

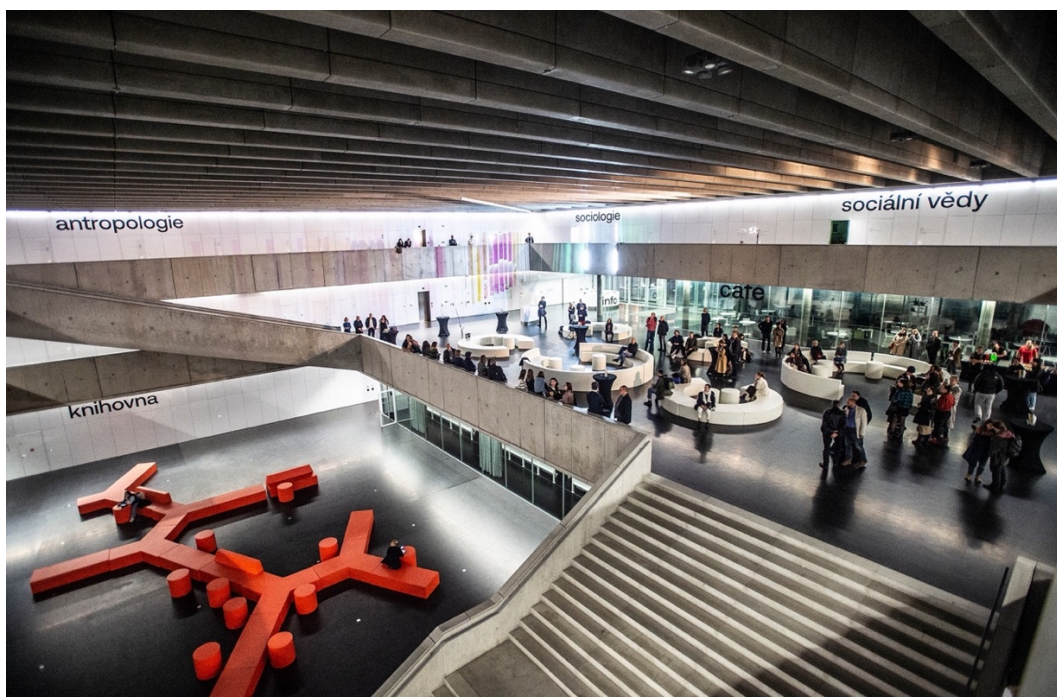


FACULTY  
OF HUMANITIES  
Charles University

## Biographical Research in Central and Eastern Europe: Traditions and Challenges

### WORKSHOP PROGRAM

**Date:** June 3–4 2024  
**Place:** Room 1.21, Faculty of Humanities, Charles University  
Pátkova 2137/5, Prague 8, Czechia  
**Contact:** Jana.WohlmuthMarkupova@fhs.cuni.cz



### Monday 3 June

10:15 Opening (Hans Renders, Jana Wohlmuth Markupová)  
10:30–12:30 Roundtable Session I: Biography in Central and Eastern Europe  
14:00–16:00 Roundtable Session II: Various Forms of Biography

### Tuesday 4 June

10:30–12:30 Roundtable Session III: Theory and Ethics of Biographical Research  
14:00–16:00 Roundtable Session IV: Student Section  
16:00 Closing Remarks (David Veltman, Jana Wohlmuth Markupová)



**Monday 3 June**

**10:15 Opening** (Hans Renders, Jana Wohlmuth Markupová)

**10:30–12:30 Roundtable Session I: Biography in Central and Eastern Europe**

Host: Jana Wohlmuth Markupová

Discussed topics:

- The role of biographies in the Central and Eastern European public discourses: biography as a way to come to terms with the (communist) past?
- Which public figures need to be ‘corrected’ after the fall of communism?
- What has biography added to national history?

Reading to discuss:

- Bartha, Á. (2017). From Myths to Reality: The Regionalism of Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky (1886–1944). In M. Vít, & M. M. Baran (Eds.), *Transregional versus National Perspectives on Contemporary Central European History: Studies on the Building of Nation-States and Their Cooperation in the 20th and 21st Century* (pp. 139–148). Ibidem Press.
- Kšiňan, M. (2017). Štefánik’s Death and the Czecho(Slovak) Identity. In M. Vít, & M. M. Baran (Eds.), *Transregional versus National Perspectives on Contemporary Central European History: Studies on the Building of Nation-States and Their Cooperation in the 20th and 21st Century* (pp. 149–160). Ibidem Press.
- Renders, H. (2020). ‘Different Lives in a Global World’. In H. Renders, & D. Veltman (Eds.), *Different Lives: Global Perspectives on Biography in Public Cultures and Societies* (pp. 3–11). Brill.
- Wohlmuth Markupová, J. (2020). In Between ‘Creators and Bearers of the Czech National Myth’ and an ‘Academic Suicide’: Czech Biography in the Twenty-First Century. In H. Renders, & D. Veltman (Eds.), *Different Lives: Global Perspectives on Biography in Public Cultures and Societies* (pp. 182–196). Brill.

**12:30–14:00 Lunch Break**



## 14:00–16:00 Roundtable Session II: Various Forms of Biography

Host: Petr Wohlmuth

Discussed topics:

- Biography, Microhistory, and Life-Writing: reflection on the current state
- The role of national biographical dictionaries
- What is the cut-off point from commemorative to critical biography?

Reading to discuss:

- Magnússon, S. G. (2021). The Backside of the Biography: Microhistory as a Research Tool. In H. Renders, & D. Veltman (Eds.), *Fear of Theory: Towards a New Theoretical Justification of Biography* (pp. 89–99). Brill.
- Renders, H. (2014). Biography in Academia and the Critical Frontier in Life Writing: Where Biography Shifts into Life Writing. In H. Renders, & B. de Haan (Eds.), *Theoretical Discussions of Biography: Approaches from History, Microhistory, and Life Writing* (pp. 169–176). Brill.
- Renders, H., & Veltman, D. (2021). The Representativeness of a Reputation: A ‘Third Wave’ in Microhistory. In H. Renders, & D. Veltman (Eds.), *Fear of Theory: Towards a New Theoretical Justification of Biography* (pp. 191–194). Brill.
- Wohlmuth Markupová, J. (2023). “Biography is with its one leg in the academia and with the other in the public arena.”: Interview with Professor Hans Renders about the crossroads of historical biography, oral history, and microhistory. *Dějiny – Teorie – Kritika*, (2), 159–173.



**Tuesday 4 June**

**10:30–12:30 Roundtable Session III: Theory and Ethics of Biographical Research**

Host: Hans Renders

Discussed topics:

- (Why) Do we need theory?
- The personal and the public in biographies of public figures
- Approaches toward post-mortem legacy and privacy of historical actors

Reading to discuss:

- Renders, H. (2016). Biography in the Public Sphere: The Year in the Netherlands. *Biography* 39(4), 641–647.
- Renders, H. (2021). The Deep-Rooted Fear of Theory among Biographers. In H. Renders, & D. Veltman (Eds.), *Fear of Theory: Towards a New Theoretical Justification of Biography* (pp. 15–24). Brill.
- Renders, H. (2021). History That Addresses Biography: Ethics and the Vatican. In H. Renders, & D. Veltman (Eds.), *Fear of Theory: Towards a New Theoretical Justification of Biography* (pp. 114–121). Brill.
- Renders, H., & de Haan, B. & Harmsma, J. (2017). The Biographical Turn. Biography as a Critical Method in the Humanities and Society. In H. Renders, & B. de Haan, & J. Harmsma, J., *The Biographical Turn: Lives in History* (pp. 3–10). Routledge.

**12:30–14:00 Lunch Break**

**14:00–16:00 Roundtable Session IV: Student Section**

Host: Jana Wohlmuth Markupová

Discussed topics:

- Forms of biographical research in student theses
- Specifics and problematics of such approaches

**16:00 Closing Remarks** (David Veltman, Jana Wohlmuth Markupová)