



Roundtable Discussion

Skopje 2014: Monumentalizing the Past for a Majoritarian Present?

Hosted by the Max Planck Research Group,
“Empires of Memory: The Cultural Politics of History in Former Habsburg and Ottoman Cities”

6 June 2017 | 10:30

Library Hall MPI-MMG, Hermann-Föge-Weg 11

Participants:

Dr. Rozita Dimova, Associate Professor, Department of Languages and Cultures, Slavonic and East-European Studies, Ghent University

Dr. Andrew Graan, Visiting Research Fellow in Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Helsinki

Dr. Goran Janev, Associate Professor of Social Anthropology, Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje

Dr. Aleksandar Takovski, Assistant Professor of Discourse Analysis, South East European University

Over the past decade, Skopje, the capital of Macedonia, has witnessed a spectacular transformation in its urban environment. A project known as “Skopje 2014,” spearheaded by former Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, endowed the center of city with a plethora of neoclassical and neo-Baroque monuments, including a victory arch reminiscent of Paris’ Arc de Triomphe, a massive statue of Philip II of Macedon, and an even larger version of Alexander the Great, perched on an out-size plinth at the center of the city’s main square. While the most overt political context for this proliferation of gargantuan statuary was the ongoing “name dispute” with Greece, which officially rejects Macedonia’s claim to the name “Macedonia” and insists on referring to the country with the periphrastic expression “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,” Skopje 2014 also intervened in a variety of national and local debates over Macedonian identity and the role of the past in the contemporary city. Our roundtable discussion on Skopje 2014 assembles a panel of experts deeply versed in contemporary Macedonian public culture and politics to address a series of interrelated questions: How might we understand the intersecting logics of imperial glorification, national and ethnic antagonism, and amnesia that Skopje 2014 embodies? What is the relationship between Skopje 2014 and more recent, vehement political disputes over Macedonian identity and citizenship? Finally, how are we to interpret Skopje 2014’s neoimperial aesthetics vis-à-vis the other, laminated pasts that saturate and define the city, whether socialist, Ottoman, or Byzantine?



Contact:

Marina Cziesielsky
cziesielsky@mmg.mpg.de