

**(1) Title: Revisiting Central European “Classics” of Southeast Asian Studies**

(2) Conveners: Tomáš Petrů (Czech Academy of Sciences) and Martin Slama (Austrian Academy of Sciences)

(3) Abstract

The humanities-oriented research on Southeast Asia is stereotypically associated with academic institutions in former colonial metropolises such as Britain, France and the Netherlands, Anglophone countries like the United States and Australia, and today also with the new educational hubs in Southeast Asia itself like Singapore or Malaysia. This panel, however, intends to remind the academic community of several influential scholars hailing from Central Europe, mostly from the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, aiming to cast more light on their contribution to the scholarship on Southeast Asia. Our focus is above all on researchers in the field of history and anthropology of the region, whose works were widely read at their time, and today may arguably be considered “classic”. We seek to focus on their legacy, aiming to find out of what actually remains of their work, how it is interpreted and re-interpreted and to what extent it is still relevant to analyze current phenomena. The figures of our focus include, among others, the Czechoslovakia-born historian of Indonesia Harry J. Benda, after whom the annual AAS prize for the best (first) book on Southeast Asia has been named, the Austrian anthropologist Robert von Heine-Geldern, whose studies of Southeast Asian concepts of power left a lasting imprint on the perception of Southeast Asian kingdoms, the Prague-born Austrian Philippinist Ferdinand Blumentritt, whose name is a familiar term among modern Manileños, and Father Paul Schebesta of Moravian-Austrian descent, who conducted pioneering research on hunter-gatherer societies on the Malay Peninsula.

(4) Double session (2 x 90 min.): 6 presenters

Contact: [petru@orient.cas.cz](mailto:petru@orient.cas.cz), [Martin.Slama@oeaw.ac.at](mailto:Martin.Slama@oeaw.ac.at)