

Svenska Forskningsinstitutet i Istanbul



The Straits – Inquiries into a Crossroad

Seminar at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, November 1-7, 2014

The Turkish Straits between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea are often described as a symbolic dividing line between Europe and Asia, but historically their function has been uniting and not separating. At the crossroads of land routes between the Balkans and Anatolia, and the sea route between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, they have constituted a natural meeting place for peoples and cultures since ancient times. Two world empires, the Byzantine and the Ottoman, were ruled from the straits and left their marks on the two main world religions of Christianity and Islam. Greeks, Slavs, Scandinavians, Italians, Turks and Englishmen have tried to gain control over the Straits and sometimes succeeded; but the prize has remained contested and been a recurrent source of dispute. As such, the straits have also been at the core of Eastern and Western political discourses at least since the accession of the Persian king Xerxes 2500 years ago, and their significance to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 has come to the foreground in recent years.

To mark these historical convergences, and to initiate an interdisciplinary platform for future research about the history of the Straits, we invite junior (pre-doc and post-doc) scholars to present their own research and exchange perspectives on the topic during a one-week seminar with excursions at the **Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, November 1-7, 2014**. We welcome submissions from different areas of research, such as the Ancient, Byzantine and Ottoman eras, art history, archaeology and memory studies, studies in the religious, cultural and political relations, as well as the topography, landscape and environment history of Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Applicants should submit abstracts of no more than **500 words** to nbnidolon@gmail.com no later than **Friday, May 15, 2014**, together with a CV and a few lines about their interest in the topic, from a subject specific as well as from an interdisciplinary point of view.

For those who are accepted, the stay in Istanbul, the excursions and most meals will be arranged and paid for by the seminar. In addition to this, we may consider reimbursing the cost of travel to and from Istanbul for a strictly limited number of applicants (those who wish to be considered for such travel funding should specify it in their application and explain why other sources are not available).

March 9, 2014

Olof Heilo

Lund / Vienna

Tonje Haugland Sørensen

Bergen

Monica White

Nottingham

Alexandros Tsakos

Bergen / Berlin