

Evaluation of research and professional activity of research-oriented institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences for the period 2015–2019

Final Report

Name of the Institute: Oriental Institute of the CAS, v. v. i.

Evaluated teams and their leaders:

1. Middle East Department (Jan Zouplna)
2. South Asia Department (Jaroslav Strnad)
3. East Asia Department (Jakub Hrubý)

Part A: Evaluation of the institute

Strengths: The Oriental Institute (OI) is the only institution in the Czech Republic specialised in research on the history, politics, societies, cultures, religions, languages and literatures of the Near and Middle East, South Asia and East Asia. It also covers North Africa and Central Asia and investigates the whole time-span of human agency from early historical phases to today.

In the last decades the OI has moved from its older focus on philological studies to cover a broad scope of topics and problems that, fortunately still also include philological matters. Especially in the last ten years, and then again in the period under evaluation, it has internationalised its staff (more than a third of the academic staff are holders of foreign passports), its research activities (by, to name the most prominent example, the inauguration of the Research Center of the Oriental Institute at Academia Sinica in Taiwan), and the publication emanating from the members of the institutes (in terms both of books and articles authored by them and the internationalisation of the *Archiv Orientální*, the well-established academic journal that now offers not only a sound peer review system, but an impressive editorial team and an English language editing service). The OI is also involved in the construction and maintenance of a number of digital databases that make research material to the academic community. Publications and the richness of research activities are as impressive as the hiring policy that allowed the institute to fill gaps in its staff according to the recommendation issued in 2015.

The OI is further engaged in outreach activities on a very large scale. These include (among others) exhibitions, popular publications (both books and the journal *Nový Orient*), presence in Czech and international media, but also the offering of expert opinions to courts and political institutions, and even a music and cultural festival. Perhaps the most important outreach, however, is the involvement of the members in university teaching, mainly at Charles University but also at other Czech institutions of higher education and even abroad.

This impressive workload has led to a number of important research results and turned the OI into an active, respected and internationally increasingly visible venue of research.

The impression of the commission (albeit hampered by the impossibility of face-to-face contact on an on-site visit) is that the professional environment at the OI is positive and research is conducted with a lot of enthusiasm.

Weaknesses:

The level of salaries can still not compete with those paid at international centres of excellence in countries such as France, the Benelux, the US, or Germany, to name just a few. The same holds true for the research infrastructure (building, new research centres abroad, electronic resources, systematic support of open access in renowned journals).

Opportunities:

The best of the news that the commission received from the OI was that of a centrally located, spacious and adequately prestigious building allocated to them. The necessary repair, refurbishment and furnishing is a matter that should be given high priority by the AVČR. The current, rather improvised arrangement exists now for almost three decades. The new location furnishes easy access to Charles University and the National Library and will thus help the academic staff to spend less valuable time in commuting between their desk and their other professional venues such as classrooms and library reading rooms.

Threats:

The OI has to deal with the fact that due to the systematic weakening of the humanities in the Czech system of higher education, there are too few qualified alumni on the fields researched by the OI. The normal international exchange that leads to international scholarly career paths, has the tendency to turn into a brain drain. Members of the OI try to remedy this situation by putting a lot of effort into teaching at universities. The OI has also been successful in hiring international scholars, some of whom, however, stay only for a limited time.

Together with the necessity to conduct routine research business with money from grants (rather than the fixed budget), this contributes to a tendency that privileges short-term projects over long-term endeavours that are the *proprium* of research at academies such as the AVČR. Moreover, as the chance factor plays an eminent role in the selection of projects awarded with grants, the reliance on grants always entails the risk of losing valuable time and man-power on worthy projects that finally do not get funding.

Until now, the balance between the long- and shorter-term projects, along with that between projects oriented to studies of the past and those pertaining to present affairs, has been retained. However, as the lack of graduates and younger post-graduates in the Czech academic system makes detailed programmatic planning difficult, the situation continues to be precarious.

The intensive outreach activities and the teaching at universities need continuous calibration so that they do not impede the core research activity.

The orientation of members of the OI to publish in international, indexed and peer-reviewed journals and publishing houses may have the effect that a lot of time elapses during the publication process (which generally looks more rational than it is really conducted), something that potentially forces scholars to return to problems and topics that no longer are on their agenda.

Main criterion: 1. Quality of results (H1.1-H1.5)

H1.1	Quality of selected outputs of Phase I
As this commission has not been given access the publications it can but refer to the results of the first phase of the evaluation. It wishes to express its view that the mode of data collection and quantified evaluation presented in the reports on phase I appears to be inadequate and extraneous to research in the humanities.	
H1.2	Contribution of workers on the outputs reached
As this commission has not been given access the publications it can but refer to the results of the first phase of the evaluation. It wishes to express its view that the mode of data collection and quantified evaluation presented in the reports on phase I appears to be inadequate and extraneous to research in the humanities.	
H1.3	Quality of all outputs and results
As this commission has not been given access the publications it can but refer to the results of the first phase of the evaluation. It wishes to express its view that the mode of data collection and quantified evaluation presented in the reports on phase I appears to be inadequate and extraneous to research in the humanities.	
H1.4	The most valuable discoveries and findings in the fields, their importance for the field

As this commission has not been given access the publications it has mainly to refer to the results of the first phase of the evaluation. The monographs authored or co-authored by Drs. of Ostřanský, Beránek, Steuer, Taglia, Klimeš, Třísková and Liščák, the results of Dr. Melčák's research on Northern Mesopotamia, the publications of Drs Šabasevičiūtė, Exnerová, Hons, Petrů, Strnad, Ptáčková, Hrubý, Weingarten and Dluhošová	
H1.5	Contribution of the participation of the authors in large collaborations
As this commission has not been given access the publications it can mainly just refer to the results of the first phase of the evaluation. The collaborative project of <i>China's Cultural Diplomacy</i> appears to have been of great importance, as is the case with the long-term research initiative <i>Power and Strategies of Social and Political Order</i> .	

Main criterion: 2. Societal relevance (H2.1-H2.5)

H2.1	Societal relevance of outputs and results pursuant to CAS and institute mission
High, as the fields of research are in the public focus and often subject to rassedified, Islamophobic or political stereotyping.	
H2.2	System functionality for knowledge transfer into practise, its usefulness for society. The impact of the institute's activity on proper practice in society in the area of social sciences and humanities
Humanities do not have the function of being useful to society in the sense that they were required to subscribe to the aims, methods, believes of the dominant strata of society or to contribute to a societal consensus. Their usefulness may be critical as much as constructive in character and often consists of creating meaning and orientation. In this sense: very high.	
H2.3	Relation to practice
The term "practice" would need clarification and critique. If it relates to anything directly connected with economic gain: n/a. If practice entails knowledge circulation, contribution to political opinion-making of decision makers and public discourse: high and positive.	
H2.4	Participation in AV21 strategy
Intensive and successful.	
H2.5	Cooperation with regions of the Czech Republic
N/a. Outreach, however, was not confined to Prague but covered all of the ČR's territory.	

Further criterion: 1. Position in international and national context (D1.1-D1.3)

D1.1	Comparison of the teams and the institute with similar international and national institutes
In the period under review, the OI has enhanced its international visibility, and conducted research in an international arena on a par with other similar institutions. The territorial and	

temporal scope of the institute's research area is, however, exceptional. The OI has used this particularity to its advantage.	
D1.2	Scope and quality of international and national cooperation and the role of the institute in such cooperation; engagement in broad international cooperation
Very good, both on institutional and individual levels.	
D1.3	Participation of the workers in scientific community activities (organizing of conferences and workshops, invited lectures, awards)
Impressive.	

Further criterion: 2. Vitality, sustainability and strategy (D2.1-D2.9)

D2.1	Direction in line with the perspective of the planned research directions
Yes.	
D2.2	Assessment of the previous research objectives and their achievement
Positive.	
D2.3	Assessment of implementation of recommendations from past evaluation
The OI has intelligently and successfully implemented the recommendations as much as it was in its power. Some of the recommendations required the assistance of the AVČR as a whole. The committee acknowledges the efforts to increase the number of researchers and to work on the basis of contracts that are not temporary. It also takes notice that travel money is now available to members of the OI.	
D2.4	Success in receiving grants
Very good.	
D2.5	Adequacy of instrumental equipment
Adequate.	
D2.6	Effectiveness of management
Very good.	
D2.7	Assessment of professional structure, development strategy and the strategy of keeping best scientists, age structure, career and qualification growth
Altogether good. All teams are in need of some more researchers, especially team 2 (South Asia) that has difficulties to cover fields of study pertaining to Central Asia and to Southeast Asia. Fluctuation is relatively high and sometimes problematic (see under threats) but not in the responsibility of the OI (salaries are not high enough to keep people who get offers from institutions in richer countries). Qualification and career growth are positively evaluated. The age structure with a peak in the range of 40 to 45 years has the potential to create a problem in the future.	
D2.8	Creating work-life balance conditions, assessment of approach towards possible gender issues

Work-life balance conditions are difficult to judge via zoom. Gender equality is an issue that is being addressed. On the council of the institute, only two women sit together with seven men, however.	
D2.9	Relation of the institute with regard to the integration, development and sustainability of the research centre funded by the National Programme of Sustainability II.
This question has not been object of the evaluation.	

Further criterion: 3. Cooperation with universities and participation in education (D3.1-D3.6)

D3.1	Scope of cooperation with universities on national and international level
Good, nationally perhaps a bit too high, as the OI seems to receive much less than it gives.	
D3.2	Effectiveness of joint research centres
Very good.	
D3.3	Success rate in supervision of PhD students
Very good.	
D3.4	Participation of PhD students in the outputs
By now, only one PhD student is member of the OI. However, a number of researchers have received their degree in the time under evaluation.	
D3.5	Participation of the institute in master or bachelor studies
Very high, which constitutes both an achievement and the risk of overexertion.	
D3.6	Assessment of cooperation intensity with universities in the form of teaching
See above.	

Further criterion: 4. Outreach activities (D4.1-D4.3)

D4.1	Sufficiency of media strategy and activities in the area of research popularisation
Fully sufficient .	
D4.2	Publishing activities and its quality
Very high, with regard both to the publications of the members and the journals edited by the OI.	
D4.3	Participation in professional organisations in the area of research and development
Fully adequate.	

Other comments of the commission:

The commission wishes to confirm its assessment of the OI as an institution of both national and international importance that has shown and continues to show a high degree of dynamic and successful development as an eminent hub of research. The OI is the framework that has helped the three teams in their development; a development that is coordinated and makes each team appear as a part of a meaningful institutional structure. There is no doubt that the OI deserves increased support on the whole, in particular for its research infrastructure (building, new research centres abroad, electronic resources, systematic support of open access in renowned journals) and for the South Asia Department.

Part B: Evaluation of teams

1. Middle East Department

Strengths:

The Middle East Department has largely completed its restructuring that has been begun a decade ago. The team consists of five specialists on the Arab world, three specialists on the Ottoman Empire/Turkey, one specialist on Iran, one specialist on Israel, and two specialists on the Ancient Near East and concentrates on Islamic Studies and on the modern and contemporary history of the Middle East. The team is oriented to humanities rather than social sciences and has been successful in creating clusters of interests where different members can profit from each other's research. This includes also the specialist in the ancient Near East, whose interest in the relation of civilisation and ecology resonates with several other team members. In a similar vein, a number of team members concentrate on the connection of nation building and religious identity in the Middle East.

The publication record of the team is impressive, as it can list more than ten scholarly monographs and nearly 30 articles. Likewise, the team has organised nine international conferences and workshops, a lecture series and a wide range of outreach activities (talks, advising, media presence, popular publications and two exhibitions). The teaching activity of team members at a number of academic programmes in Prague, Cairo and Paris is remarkable. The main beneficiary is the Faculty of Philosophy at Charles University. The team is also actively employing methods and techniques of digital humanities.

Age- and genderwise the composition of the team appears to be well balanced.

Weaknesses:

While the team has secured a number of grants from the AVČR, external funding has been difficult to come by.

Opportunities:

The team's work will most certainly profit when the new quarters in central Prague become available.

External grants will stimulate further work.

A long-term project, probably on one of the clusters of common interest, might help the team to build up further continuity and stability in its academic structure.

Threats:

The intensive activity and outreach is well motivated. However, the team has to calibrate its efforts in order to protect its main focus on research.

Given the conditions of international publications, the process of disseminating research results may be cumbersome and slow.

Main criterion: 1. Quality of results (H1.1-H1.5)

H1.1	Quality of selected outputs of Phase I
As this commission has not been given access the publications it can but refer to the results of the first phase of the evaluation. It wishes to express its view that the mode of	

data collection and quantified evaluation presented in the reports on phase I appears to be inadequate and extraneous to research in the humanities.	
H1.2	Contribution of workers on the outputs reached
As this commission has not been given access the publications it can but refer to the results of the first phase of the evaluation. It wishes to express its view that the mode of data collection and quantified evaluation presented in the reports on phase I appears to be inadequate and extraneous to research in the humanities.	
H1.3	Quality of all outputs and results
As this commission has not been given access the publications it can but refer to the results of the first phase of the evaluation. It wishes to express its view that the mode of data collection and quantified evaluation presented in the reports on phase I appears to be inadequate and extraneous to research in the humanities.	
H1.4	The most valuable discoveries and findings in the fields, their importance for the field
As this commission has not been given access the publications it has mainly to refer to the results of the first phase of the evaluation. The monographs authored or co-authored by Drs. of Ostřanský, Beránek, Steuer, and Taglia, the results of Dr. Melčák's research on Northern Mesopotamia and the publications of Dr Šabasevičiūtė appear to be of special importance.	
H1.5	Contribution of the participation of the authors in large collaborations
N/a	

Main criterion: 2. Societal relevance (H2.1-H2.5)

H2.1	Societal relevance of outputs and results pursuant to CAS and institute mission
High, as the fields of research are in the public focus and often subject to rassedified, Islamophobic or political stereotyping.	
H2.2	System functionality for knowledge transfer into practise, its usefulness for society. The impact of the team's activity on proper practice in society in the area of social sciences and humanities
Humanities do not have the function of being useful to society in the sense that they were required to subscribe to the aims, methods, believes of the dominant strata of society or to contribute to a societal consensus. Their usefulness may be critical as much as constructive in character and often consists of creating meaning and orientation. In this sense: very high.	
H2.3	Relation to practice
The term "practice" would need clarification and critique. If it relates to anything directly connected with economic gain: n/a. If practice entails knowledge circulation, contribution to political opinion-making of decision makers and public discourse: high and positive.	
H2.4	Participation in AV21 strategy
Intensive and successful.	

H2.5	Cooperation with regions of the Czech Republic
N/a. Outreach, however, was not confined to Prague but covered all of the ČR's territory.	

Further criterion: 1. Position in international and national context (D1.1-D1.3)

D1.1	Comparison of the team with similar international and national institutes
In the period under review, the team has enhanced its international visibility, and conducted research in an international arena on a par with other similar institutions. The territorial and temporal scope of the institute's research area is, however, exceptional. The team has used this particularity to its advantage and was able to attract a number of international scholars.	
D1.2	Scope and quality of international and national cooperation and the role of the team in such cooperation; engagement in broad international cooperation
Good, both on institutional and individual levels.	
D1.3	Participation of the workers in scientific community activities (organizing of conferences and workshops, invited lectures, awards)
Impressive.	

Further criterion: 2. Vitality, sustainability and strategy (D2.1-D2.9)

D2.1	Direction in line with the perspective of the planned research directions
Yes.	
D2.2	Assessment of the previous research objectives and their achievement
Positive.	
D2.3	Assessment of implementation of recommendations from past evaluation
The team has, along with the rest of the OI has intelligently and successfully implemented the recommendations as much as it was in its power. Some of the recommendations required the assistance of the AVČR as a whole. The committee acknowledges the efforts to increase the number of researchers and to work on the basis of contracts that are not temporary. It also takes notice that travel money is now available to members of the team.	
D2.4	Success in receiving grants
Good for internal grants; grants from other and international institutions have not been received.	
D2.5	Adequacy of instrumental equipment
Adequate.	
D2.6	Effectiveness of management
Very good.	

D2.7	Assessment of professional structure, development strategy and the strategy of keeping best scientists, age structure, career and qualification growth
<p>Altogether good. The team is still in need of two more researchers. Fluctuation is relatively high and sometimes problematic (salaries are not high enough to keep people who get offers from institutions in richer countries). Qualification and career growth are positively evaluated. The age structure of the team is overall balanced.</p>	
D2.8	Creating work-life balance conditions, assessment of approach towards possible gender issues
<p>Work-life balance conditions are difficult to judge via zoom. Gender equality is an issue that is being addressed; however, gender-balance has not yet been attained.</p>	
D2.9	Relation of the team with regard to the integration, development and sustainability of the research centre funded by the National Programme of Sustainability II.
<p>This question has not been object of the evaluation.</p>	

Further criterion: 3. Cooperation with universities and participation in education (D3.1-D3.6)

D3.1	Scope of cooperation with universities on national and international level
<p>Good, nationally perhaps a bit too high, as the team seems to receive much less than it gives.</p>	
D3.2	Effectiveness of joint research centres
<p>Very good.</p>	
D3.3	Success rate in supervision of PhD students
<p>Very good.</p>	
D3.4	Participation of PhD students in the outputs
<p>By now, only one PhD student is member of the team. She has successfully pursued her doctoral studies in the framework of the team's research.</p>	
D3.5	Participation of the institute in master or bachelor studies
<p>Very high, which constitutes both an achievement and the risk of overexertion.</p>	
D3.6	Assessment of cooperation intensity with universities in the form of teaching
<p>See above.</p>	

Further criterion: 4. Outreach activities (D4.1-D4.3)

D4.1	Sufficiency of media strategy and activities in the area of research popularisation
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Fully sufficient .	
D4.2	Publishing activities and its quality
Very high, with regard both to the publications of the members and the journals edited by the OI.	
D4.3	Participation in professional organisations in the area of research and development
Fully adequate.	

Other comments of the commission:

2. South Asia Department

Strengths and Opportunities:

Since the last evaluation in 2015 the team has not only grown in terms of FTE (from 5,50 to 6,93) but also increased its internal cooperations and those across the Oriental Institute, such as the Central Asian Platform. Enhanced by recent incomings with strong potential, its broad research topics and interests ensure a wide coverage of the region from the Himalayas to Maritime Southeast Asia, a region becoming more and more important in geopolitical respect. Besides strong individual performance there is a clear commitment to the study of marginalized and radical groups in today's societies (Bahovadinova, Exnerová, Hons, Ngo, Petrů) as well as research in traditional religion, literature and philosophy (Filipský, Holba, Madaio, Strnad) with the multilingual and multicultural makeup of the region as a unifying thread. This constitutes a unique profile in the international academic landscape contributing to ongoing discussions of political relevance, at the same time not neglecting the traditions having led to the world we are facing.

Weaknesses and Threats:

Recommendations from the last evaluation concerning travel funds were accepted by the Oriental Institute by allocating a fixed sum to the team. In spite of its laudable growth in numbers, however, the team is still the smallest in the Oriental Institute. It has to cover a huge region where appr. one third of humankind live. While major aspects of research on the sub-continent can be covered, the available positions for Central Asia and Southeast Asia only allow partial access to these important parts of the region. It has been difficult to find scholars fitting the profile of the team *and* willing to stay with it not only short-term, but commit themselves for a longer period and thus adding sustainability to its program. The main reason for this is a lack of young researchers in the respective fields in many European countries including the Czech Republic. Members of the team try to remedy this situation by teaching at Charles University in order to educate the next generation, which is absolutely necessary and highly praiseworthy, and hopefully will pay off soon.

Main criterion: 1. Quality of results (H1.1-H1.5)

H1.1	Quality of selected outputs of Phase I
The quality of the results of the team is excellent, 10 out of 12 outputs submitted to evaluation were ranked 1 or 2. All these outputs were single-authored, thus showing the strength of the team's individual researchers whether early career or senior. In general, the international visibility of the outputs is high (publishers such as Oxford UP, Pittsburgh UP, Brill). In addition, members of the team have contributed to promoting knowledge about Southeast Asia in the Czech society by translations and scholarly publications in the Czech language.	
H1.2	Contribution of workers on the outputs reached
See above.	
H1.3	Quality of all outputs and results
See above.	
H1.4	The most valuable discoveries and findings in the fields, their importance for the field

Not applicable.	
H1.5	Contribution of the participation of the authors in large collaborations
Not applicable.	

Main criterion: 2. Societal relevance (H2.1-H2.5)

H2.1	Societal relevance of outputs and results pursuant to CAS and institute mission
The team provides expertise on an international level of quality to the Czech public by publications, outreach activities and teaching and participated in the Strategy AV21 project “Legitimacy of Power in the 14th Century World”. Since it is the major institutional address for South Asian Studies in the Czech Republic, the Czech presence on the international map of this field has to be credited to the team.	
H2.2	System functionality for knowledge transfer into practise, its usefulness for society. The impact of the team’s activity on proper practice in society in the area of social sciences and humanities
See above.	
H2.3	Relation to practice
Not applicable.	
H2.4	Participation in AV21 strategy
See above.	
H2.5	Cooperation with regions of the Czech Republic
Not applicable.	

Further criterion: 1. Position in international and national context (D1.1-D1.3)

D1.1	Comparison of the team with similar international and national institutes
To the best of our knowledge there is no comparable institute in Europe or North America, not to mention the Czech Republic. The team is successfully engaged in international cooperations (e.g. University of Oxford, Humboldt-Universität) and actively contributes to international networks such as the Braj Bhāṣā network, the Southeast Asian Initiative or the European Network of Dravidian Studies.	
D1.2	Scope and quality of international and national cooperation and the role of the team in such cooperation; engagement in broad international cooperation
See above.	
D1.3	Participation of the workers in scientific community activities (organizing of conferences and workshops, invited lectures, awards)
The team has organized many international and national conferences and workshops within the evaluation period. Many members gave invited talks at highly prestigious	

institutions. In addition, the digitization projects of the team have to be highlighted here, one in cooperation with Heidelberg giving access to microfilms of Old Hindi manuscripts, the other one concerning 110 reels of microfilms provided by the National Archives of India – both destined to make the Czech Academy an even more important address in things South Asian.

Further criterion: 2. Vitality, sustainability and strategy (D2.1-D2.9)

D2.1	Direction in line with the perspective of the planned research directions
The team has developed beyond expectation: four of its members successfully applied for six grants either as PI or as co-applicant; it has actively propelled the cooperations within the Oriental Institute and has convincing plans for the future research agenda, including replacements for retiring members. Compared to the difficult situation just a few years ago, the team has shown its determination to integrate their own research interests and to cooperate more closely among each other and within the Oriental Institute. Credit for this beneficial development has to be given to the outgoing and incoming heads of department who apparently were able to build a true team.	
D2.2	Assessment of the previous research objectives and their achievement
See above.	
D2.3	Assessment of implementation of recommendations from past evaluation
See above.	
D2.4	Success in receiving grants
See above.	
D2.5	Adequacy of instrumental equipment
Not applicable.	
D2.6	Effectiveness of management
See above.	
D2.7	Assessment of professional structure, development strategy and the strategy of keeping best scientists, age structure, career and qualification growth
See above.	
D2.8	Creating work-life balance conditions, assessment of approach towards possible gender issues
Laudable efforts are undertaken.	
D2.9	Relation of the team with regard to the integration, development and sustainability of the research centre funded by the National Programme of Sustainability II.
Not applicable.	

Further criterion: 3. Cooperation with universities and participation in education (D3.1-D3.6)

D3.1	Scope of cooperation with universities on national and international level
<p>Due to the highly specialized expertise needed for the study of Southeast Asia, the only institution in the Czech Republic providing the necessary educational background is Charles University. Members of the team participate in two PhD programs, supervise MA and PhD theses and teach BA and MA classes. This is an extremely valuable contribution to tertiary education which deserves recognition. For the future it might be considered to organize summer or winter schools with European partners, in order to further integration of teaching <i>and</i> of European cooperation.</p>	
D3.2	Effectiveness of joint research centres
<p>Not relevant.</p>	
D3.3	Success rate in supervision of PhD students
<p>See above.</p>	
D3.4	Participation of PhD students in the outputs
<p>Not known.</p>	
D3.5	Participation of the team in master or bachelor studies
<p>See above.</p>	
D3.6	Assessment of cooperation intensity with universities in the form of teaching
<p>See above.</p>	

Further criterion: 4. Outreach activities (D4.1-D4.3)

D4.1	Sufficiency of media strategy and activities in the area of research popularisation
<p>The team has been very active to disseminate the results of their research. Besides the scholarly translations already mentioned above, they contributed to journals, advised on translations and appeared in radio and TV broadcasts as well as on Facebook.</p>	
D4.2	Publishing activities and its quality
<p>See above.</p>	
D4.3	Participation in professional organisations in the area of research and development
<p>See above under D1.</p>	

Other comments of the commission:

3. East Asia Department

Strengths:

The team is a rather homogenous group that has started to collaborate shortly before the last evaluation had begun. It has grown into a coherent body since that time and has started to bundle its research. Several collaborative projects have evolved out of the group that have also positively affected other parts of the Oriental Institute. The group has an excellent mixture of research on contemporary and historical research on China.

Opportunities:

Its focus on Tibet and Xinjiang turns it into one of the very rare examples of institutions that are competent when it comes to research on such sensitive issues as these two territories of the PRC. This focus makes it a potentially important partner also for decision makers beyond the academia.

Weaknesses:

The East Asia Department has implemented many suggestions of the last evaluation panel. Among other things it has opened up a travel fund. Moreover, it has established a small research outlet in Taipei in collaboration with the renowned Taiwanese Academia Sinica. Apparently, this does not cost very much money. Still, it is difficult with the resources available at the institute to repeat this effort in other parts of the research area. Resources are also a problem as far as salaries are concerned. Salaries are not competitive enough to keep researchers. The department has a very strong focus on China and, as the last evaluation panel suggested, has tried to change this situation by hiring two specialists on Japan. However, one of them has left shortly afterwards because he/she found a better position. Given the fact that there seems to be a shortage of qualified young researchers in this research area within the Czech Republic, the department has started to internationalize.

Threats:

All this seems to have worked quite well but it seems to be easier to attract international researchers for some time than to convince them to stay for long terms.

One final aspect, also related to financial resources, is digitalization. More and more journals but also databases are created all over the world. They are changing traditional ways of doing scholarship. However, many of them are expensive, and the department has a hard time to provide access to these modern tools that are indispensable for performing competitive research.

Main criterion: 1. Quality of results (H1.1-H1.5)

H1.1	Quality of selected outputs of Phase I
<p>Overall there has been a good and steady output produced by all members of the team. Klimes' book on the Uyghurs belongs to the very few publications on a world-wide level that does not just describe the situation in Xinjiang on the basis of secondary literature but as a matter of fact makes wide use of sources in the Uyghur language. Weingarten has several articles on classical Confucianism that have been met with praise on an international level. Ptackova's work on Tibet is highly regarded by her colleagues around the globe. Dluhosova has worked on censorship and on Taiwanese literature, Hruby, among other things, has contributed to the collaborative project on China's cultural</p>	

<p>diplomacy. Liscak is a very prolific writer as far as the Jesuit mission to China is concerned. Toyosawa, a new member of the team, enriches research by writing on the intellectual world and reforms in Tokugawa and Meiji Japan. It is difficult to single out one author. All members of the team have contributed to the international visibility of the research unit. There have also been publications in Czech which the reviewers did not read, but it does seem important to them that this tradition is being continued.</p>	
H1.2	Contribution of workers on the outputs reached
<p>All researchers have contributed to the outputs.</p>	
H1.3	Quality of all outputs and results
<p>See above</p>	
H1.4	The most valuable discoveries and findings in the fields, their importance for the field
<p>See in H1.1</p>	
H1.5	Contribution of the participation of the authors in large collaborations
<p>Not applicable</p>	

Main criterion: 2. Societal relevance (H2.1-H2.5)

H2.1	Societal relevance of outputs and results pursuant to CAS and institute mission
<p>Societal relevance seems obvious. Both the subject of China's cultural diplomacy and the one of its political power are relevant for Europe's understanding of what is going in a country that now is being seen as the major competitor of the United States for power and influence in the world and in Europe. China has established the China 17+1 group. In this context it seems highly important that the Czech Republic supports basic research into the foundations underlying Chinese foreign politics in Central Europe which is done with high standards at the Academy. At the same time, the focus on minorities is also highly relevant for giving a deeper understanding of topics that are currently being discussed in the international Western media such as the treatment of Uyghurs or Tibetans and the status of their territories as autonomous regions within China.</p>	
H2.2	System functionality for knowledge transfer into practise, its usefulness for society. The impact of the team's activity on proper practice in society in the area of social sciences and humanities
<p>See under H2.1: They really have done their best.</p>	
H2.3	Relation to practice
<p>Has been pointed out under H2.1</p>	
H2.4	Participation in AV21 strategy
<p>See above</p>	
H2.5	Cooperation with regions of the Czech Republic
<p>University of Olomouc</p>	

Further criterion: 1. Position in international and national context (D1.1-D1.3)

D1.1	Comparison of the team with similar international and national institutes
<p>The United States do not dispose of an academia system such the Czech Republic. It does not seem useful to compare the department with institutes within American universities. Within Europe, comparable institutions are the CNRS in France and the Max-Planck Society in Germany. Just as does the Czech Academy, both institutions have a strong focus on the natural sciences, but they do have humanities as well. There is a lot of collaboration of the colleagues within the East Asia Department going on with their counterparts in France and Germany and it is a collaboration among peers.</p>	
D1.2	Scope and quality of international and national cooperation and the role of the team in such cooperation; engagement in broad international cooperation
<p>The team is internationally composed and it collaborates internationally as far as possible. Collaboration with Humboldt University Berlin</p>	
D1.3	Participation of the workers in scientific community activities (organizing of conferences and workshops, invited lectures, awards)
<p>The team has jointly organized 14 international conferences and workshops within the evaluation period. Not more should be expected since this would threaten the scholarly output of its members. Of interest are also two public debates by Dr. Klimes. There is also a long list of invited lectures. All in all this is a very satisfying result.</p>	

Further criterion: 2. Vitality, sustainability and strategy (D2.1-D2.9)

D2.1	Direction in line with the perspective of the planned research directions
<p>The team has fully achieved what it promised to do during the discussions that took place when the last evaluation was conducted.</p>	
D2.2	Assessment of the previous research objectives and their achievement
<p></p>	
D2.3	Assessment of implementation of recommendations from past evaluation
<p>Team has taken the recommendation of the evaluation team into consideration and has implemented the recommendations (travel fund, strengthening the role of work on minorities, widening the scope by including a researcher on Japan, formation of research clusters).</p>	
D2.4	Success in receiving grants
<p>Several members of the team have also applied for grants. Some of these applications were successful, mainly with Czech and Taiwanese bodies. They are working on receiving an ERC grant, a task that is not easy to achieve. We do think that there is a lot of potential for a successful application.</p>	
D2.5	Adequacy of instrumental equipment
<p>Access to databases needs more money. This is a field that is developing very fast on an international level.</p>	
D2.6	Effectiveness of management

The management quality seems excellent.	
D2.7	Assessment of professional structure, development strategy and the strategy of keeping best scientists, age structure, career and qualification growth
As far as the age structure is concerned the team is very homogenous. Many of its members are within the age group from 40 to 45 years. However, the team should also look for younger members. The difficulties to achieve this have been described above. A raise of the salary levels seems to be a crucial tool to increase the attractiveness of the academy as a work place for young international researchers.	
D2.8	Creating work-life balance conditions, assessment of approach towards possible gender issues
Gender imbalance is not a problem in this department.	
D2.9	Relation of the team with regard to the integration, development and sustainability of the research centre funded by the National Programme of Sustainability II.
Not applicable.	

Further criterion: 3. Cooperation with universities and participation in education (D3.1-D3.6)

D3.1	Scope of cooperation with universities on national and international level
The main partner of the East Asia Department obviously is Charles University, but there is also a collaboration with Masaryk University. On an international level, a partnership with Humboldt University in Berlin exists.	
D3.2	Effectiveness of joint research centres
Not relevant.	
D3.3	Success rate in supervision of PhD students
As has been outlined above, there seem to be problems of attracting PhD students. Apparently, this has something to do with the difficulties that Czech (and other) universities currently have in raising young scientists in fields that require a long training in difficult languages and that offer limited job opportunities. To attract PhD students on an international level also is not easy. Although it is not the task of the East Asia Department of the Academy to solve this problem, it obviously effects its own work.	
D3.4	Participation of PhD students in the outputs
See above.	
D3.5	Participation of the team in master or bachelor studies
Various team members have engaged in teaching on all three levels.	
D3.6	Assessment of cooperation intensity with universities in the form of teaching
It would be a good idea to get into contact with those responsible for doctoral training at Czech universities and jointly think about a strategy. On the other hand, it might be a good	

idea to get into contact with more universities within in Europe in order to think about the possibility of establishing more partnerships that may bring PhD students to Prague.

Further criterion: 4. Outreach activities (D4.1-D4.3)

D4.1	Sufficiency of media strategy and activities in the area of research popularisation
The team has understood the importance of cooperation with public media such as Czech television or radio. It also offers guidance to ministries and municipal courts. Public debates have been organized which also help to make the research done at the academy visible to a general audience. Finally, social media are also part of the efforts to reach out to a younger public.	
D4.2	Publishing activities and its quality
As outlined above, the team has been very active and given its scope it has been very successful in publishing.	
D4.3	Participation in professional organisations in the area of research and development
They have done their best in this field.	

Other comments of the commission:

Final report was elaborated by:

Commission 12 - Humanities and the arts
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