. It also shows how people conceived the Baltic, Atlantic and Indian Ocean maritime spaces as integrated and uncovers the reasons why the Baltic was seen as a potential opportunity for oceanic profit.

John Freeman is an independent scholar based in Cambridge. His work concerns the agency of merchants in the Baltic Sea in connecting with early modern colonial trade from the Atlantic Ocean. He has largely written on the seventeenth century colonial ambitions of the Duke of Courland, which will be the topic of his first monograph to be published in Autumn 2026 by CEU Press. His first article, 'The neutral philosophy of the Duchy of Courland in trading and colonial activity from the reign of Jakob Kettler to the turn of the 18th Century' won the Atlantic Studies journal early career essay prize for 2023. He has previously worked for the University of Warsaw, University of Greifswald and Centre for Geopolitics in Cambridge, receiving his doctorate from the University of Cambridge in 2023. He is also co-leader of the BASEES Study Group for the Baltic States.

Lucrezia Eritrei

Collecting Power: Diplomatic Networks and the Roman Art Market between Poland and Russia

In the late eighteenth century, Stanisław II August Poniatowski and Caterina II di Russia sought to position their courts within European and global practices of elite art collecting. This paper argues that their engagement with the Roman art market formed part of a broader strategy of cultural and political positioning, aimed at accruing prestige and legitimacy through the acquisition of antiquities and works of art. To this end, both courts developed extensive networks of diplomatic agents in Rome, conceived not merely as representatives but as cultural and commercial brokers operating across formal and informal channels.

Drawing on archival materials from the Archivio di Stato di Roma, particularly the series *Camerali* II, *Esportazione di antichità e belle arti*, the paper reconstructs the regulatory frameworks and everyday practices governing the export of cultural goods. The documentation also preserves export licenses requested directly by artists and craftsmen active in Rome, whose destinations often remain unstated but can be reconstructed through the cross-referencing of archival and collection data. This evidence reveals the extent to which artists, dealers, craftsmen, and intermediaries participated in transregional networks linking the Roman art market to the courts and collectors of Central and Eastern Europe. Particular attention is devoted to figures such as Tommaso Antici or Marcello Bacciarelli, whose activities illuminate the intersection of artistic production, political representation, and market dynamics. Beyond Bacciarelli's dual role as court painter and supervisor of the royal collections, the paper highlights how artists connected to his Roman circle sought opportunities at the Polish court, revealing how diplomatic and collecting networks functioned as channels of artistic mobility and professional advancement. The paper also highlights the connections between the Polish and Russian courts, showing how Catherine II similarly relied on networks of Roman agents and intermediaries, including Gaspare Santini, to access the city's art market and antiquities trade. By conceptualizing Rome as a crucial hub in transregional systems of exchange, the paper demonstrates how Central and Eastern European courts were actively embedded in global circuits of material culture.

Lucrezia Eritrei is a PhD candidate in Art History at the University of Rome "Tor Vergata", currently pursuing a cotutelle doctoral program with the "École nationale des chartes" of Paris. Her doctoral research focuses on the art collections of French ambassadors in early seventeenth-century Rome, with broader interests in diplomacy, collecting practices, and the circulation of artworks between Rome and France. She graduated in History and Conservation of Artistic and Archaeological Heritage from the University of Rome Tre in 2016 and received a MA in Art History from the same institution with highest honors. In 2019, she was awarded a post-graduate research fellowship from the Fondazione Ermitage Italia for a project on Russian travelers and collectors in eighteenth-century Rome. In 2021, she completed a second-level Master's degree in Scientific Tools for the Study and Preservation of Cultural Heritage.

Panel 6: Global World in Central and Eastern European Perspectives

Stefano Gulizia

The Invention of the Chinese Past: Martini Rewrites Alsted

In 1658, during his return mission to Europe, which was meant to recruit financial help and new personnel for the China Mission, the Jesuit Martino Martini (1614-61) published the *Sinicae Historiae*, a collection of annals that represents the most authoritative treatise up to date on the theme of China's ancestral past, as well as on how scholars should try to harmonize distant chronologies with the Biblical account. This paper investigates how the brand of millenarianism pioneered in Central Europe by the Herborn encyclopedist and polymath Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588-1638) influenced the Jesuit study of Confucian origins and, by extension, how the Scaliger debates on chronology found its appendix in East Asia. In particular, my analysis consists in a demonstration that Martini's paratextual preliminary to the *Sinicae Historiae* was directly inspired by Alsted's preface to the *Thesaurus chronologiae*, a classic in the field, but not the most obvious choice for a Jesuit writer to cite. This intertextuality to which I bring some attention for the very first time means that we can no longer be content to study a Jesuit treatise in its confessional context. The paper is divided in two parts. It will first be necessary to undertake a detailed examination of Martini's dependency on Alsted based on a philological analysis and close comparison between the two texts. Secondly, I will address several possible motivations as to why it seemed appropriate for a pioneer, Jesuit account of ancient China to embed a voice that belonged to the Protestant apocalyptic tradition.

Stefano Gulizia teaches classes of early modern history, is the director of the Historical Institute of Scientiae in Turin, and collaborates as a senior lecturer with Ca' Foscari University in Venice. He also serves as the editor in chief of the *Scientiae Studies* book series at Brill. His last essays include "Cartesianism between Northern Europe, Germany, and the Medici Court" (Brepols 2023), "Assembling the Scribal Self," in *Beyond the Learned Academy* (Oxford 2024) and "Disputing the Animation of the Heavens in Rome around 1616" (Centaureus 2024, with PD Omodeo). Gulizia has two books forthcoming, *Older Than Its Gods*, dedicated to the knowledge networks of the Jesuit China Mission (scheduled for 2027), and *Before Sidereus Nuncius* (under contract at Routledge), a study of Galileo's infrastructure in the Veneto and paper technology.

Anastasia Tenchurina
India and Its Inhabitants in German Translations of English
Enlightenment Texts

The research examines the representations of India and its inhabitants in Enlightenment pirate editions printed in the Czech lands during the late eighteenth century. The study focuses on the large-scale publishing projects of Franz Anton Schrämbl in Brno and Georg Trassler in Opava, whose multi-volume series of travelogues and encyclopaedic publications responded to the growing demand for accessible narratives of the “Other” among wider reading audiences. A significant part of this print production was translated from English, including *A General History of the World* by William Guthrie and John Gray, which became part of the ambitious project *Ausgabe der besten deutschen Werke*. Also, the study examines the *Allgemeine Historie der Reisen zu Wasser und Lande* in relation to its source text: the English collection *A General History of Voyages and Travels*, published by Thomas Astley.

The study explores how representations of India and its inhabitants circulated through printing networks and contributed to the emergence of the transcultural public sphere. As the Czech lands, especially Moravia and Upper Silesia, functioned as centers of pirate printing, they can be understood as geographical and market peripheries within European print culture. This perspective allows for a reconsideration of the notion of “Europe” in postcolonial and global history by foregrounding the role of Central European margins in the dissemination of colonial knowledge and racial representations.

The research combines postcolonial theory, media and public sphere studies, and critical discourse analysis in order to examine how India and its population were presented to Central European readers through travel literature. By analysing the dissemination of translated English narratives into German, the project contributes to the study of early modern transcultural print history and the circulation of colonial ideologies in Central Europe.

Anastasia Tenchurina: I am a PhD candidate in Historical Anthropology at Charles University under the supervision of doc. Veronika Čapková, Ph.D. My research focuses on early modern print culture, colonial ideologies, racial constructs, and transcultural public spheres, particularly representations of India and its inhabitants in English print production and their reception in Central Europe. My doctoral project examines the circulation of colonial narratives through pamphlets, travel accounts, ballads, and pirate editions in the British Isles and the Habsburg Czech lands. I am also involved in the COST Action “Print Culture and Public Spheres in Central Europe 1500–1800” (CA23137).

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