Description of the main research directions investigated by the institute

The OI concentrates on **both individual and collaborative research**. The OI is divided into three departments on a geographical basis. In the last five years, the three departments of the OI and its individual researchers have focused on the following areas of research (this is just a brief digest; for details see the reports for individual teams/departments).

<u>The Middle East Department</u>
• Modern and contemporary history of the Middle East (the Arab states, Iran/Persia, Israel, Turkey, the Ottoman Empire);
• Islam in its many forms (including medieval, modern, political, mystical, etc.);
• Social and cultural history of the pre-modern Middle East;
• Economic and cultural history of the Ancient Near East.

When it comes to the modern and contemporary history of the Middle East, researchers from the ME Department concentrated specifically on modern Egyptian intellectual and literary history, with a particular focus on the writings and intellectual networks of the Egyptian intellectual and Islamic activist Sayyid Qutb. Their research also included analysis of the Egyptian political and constitutional transition process since 2011. Another line of research dealt with the interplay of millennialism and Salafist/Jihadist interpretations and the history of the phenomenon of grave destruction in Salafi Islam. Academic inquiry was also directed toward topics as diverse as: the evolution of Persian literary culture in the 18th and 19th centuries; the origins of the pre-independence Zionist/Israeli right and Israel's foreign relations before 1967; state repression in Turkey as a catalyst for Kurdish women's political participation; and the ideological and intellectual trajectory of the Young Turk opposition to the reigning sultan in the late 19th-century Ottoman Empire. More classical studies included an investigation of the network of more than fifteen sites which existed from the late Sasanian to the Ottoman period (6th–19th century) in the region of northeastern Mesopotamia. Finally, with respect to Ancient Near Eastern studies, researchers focused on topics such as mathematical aspects of earthwork projects in the city of Umma during the Third Dynasty of Ur (also called Ur III, ca. 2100–2000 BC) and the analysis of Sumerian and Akkadian chronographic texts.

<u>The South Asia Department</u>
• Political and cultural history of India;
• Buddhism and Buddhist philosophy; Hindu mythology;
• Indo-Aryan languages (Sanskrit and Hindi); Tamil language and Tamil literature;
• Political and cultural history and ethnography of Central Asia and Southeast Asia
(especially Indonesia and Malaysia).

When it comes to India, an edition of a medieval Rājasthānī manuscript has been produced, along with an analysis that situates the text in its broader historical and literary context. Furthermore, knowledge of the Tamil language and Tamil literature has been used as a tool to conduct a broader analysis of South Indian society, particularly the lower and oppressed castes. Another project was dedicated to the classical philosophy of Advaita Vedānta and its further developments, initially in the context of the South Indian medieval empire of Vijayanagara, and later in the so-called neo-Vedānta philosophy in 19th-century British India. In Buddhism studies, research dealt with Indian and Tibetan Buddhist philosophers' understanding of the way in which perceptions, sensations, and the senses provide knowledge or justified beliefs about the world, and also with acculturation of Indian and specifically Buddhist philosophy in the Czech intellectual milieu. In Southeast Asian studies, research was dedicated to the role of radicalized Islamic groups in the estrangement of minorities in contemporary Indonesian society. Furthermore, the fields of Persian cultural impact in Maritime Southeast Asia were researched in order to provide a more complex picture of the region's cultural pluralism and hybridization. In terms of Central Asian studies, one line of inquiry

focused on labor migration and the mobile proletariat in the late Soviet and post-Soviet Euro-Asian space, with a special focus on Central Asia; another looked at the resurgence of Islam in Central Asia.

The East Asia Department
• Politics and history of modern China;
• History of Tibet and Sino-Tibetan relations;
• Modern history of Japan;
• History of Medieval China; history of religion in China;
• Ancient Chinese language, literature, and thought; phonetics and phonology of Mandarin;
• History, culture, and postwar literature of Taiwan.

As for China, various aspects of its history and culture were the foci of research. Among them were: the politics of contemporary China, focusing on policies towards Uyghurs and the uses of language and ideology in the PRC; Chinese development policy in Tibetan areas and the sedentarization of pastoral communities; Chinese cultural diplomacy in Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia; Taiwanese literature, focusing on the sociology of literature, language, and ideology in the post-war period and means of control in the cultural field; the phonetics and phonology of Mandarin; medieval history and Han and non-Han interactions, political legitimization, and concepts of emperorship; the history of Franciscan missions in China from the 13th to the 18th century; state control and spatial mobility in Early Empires; and early Chinese intellectual history and justifications of social and ethical norms. In Japanese studies, a specific line of inquiry was dedicated to the cultural and intellectual history of early modern and modern Japan, focusing on processes of knowledge production and also media and forms of communication in Japan.

In general, the results of our research are published in various formats and through various channels. Besides specialized monographs, both in Czech and international languages, we publish in high-standard academic journals. Representative lists of outstanding results achieved during the reviewed period can be found below and in the reports of individual teams/departments.

In addition to individual projects, we have also been active in the field of collaborative research at both the national and international levels, oftentimes supported by a specific grant. This was the case, for example, for research on attitudes toward graves in Islam, Chinese cultural diplomacy in various regions, and administrative aspects of Ancient Near Eastern societies. As for the national level, there is, unfortunately, only a limited number of grant providers. In spite of this, we have regularly submitted proposals to the Czech Science Foundation (GACR, the largest Czech grant provider) and we also applied to the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (oriented towards applied research, experimental development, and innovation). We have also prepared or participated in the preparation of several European grants—for example, to ERC or Horizon 2020 (unfortunately, the success rate has so far been rather limited). Luckily, our researchers submitted several successful applications to regional grant providers, such as the Gerda Henkel Stiftung, the Toshiba International Foundation, and the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation.

Our international activities have been further enhanced by several new memoranda of understanding signed with our partner institutions. Our branch office in Taiwan has also proved to be hugely beneficial, as it has enabled our researchers to use local facilities and broaden their academic networks.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the quality of the research conducted by the OI is ensured by two bodies:

Council of the Institute
The Council is mainly tasked with supervising the academic activities of the OI and its research strategies.
Dr. **Tomáš Petrů** (OI), *chairperson*
Dr. **Táňa Dluhošová** (OI), *vice-chairperson*
Assoc. Prof. **Daniel Berounský** (Director, Institute of Asian Studies, Charles University)
Assoc. Prof. **Daniel Boušek** (Dpt. of Middle Eastern Studies, Charles University)
Dr. **Pavlína Cermanová** (Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences)
Dr. **Ondřej Ditrych** (Director, Institute of International Relations)
Dr. **Ondřej Klimeš** (OI)
Dr. **Bronislav Ostřanský** (OI)
Dr. **Stefano Taglia** (OI)

International Advisory Board
The IAB (established in 2019) gives expert feedback on the OI's research activities and development of research fields and helps to enhance its international standing.
Prof. **Mareile Flitsch** (University of Zurich, Director of the Ethnographic Museum and Professor at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology)
Prof. **David Howell** (Harvard University, Professor of Japanese History)
Prof. **Eberhard Kienle** (Sciences Po/CNRS, Directeur de recherché)
Prof. **Gudrun Krämer** (Freie Universität Berlin, Professor of Islamic Studies, member of the German National Research Council)
Prof. **James Leibold** (La Trobe University, Melbourne, Professor in Chinese Politics and Asian Studies)
Dr. **Madeleine Reeves** (University of Manchester, Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology)
Prof. **Atreyee Sen** (University of Copenhagen, Professor of Anthropology)
Assoc. Prof. **Martin Slama** (Institute for Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences)
Prof. **Naghmeh Sohrabi** (Brandeis University, Professor, Charles (Corky) Goodman Chair in Middle East History)

Research activity and characterisation of the main scientific results

During the period under scrutiny, the members of the department have authored more than 10 scholarly monographs and almost 30 articles. These include books at flagship publishing houses in the field of Middle East/Islamic studies, such as Routledge or the Edinburgh University Press, and articles appearing in the upper tier of IF-ranked journals. Our members were also involved in a number of collaborative projects, including edited monographs or special issues of renowned journals. Other activities included the organization of international workshops/conferences or lectures given by foreign scholars who visited the country at the invitation of the Institute, and talks (in Czech) for pre-university students or the general public (for more, see the sections on organized conferences and outreach activity). Most members of the department were involved in teaching at universities on topics ranging from Islam and the Middle East in general to the history of particular countries, such as Iran or Israel (for more, see the section "pedagogical activity"). By specialization, our top publications were as follows.

So far as the Arab Middle East is concerned, Dr. Šabasevičiūtė has turned part of her long-term research concerning modern Egyptian intellectual and literary history into an article, entitled "Sayyid Qutb and the Crisis of Culture in Late 1940s Egypt" (*International Journal of Middle East Studies* 50.1, 2018). The article focuses on the writings and intellectual networks of the Egyptian intellectual and Islamic activist Sayyid Qutb. Providing a counterpoint to conventional accounts of Qutb's Islamization predicated on the thesis of his turn from secularism to Islamism, this article explores Qutb's radicalization in the context of his ongoing literary career and in relation to post-war developments in Egypt's intellectual field. Drawing on three periodicals published respectively by leftist, Islamist, and independent aspiring writers, the article places Qutb's radicalization in the context of an emerging postwar intellectual generation. By shedding light on intellectual cooperation between Qutb, Muslim Brothers, and independent writers, this study challenges established scholarly narratives that locate the Islamist project outside the Egyptian intellectual field. In doing so, it highlights the methodological interest in integrating the focus on intellectual networks into the study of modern Arab intellectual history and invites a reappraisal of its conventional reading through the prism of the Islamist/secular divide. Dr. Ostřanský converted his research dealing with the interplay of millennialism and Salafist/Jihadist interpretations of Islam into a book, entitled *The Jihadist Preachers of the End Times: ISIS Apocalyptic Propaganda* (Edinburgh University Press, 2019). The monograph examines how ISIS employs a millennial agenda in the presentation of its ideas. Focusing on apocalyptic manifestations found in ISIS propaganda, this book situates the group's agenda in the broader framework of contemporary Muslim thought and elucidates key topics in millennial thinking within the spiritual context of modern Islamic apocalypticism. Based on the group's primary sources as well as medieval Muslim apocalyptic literature and its modern interpretations, the book analyses the ways ISIS presents its message concerning the Last Days as a meaningful, inventive, and frightening expression of collectively shared expectations relating to the supposedly approaching End Times. It is the first comprehensive study of ISIS primary sources – previously only discussed as part of the background to broader interpretations of the ISIS campaign – to be based on a coherent critical approach to the primary sources both in Arabic and Western languages, including new media and social network sources. His article "The Sufi Journey to the Next World: Sepulchral Symbolism of Muslim Mystics, Its Context and Interpretations" (*Archiv orientální* 83.3, 2015), sets Sufi symbolism related to the Last Things, death, funerals, the Hereafter etc. within the complex framework of the Sufi spiritual legacy. It argues that the symbolic interpretation of the eschatological journey undeniably has, based on the numerous examples of the Sufi symbolic imagination, its demonstrable "earthly counterpart" within the Sufi teaching about the spiritual progress of the human being. Dr. Beránek has co-authored a book with Pavel Ťupek dealing with the attacks on Islamic funerary and sacral architecture in past decades, entitled *The Temptation of Graves in Salafi Islam: Iconoclasm, Destruction and Idolatry* (Edinburgh University Press, 2018). The book aims to illuminate the ideology behind these acts, explaining

the current destruction of graves in the Islamic world and tracing the ideological sources of iconoclasm from medieval theological and legal debates to contemporary Islamist movements. To this end, it uses the case studies of Ibn Taymiyya, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, the formation of the Saudi ulama, Nasir al-Din al-Albani, and ISIS. The book works with primary sources, both pre-modern and contemporary, and explains how certain Islamic movements formed their particular antipathy towards the cult of the dead. Furthermore, the authors claim that the recent examples of destruction are rooted in the political realities of global modernity, which lead actors to oversimplify medieval debates in order to dominate their theological and political opponents. By destroying graves and shrines, many of the contemporary Salafi groups simply seek to differentiate themselves from their traditional ideological opponents and announce themselves as a force to be reckoned with among Sunni Muslims. In this context, the book provides an innovative and comprehensive view on an important phenomenon of both the medieval and contemporary Islamic worlds. The work of Dr. Steuer seems best characterized by his article (co-authored with A. Blouët) "The Notions of Citizenship and the Civil State in the Egyptian Transition Process" (*Middle East Law and Governance* 7.2, 2015) and his book chapter "The Role of Elections: The Recomposition of the Party System and the Hierarchization of Political Issues" (in: *Egypt's Revolution. Politics, Religion, and Social Movements*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). The article deals with two notions that have become central in the Egyptian political and constitutional transition process since 2011 – citizenship and the "Civil State" – and presents the struggle to define them that took place during the 2012 writing of the Constitution. The authors assume that even though the principle of citizenship is not seriously contested by any of the important political players, its scope and relationship with Islamic normativity (subordination, pre-eminence, or independence) have both been fiercely debated. As for the notion of the Civil State, it is characterized by an important semantic haziness, which results in a political tension around the issue of its definition, although there is relative consensus in Egypt regarding the term itself. The innovative aspect of the article is that it goes beyond the study of the competing strategies of Islamists and Secularists and seeks to highlight the attempt to reach a consensus among these political actors through the notion of a "Civil State." It further explains why this attempt eventually failed in the Egyptian political and constitutional context. This was due to disagreement over the role of *shari'a* (the material source of the positive law or moral principle inspiring the practitioner), the degree of autonomy of the citizen's political representation in relation to religious institutions, and the balance between rights and freedom on the one hand and the application of religious norms on the other. The aforementioned book chapter asserts that while all the Egyptian institutions established in 2011–2012 were prematurely disbanded, these elections have strongly contributed to the definition of political priorities according to the choices of the electorate. Indeed, the legal and political conditions following the ousting of Hosni Mubarak allowed, first, the creation of political parties based on the various organizations existing within Egyptian society, and second, the politicization of elections through the campaigning activity of parties competing in order to represent various sectors of the electorate. As a result, it appears clear that the most important issues for Egyptian voters are those relating to the nature of the state itself: should it be Islamic or secular, military or civilian? These two issues have henceforth shaped the boundaries of the political debate in Egypt, and explain why the vague notion of a "Civil State" became so crucial to the political debate of this time. The innovative aspect is that it shows how the Egyptian political parties of that time (2011–2012) mediated between the structuring of Egyptian society itself and the debates within the Constitutional Committee regarding the nature of the State. Of course, this mediation is not neutral: the weight of past repression (path dependence) and the electoral system intervened and contributed to shape the political field, and consequently the constitutional debate. Dr. Melčák is one of four authors of a monograph concentrating on the investigation of the network of more than fifteen sites which existed from the late Sasanian to the Ottoman periods (6th–19th centuries) in the region of northeastern Mesopotamia, bounded by the rivers of Great Zab, Little Zab, and Tigris (*Medieval Urban Landscape in Northeastern Mesopotamia*, Archaeopress, 2016). The book is an outcome of the interdisciplinary research which was unique in putting together data

obtained by remote sensing (both spy and commercial satellite imagery and military aerial photos), archaeological surveys and pottery analysis (where possible), and analysis of written historical sources. This integrative approach made it possible to draw an accurate picture of the extinct urban network (some of the sites were identified for the very first time) and presents a series of detailed site profiles including historical, archaeological, and topographical analysis. The investigation of these settlements offered a unique opportunity for the holistic study of diversity, temporal dynamics, and mutual relationships within the urban network that developed in the hinterland of Baghdad and Samarra, two capital cities of the old Islamic world. The monograph presents and interprets unique data based on original field research in Iraqi Kurdistan. Dr. Melčák and Dr. Beránek have also managed to blend their research interests, co-authoring an article entitled "ISIS's Destruction of Mosul's Historical Monuments: Between Media Spectacle and Religious Doctrine" (*International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 6.2, 2017). The article advances the debate on whether the attacks of ISIS (the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) on archaeological heritage should be interpreted as a revival of the phenomenon of iconoclasm or rather as a form of "iconoclash," i.e. a highly effective method of producing visual imagery that is intended to be disseminated by the media in order to shock both the world and a local audience. The paper argues that iconoclasm – especially that inherent in the Islamic doctrine of *taswiyat al-qubur* (the leveling of graves) – should not be considered a mere pretext, but rather one possible genuine rationale behind ISIS's destructive behavior. To support the argument, the paper systematically tracked the destruction of monuments in Mosul after ISIS seized control of the town in June 2014. The analysis clearly showed that ISIS mainly targeted the funerary architecture (tombs, shrines) and funerary-related architecture (mosques attached to tombs) and that only a small proportion of these cases were utilized in ISIS's media propaganda. The collected data have been interpreted in the context of the religious discourse on the destruction of graves (*taswiyat al-qubur*) in Salafi teachings, which has often been vigorously invoked by religious circles, e.g., in Saudi Arabia, and shows that ISIS's ideology utilized almost the same arguments, while referencing the same religious and ideological sources. All these findings clearly support the notion of the religious motivation behind ISIS's destructive behavior. The paper is based on clear empirical data, which were obtained using modern methods of satellite imagery in order to get the most accurate possible picture of the damage.

In the field of Ottoman and Turkish studies, we may refer to a number of outputs with topics ranging from the nation-building process in the late Ottoman Empire to gender-related aspects of Kurdish politics in contemporary Turkey. Dr. Taglia's monograph *Intellectuals and Reform: The Young Turks on the Challenges of Modernity* (Routledge, 2015) uncovers the ideological and intellectual trajectory of the Young Turk opposition to the reigning sultan in the late 19th century Ottoman Empire. Through an analysis of Ottoman-period journals, political and philosophical treatises, contemporary accounts, and police archives, this work offers a critical comparison of the different views present within a movement too often portrayed as a unified bloc. The book provides a new perspective on the understanding of religion, ethnicity, and social change of the Young Turk organization in exile. Challenging the widespread literature that presents Ottoman society in the long 19th century as locked in a fight between innovation and tradition, secularism and Islamism, technological advancement and backwardness, the book provides a more nuanced picture of a complicated and crucial time for the Empire; one in which the battle for supremacy took place not only between the Sultan and the Young Turk organization, but also within the Young Turk movement. The book follows Ahmet Rıza and Mehmet Sabahattin, two of the most influential leaders of the Young Turk organization, through their association with philosophical circles, and highlights how their emphasis on intellectualism and elitism had a twofold effect. On the one hand, seeing themselves as enlightened and entrusted with a mission, they engaged in enduring debates, leaving an important legacy for both Ottoman and Republican rule. On the other hand, the rigidity resulting from elitism and intellectualism prevented the conception of concrete plans for change, causing a schism at the 1902 Congress of Ottoman Liberals and marking the end of the intellectual

phase of the Young Turk movement. In the end, the remoteness of the two from the everyday needs of the Ottoman population marked their own failure and gave way to the militaristic confrontations that took the Empire through the Revolution of 1908, World War I, and the final collapse of the Ottoman Empire. His article "The Feasibility of Ottomanism as a Nationalist Project: the View of Albanian Young Turk Ismail Kemal" (*Die Welt des Islams* 56.3–4, 2016) is part of a thematic issue, "Ottomanism Then and Now: Historical and Contemporary Meanings," published by *Die Welt des Islams*. Dr. Taglia, serving as the guest editor, contributed an article and an introduction. The volume has quickly become a reference work for the academic community working on Ottomanism and Neo-Ottomanism, with frequent citations and widespread use. The article surveys the appeal of Ottomanism for non-dominant group members of the Young Turk organization, i.e. non-Muslims or non-Turkish members of the movement. It focuses on a specific reading of Ottomanism as a nationalist discourse articulated by Young Turk intellectuals in exile. It analyses the actions, thoughts, and writings of Ottoman Albanian İsmail Kemal who, in 1900, after an influential career in Ottoman officialdom, escaped to Europe and affiliated himself with the leaders of the organization in exile. What emerges from this study is that Ottomanism was a feasible discourse for Young Turk activists from both a dominant and non-dominant background, until the movement, by then organized in the Committee of Union and Progress, adopted an authoritarian and pro-Turkist stance after 1909. The novelty of the article resides in its emphasis that an assessment of the role of Young Turks from a non-Muslim or non-Turkish background needs to include a consideration of the simultaneous and compatible roles of such members as working for imperial reform and for the improvement and protection of their own particular community. In doing so, the work departs from the commonly accepted view that Young Turk members from a non-dominant background mainly worked, towards the end of the 19th century, for the emancipation of their own community and did not believe in the feasibility of a multi-religious and multi-ethnic reformed imperial entity. Dr. Drechselová's book chapter entitled "The Kurdish Women's Political Organizing from the feminist neo-institutionalist perspective" is part of a monograph she co-edited with Adnan Çelik (*Kurds in Turkey. Ethnographies of Heterogeneous Experiences*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2019). The chapter analyses state repression in Turkey as a catalyst for Kurdish women's political participation. It uses a conceptual framework of the feminist critique of neo-institutionalization which puts actors and their agency at the center of the analysis of institutions. Based on the premise of the feminist critique, the political parties are analyzed as gendered institutions and women as actors within them who navigate the intra-party environment. First, the chapter shows that in the course of the last forty years, the repressive environment in Turkey has contributed to the politicization of Kurdish women. Simultaneously, however, most of the female politicians in the Kurdish parties come from families which were politically active within the different components of the Kurdish movement. This means that, in terms of profiles, women who get selected as political candidates are chosen specifically for two reasons: having a family heritage of political involvement and individual experience with state violence. Second, the chapter is innovative since it elaborates on an issue which is glossed over in most of the existing research about the feminization of Kurdish politics in Turkey: the importance of the year 1999. Through a thorough contextualization, the chapter shows that the end of the 1990s and the beginning of 2000s were marked by a concomitant set of developments which all contributed to huge numbers of women entering pro-Kurdish political parties and led eventually to the implementation of the unprecedented 40% female quota and gender-parity in the co-chairing system. Ms. Özel Volfová's article "Turkey's Middle Eastern Endeavors: Discourses and Practices of Neo-Ottomanism under AKP" (*Die Welt des Islams* 56.3–4, 2016) focuses on the concept of neo-Ottomanism as a key Turkish foreign policy doctrine formulated by Justice and Development Party (AKP) ideologues as a justification for its growing political, economic, and cultural presence in the Middle East after 2002. This is contrasted with the civic nationalist discourse of Ottomanism developed in the 19th century by Ottoman political reformers who were trying to construct an overarching identity formula for the multi-confessional and multi-ethnic Empire which sensed its demise. The article formulates a hypothesis that the contemporary AKP's

interpretation of Ottomanism and the Ottoman past is intentionally selective and makes a radical departure from the original 19th century concept, which was multiculturally inclusive rather than based exclusively on Turkish identity. The article's innovation is its comparative methodological approach as well as the use of primary sources consisting of documents published in Turkish (press releases, public statements of key AKP representatives, online documents supporting the hypothetical claim on the divergence of Ottomanism vs. neo-Ottomanism, etc.).

Dr. Zouplna's articles dealing with Israeli history result from his core research projects: (a) the origins of the pre-independence Zionist/Israeli right, and (b) Israel's foreign relations before 1967. The first article, entitled "The Revisionist Union and Britain: From declarations of 'loyalty' to the employment of 'methods of bullying'" (*Journal of Israeli History* 36.1, 2017)**,** examines the attitudes of the leadership of the Revisionist Union (RU) towards the British presence in Palestine from the first quarter of the 1920s until the mid-1930s. The article challenges several simplistic notions of the (early) Zionist right. These include its image as a principally isolationist force and the exclusive focus upon the actors revered by the post-independence Israeli right. It further points out that the RU's critique had its contemporary parallels while much of its anti-British reputation resulted from Jewish political infighting. It asserts that the RU's founders had no intention of terminating the British presence, but sought to transform it to serve Zionist objectives. While official Zionism preferred backstage diplomacy, the RU pursued a different strategy – appealing directly to the masses and making its cause as public and vocal as possible. Eventually, the principle of pro-British orientation was combined with merciless criticism of Palestine policies on the ground. As far as the British were concerned, the Colonial Office was at best willing to tolerate a set of proposals seen as unrealistic. Once these started to erode the integrity of British policy in the region, unsolicited "enthusiasm" was reclassified as dangerous "extremism." The paper is among the first of its kind to use a complex set of original documents including archival materials, periodicals, and other primary sources in six languages. The second article, entitled "Israeli Polity and the European Powers during the 1950s: Democracy as a Tool in Fostering the Bilateral Ties?" (*West Bohemian Historical Review* 9.2, 2019), traces the interplay between Israeli declarations (and, indeed, beliefs) to the effect that the Jewish state was a "real democracy" and an outpost of the free world in the Middle East and the way Israel was seen by British and French diplomats working in the country. It is based on a rich collection of sources from archives in Israel, the UK, and France. The paper points out that even though strategic reservations regarding any closer ties with Israel were shared by all three Western diplomatic services at the time, the British and the French were far more inclined to criticism concerning the nature of the early Israeli polity. While Israel's ideological resilience towards Soviet penetration was appreciated, numerous aspects of the young state were seen as problematic. Both the British and the French considered that Mapai and the Histadrut were running a parallel state of their own. The relationships inside the microcosm of Jewish identities were interpreted as anything but idyllic. This evidence gathered on the spot raised concerns not only about the comportment of the top echelons of the state, but also about the "real" (or inclusive) character of Israeli democracy as a whole.

In the field of the Ancient Near East, we would like to mention two articles by Dr. Alivernini and a book by Dr. Prosecký. The article "Mathematical Aspects in Earthmoving linked to Hydraulic Works during the Ur III Period in Umma" (*IRAQ* 80, 2018) examines mathematical aspects of earthwork projects in the city of Umma during the Third Dynasty of Ur (also called Ur III, ca. 2100–2000 BC). The aim of this paper is twofold: firstly, it describes how such works were organized and prepared; secondly, it shows how pedagogical "mathematical texts" of the following Old Babylonian period (ca. 2000–1600 BC) about earthworks are indebted to the practical procedures adopted by Ur III officials. In his second article, entitled "A Catalogue of Harbours in the Province of Ĝirsu/Lagaš documented in the Administrative Texts of the Ur III Period" (*Acta Orientalia* 73.3, 2019), Dr. Alivernini investigates the place of boat trips on rivers and canals in the Mesopotamian economy at the end of the 3rd millennium BC. The paper

identifies a huge number of harbors in the province of Ĝirsu/Lagaš: ca. 35 harbors are documented just in this province, located in inhabited centers, villages, agricultural estates, and temples. The number is so high that we are in a position to assume that each administrative unit probably had a place for loading and unloading boats. Moreover, the article highlights that these harbors also had a sort of "fleet" onto which goods (especially barley) were loaded to be sent to their final destination. The book by Dr. Prosecký (published in 2015 in Czech) represents a collection of all known Sumerian and Akkadian chronographic texts, i.e. chronicles, king lists, and eponym lists from ancient Mesopotamia written and handed down in this region from the end of the 3rd millennium BC until the 3rd century BC. In other words, ancient texts dating from the period of the Ur III dynasty to the end of the Persian kings' rule, the ascension of Alexander the Great to the Babylonian throne, and the beginning of Hellenism in the ancient Near East. It is the first Czech translation of sources such as the Sumerian king list, the Dynastic chronicle, the Fall of Nineveh chronicle, the Nabonidus chronicle, the Cyrus cylinder, and many others. The translation is accompanied by extensive introductory studies putting these sources into a larger historical framework and clarifying their relationships with other Mesopotamian writings (primarily literary texts).

Though not the subject of the present evaluation proper, we should mention that a number of prominent outputs, commenced in this period, are to be published in 2020. This includes articles in IF-ranked journals (Schwartz, Zouplna), a book on Mosul under ISIS (Palgrave Macmillan) by Dr. Beránek and Dr. Melčák, a book on local power and female political pathways in Turkey (Palgrave Macmillan) by Dr. Drechselová, and a book on remapping Persian literary history (Edinburgh University Press) by Dr. Schwartz.

Research activity and characterisation of the main scientific results

Put in general terms and taken as a whole, the output of the team reflects the triple responsibility its members have felt toward the international scholarly community, the domestic audience for high quality research and translations regarding South Asian history and cultures generally, and, last but not least, the university establishment, which is, at least as far as South Asian subjects are concerned, seriously understaffed and—to a not inconsiderable degree—dependent on outside help. With respect to the area and time span covered, the team has attempted to include the whole region of South Asia and its members have welcomed the decision to reintroduce into its wider ambit the region of Southeast Asia. The Central Asian Platform, intended as cross-departmental project, has established part of its team within DSA; its members were able to find common ground with our specialist on Southeast Asia and develop common projects focused on two transnational topics: modern Islam, and a comparative study of the cultural diplomacy of China towards countries of Central and Southeast Asia.

Obviously, the small staff of DSA cannot entertain the ambition of covering the whole area evenly; any attempt to do so would necessarily lead to superficial treatment. On the other hand, inherited tradition and the expectations of the wider public oblige the Institute to keep, as far as possible, its research portfolio open and avoid limiting it to just one or a very few intensely investigated subjects. As a result, each member of staff pursues her/his own research project, always keeping in sight opportunities, as they present themselves, for larger collaborative projects. In the reviewed period, such projects included those mentioned above on modern Islam and cultural diplomacy, as well as the contribution of three members of the department to a large collective monograph comparing approaches to legitimacy of power on the part of different medieval Asian polities.
Every current member of the department pursues, in researching their specific topic, a long-term strategy allowing them to grasp the essential points and structure of a problem within its appropriate context(s).

All members of the team worked on their own clearly defined research topics and most of them also participated in larger collaborative projects extending beyond the boundaries of the DSA (the Legitimacy of Power project and the resulting publication; Central Asia Platform; the Chinese Cultural Diplomacy project). Results have appeared in the form of scholarly articles invariably published either in international peer-reviewed journals, or as chapters in books published by prestigious publishers (university and academic presses abroad; Academia and Karolinum publishing houses in the Czech Republic).

Malika Bahovadinova specializes on labor migration and the mobile proletariat in the late Soviet and post-Soviet Euro-Asian space, with a special focus on Central Asia. Her article "The 'mobile proletariat': the production of proletariat labor on a Soviet construction site" *(Labor History* 59,3 2018) discusses the Soviet conceptualization of labor and its importance for state building and modernization in the USSR and helps to explicate the ways in which labor migration was an integral part of the socialist development project in regions such as Tajikistan. Through the case study of the Nurek Dam, it considers the processes by which the Soviet proletariat was produced through work, mobility, and socialization. It ultimately presents an argument about the mutual constitution of the Soviet state and Soviet citizens, whose labor embodied the state's idealized "mobile proletariat." Finally, it also outlines what the development of the "mobile proletariat" and other ideals of labor came to mean for groups of peripheral subjects in the USSR, as well as what such boundaries may say about the limits of the Soviet modernization project in practice. From the perspective of post-Soviet Tajikistan, the problem of labor migration has been presented in Dr Bahovadinova's chapter "Capitalism Fulfils the Final Five-Year Plan: How Soviet era Migration Came to Fruition in Post-Soviet Eurasia," published in a collective monograph *Eurasia on the Move: Interdisciplinary Approaches to a Dynamic Migration Region* (The George Washington

University, Central Asia Program 2018). The chapter explores how discursive and bureaucratic frameworks of labor excess and shortage during the last decades of the Soviet Union found a novel re-appropriation by the Tajik bureaucracy after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Dr Bahovadinova presented the results of her research at a number of conferences and workshops, for example:
– September 2018 Eurasian, East and Central European Studies Women's Academics Forum, Oxford Brookes University, paper "Affective estrangement: police violence and migrant workers"
– May 2019, International Conference on Cities and Change, Darmstadt, Germany, paper "Despair and the politics of city redevelopment"
– October 2019 Law and Society in Soviet and Post-Soviet Tajikistan workshop, New College, Oxford, paper "Where the Law Ends: "The Rule" of Law in Migration Bureaucracy."

Věra Exnerová pursues in her research two lines relating to her past study: one is the field of international relations, and the other is focused more closely on Central Asia. Thinking about theoretical aspects of international relations resulted in her important contribution "Introducing transnationalism studies to the field of public diplomacy" (*Journal of International Communication* 23,2, 2017), arguing for the importance of transnationalism studies to public diplomacy and vice versa. In transnationalism studies, and specifically in "transnational societal spaces," she sees "an alternative unit of reference to the nation-state," allowing her to construct a polycentric framework for the study of resource distribution and power interests. Standard studies of public diplomacy tend to provide monocentric analysis that explores the tools and institutions of the country of "origin" and often do not take into account the participation of other actors, such as diverse groups and individuals (scholars, politicians, elites, civil society, etc.) in the "recipient" country or space. The transnational framework also reveals different "sites," not expected or located in public diplomacy if the nation-state is used as a sole unit of reference. The framework opens up the debate on public diplomacy and provides significant potential for further theoretical and conceptual development of the discipline. Utilizing the theoretical model for an analysis of a specific case, Dr Exnerová contributed with a book chapter, "Transnational Ties and Local Society´s Role in Improving the PRC's Image in Central Asia" (In: *China's Belt and Road Initiative and its Impact in Central Asia*. The George Washington University, Central Asia Program 2018), analyzing attempts on the part of the PRC to spread its influence in the societies of Central Asia by means of its ambitious "Belt and Road" project. The chapter is based on field research in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and discursive analysis performed in the years 2015–2017. The important phenomenon of the resurgence of Islam in Central Asia is the subject of two articles—"Radical Islam from Below: The Mujaddidiya and Hizb-ut-Tahrir in the Ferghana Valley" (in: *Islam, Society and Politics in Central Asia*. University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh 2017), assessing the practice and discourse of the two Islamic movements from below in the local context of the Ferghana Valley, characterized by multiple and competing sources of religious and social authority, and "The Veneration and Visitation of the Graves of Saints in Soviet Central Asia. Insights from the Southern Ferghana Valley, Uzbekistan" (*Archiv orientální* 83,3, 2015). The second article contributes to the development of a deeper understanding of the changes in the practice of venerating and visiting the graves of saints in Central Asia during the Soviet period. To this end, the article explores archival reports and oral histories from the region of the southern Ferghana Valley in Uzbekistan from the 1920s to the 1980s. Dr Exnerová's most recent contribution to this topic is the chapter "Islam as Ideology and Tactic - Afghanistan and Soviet Central Asia in Comparative Perspective", in Piotr H. Kosicki and Kyrill Kunakhovich, *The Long 1989. Decades of Global Revolution*. New York: Central European University Press 2019. Of her Czech contributions, mention must be made of her contribution to the collective monograph on legitimacy of power in medieval states, devoted to Central Asia: "Timur a legitimita panovnické moci ve Střední Asii druhé poloviny 14. Století" [Timur and the legitimacy of royal power in Central Asia in the second half of the 14th century]. Her papers at international conferences include:

– 2015 international conference "Central Asia in the XXI Century: Historical trajectories, contemporary challenges and everyday encounters," ESCAS, Zürich, paper "Re-traditionalizing democracy: changing civil society discourse on democracy in post-Soviet Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan)"
– 2016 conference "Cross-border Migrations from the East to the West, Russia and the East: Past and Present," Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, paper "Saving One´s Soul: *Hajj* as Strategy of Migration from Soviet Central Asia in the 1920s–1930s"
– 2016 LUCIS Annual Conference: "Memory and Commemoration in Islamic Central Asia," Leiden University, paper "Representations of Power: Islamic Monuments in the Farghona Oblast (1980s–2010s)."

Jan Filipský, emerited in 2016, contributed to a collective monograph on legitimacy in medieval non-European states with a chapter on medieval Ceylon, "Zdroje legitimity sinhalského buddhistického státu na Šrí Lance v pozdním středověku" [Sources of legitimacy in the Sinhala Buddhist state in Sri Lanka in the late Middle Ages] and, together with Dr Strnad, was co-author of a chapter on principles of good governance in medieval South and Southeast Asia (see below).

Jiří Holba, a specialist on Mahayana Buddhist philosophy and Tibetan studies, most recently analyzed "The Senses in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism from a philosophical perspective" (*Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* 50, 2019), addressing the question of how Indian and Tibetan Buddhist philosophers understand the way in which perceptions, sensations, and the senses provide knowledge or justified beliefs about the world. His long-term interest in acculturation of Indian and specifically Buddhist philosophy in the Czech intellectual milieu recently focused on the important and controversial figure of the underground philosopher Egon Bondy: "Buddhism, Marxism and philosophy of Egon Bondy" (in: J. G. Feinberg et als. (eds.), *Kontradikce / Contradictions. Časopis pro kritické myšlení / A Journal for Critical Thought*, 2019). He is also continuing with his project of translating basic Buddhist texts into the Czech language.

Pavel Hons has profiled himself as a leading Czech specialist on Tamil language and literature and a scholar capable of utilizing this expert knowledge as a tool for the broader analysis of South Indian society, particularly the lower and depressed castes. His article "Are we Hindus? Religion in contemporary Tamil Dalit discourse" (*Argument. Biannual Philosophical Journal*, Vol. 8 no. 2,2018), based primarily on original written sources in Tamil as well as interviews, focuses on the attitude of Tamil Dalit intellectuals and political leaders toward the question of religion, and particularly on the ways they utilize religious matters to mobilize their fellow caste members. It maps their efforts to distance themselves from Hinduism and to propagate the particularity of Dalit deities and Dalit religion as a part of their newly constructed identity. Looking at the same problem from a different perspective, in the article "Tamil Dalit Art and Identity: What to do with the drum?" (*South Asia Research* 38, no. 2, 2018) he maps current divergent attitudes of Dalits towards folklore and especially toward the drum. While most activists argue for the rejection of drumming as a symbol of oppression and untouchability, some try to use it as a means of mobilization. Others speak in favor of the resignification of the instrument and its protection and preservation as a part of their cultural legacy, which they consider to be different from the mainstream. The article also sets out to correlate these attitudes with the ideology of the eradication of caste and points to the ensuing dilemmas connected with an emphasis on caste-based identities. To the domestic Czech interested public he has presented the phenomenon of Indian caste in the monograph *Kasta, a basta! Pohledy na kastovní systém, tentokrát převážně zdola* [Caste, and that´s that! Views of the caste system, this time mostly from below] (Praha: Academia 2019.), explaining the intricate problem of the origin of the caste system and its further development. It looks at the role of colonial research, censuses, and the system of reservations and their role in the evolution of the caste system. The main focus is on the lowest castes, on presenting their views and description of their role within the caste system, and on their

emancipation strategies. Hons is well read in modern Tamil literature and recently focused his attention on the prominent novelist Perumal Murugan; a Czech translation of his novel *Napůl žena* (Orig. Mádorubágan, *One Part Woman* 2010) was published in 2019. He also has to his credit several translations of modern Tamil short stories published in Czech literary journals. He presented aspects of the Dalit problem in a conference and symposium:
– 2016 8th Prague Conference on Asian Studies on the topic of Contemporary Issues and Trends in Societies of South, Southeast and East Asia, Metropolitan University Prague, paper "Rivalry, Neutrality or Cooperation: the Dalit Movement in Contemporary Tamil Nadu"
– 2017 International Symposium on Cultural Inclusion, Prague, paper "Writing caste histories: A part of Dalits' emancipation struggle."

James Madaio is American scholar of Sanskrit specializing in the classical philosophy of Advaita Vedānta and its further developments, first in the context of the South Indian medieval empire of Vijayanagara, and later in the so-called neo-Vedanta philosophy in 19th-century British India. In the article "The Instability of Non-dual Knowing: Post-gnosis sādhana in Vidyāraṇya's Advaita Vedānta" (*Journal of Dharma Studies* 1:1, 2018) he analyzes innovations brought into the system by the 14th-century philosopher Vidyāraṇya, as presented in his treatise *Jīvanmuktiviveka*. He is able to show how the original Advaita Vedāntic path to liberation, often characterized as being constituted by, and as culminating in, gnosis or advaitic awakening, was reformulated in favor of a broader conception of sādhana, which helps solve the problem of post-gnosis obscurations. The most important innovation appears to consist in integrating a yogic approach and practice into the system of the Śaṃkarite sampradāya. Aspects of another system of non-dualist philosophy of classical India, the Śaiva monism of Kashmir represented by the philosophical narratives of Yogavāsiṣṭha, were analyzed in "Transformative dialogue in the Yogavāsiṣṭha" (chapter in: *In Dialogue with Classical Indian Traditions: Encounter, Transformation, and Interpretation*, eds. Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad and Brian Black; London: Routledge, 2019). Focusing on the gnoseological dialogue featured in the story of the enlightened princess and her stubbornly object-oriented husband, Dr Madaio examines how the dialogue intends to disrupt common beliefs of a dualistic worldview, not only in the figures of the story but also in the reader. He provides an example of the process of migration and accommodation of medieval Advaita philosophical concepts into the framework of modern neo-Hindu thought with an analysis of the approaches of Swami Vivekananda to this part of classical Indian heritage in "Rethinking Neo-Vedānta: Swami Vivekananda and the Selective Historiography of Advaita Vedānta" (*Religions* 2017, 8:6). The paper problematizes the prevalent model of studying the "Neo-Vedānta" of Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) principally in terms of an influx of Western ideas and nationalism. In particular, Dr Madaio demonstrates how scholarly constructions of "Neo-Vedānta" consistently appeal to a high-culture, staticized understanding of "traditional" Advaita Vedānta as the alterity for locating Vivekananda's "neo" or new teachings. In doing so, such studies ignore the diverse medieval and early modern developments in advaitic and Advaita Vedāntic traditions which were well-known to Vivekananda and other "Neo-Vedāntins." Redressing this discursive imbalance, he proposes that close attention to the way in which Swami Vivekananda drew from classical Indic texts opens up a wider frame for understanding the swami and the genealogy of his cosmopolitan theology. From many contributions presented at conferences and workshops abroad, we select:
– 2018 14th Biennial Conference of Asian Studies in Israel. Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mt. Scopus Campus. Jerusalem, Israel, paper "Questioning oneself through another: Investigative reasoning in the pedagogical dialogues of the Yogavāsiṣṭha"
– 2018 10th International Conference on the Dialogical Self, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal, paper "A classical Indian conception of conditioned persona in relation to dialogical self theory: Situating a multiplicity of I-positions within a non-dual therapeutic paradigm"
– 2018 17th World Sanskrit Conference of the International Association for Sanskrit Studies. University of British Columbia. Vancouver, Canada, paper "The Narrative Shape of Orthopraxy: Advaita Vedāntin renunciates at the Early Vijayanagara Kingdom"

– 2019 American Academy of Religion (AAR). San Diego, California, U.S., paper 'A hermeneutics of happiness in medieval Advaita Vedānta'.

Tomáš Petrů is an established scholar with expertise in maritime Southeast Asia and the Malay world generally. He is particularly interested in the cultural pluralism of this wide area and its modern transformations into ethnicity-defined communities. In "Lands below the Winds," as Part of the Persian Cosmopolis: An Inquiry into Linguistic and Cultural Borrowings from the Persianate societies in the Malay World" (*Moussons* 27,1, 2016), he analyzes the fields of Persian cultural impact in Maritime Southeast Asia to provide a more complex picture of the cultural pluralism and hybridization which has been taking place in this region since ancient times. The primary argument of this paper is that the societies of the Malay-Indonesian region were once part of a greater cultural sphere, which has been labelled the "Persian cosmopolis." This connection to various Persianate societies across the Indian Ocean brought about intense mutual interaction, resulting in numerous and highly formative linguistic, cultural, political, and also material borrowings, mainly on the Malay side. Their types and intensity can be attested by a range of loan-words from Persian into Malay which point to the main spheres of mutual interaction. An analysis of modern processes of identity formation is presented in his article "A curious trajectory of interrace relations: the transformation of cosmopolitan Malay port polities into the multiethnic divisions of modern Malaysia" (*Asian Ethnicity* 19,1, 2018), which examines aspects of the historical development of pluralism in areas forming today´s Malaysia. Focusing on the transformation of the formerly cosmopolitan populations of Malay port polities into the highly "racialized" society of modern Malaysia, he seeks to clarify the roots of ethnicity-based issues and relations in the country. Challenging the very concept of Malaysia as a society primarily consisting of three ethnic pillars, dominated by the Malays and "complemented" by the Chinese and the Indians, he argues that the main driving forces behind ethnic tensions have been segregational colonial policies and, later, the postcolonial arrangements of Malay ethnocentrist governments, rather than ethnic and cultural factors *per se*, which ruling politicians tend to stress. He also contends that religious issues, especially those stemming from the *dakwah* movement, are gradually becoming an increasingly important factor in inter-race strife. The role of radicalized Islamic groups in the estrangement of minorities in contemporary Indonesian society is analyzed in his contribution "The *Front Pembela Islam*: Well-Connected Indonesian Radicals – a Threat or a Spent Force?" (chapter in: *Graffiti, Converts and Vigilantes: Islam Outside The Mainstream In Maritime Southeast Asia*, Caesarpress, Wien 2015, of which Petrů is the editor). Here he traces the rise of the Islamic radical vigilante group Front Pembela Islam, formed in the late 1990s. Describing their attacks on religious minorities, such as the Shi´i Muslims, the Ahmadiyah sect, and Christians, he attempts to explain, within a larger view of the socio-religious landscape in contemporary Indonesia, the motives for the support this grouping receives from segments of Indonesian elites on the one hand, and calls from pro-pluralist voices to disband it on the other. Dr Petrů participated in the project investigating the cultural diplomacy of China and contributed, together with Jakub Hrubý, for example, with the article "China's cultural diplomacy in Malaysia during Najib Razak's premiership" (*Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies* 12,1, 2019). A representative example of his Czech contributions is his chapter in the collective monograph devoted to legitimacy of power in the Middle Ages focusing on the Javanese empire of Majapahit (*Legitimita královské moci největší jávánské říše Majapahitu, 1293–1478* [Legitimacy of royal power in the Javanese empire of Majapahit, 1293–1478]). His conference papers include:
– 2015 EUROSEAS Conference, Universität Wien, Austria, paper "Islamic Vigilantes in Indonesia: A Serious Threat or a Spent Force?"
– 2016 conference Language, Power and Identity in Asia: Creating and Crossing Language Boundaries, IIAS, Leiden, paper "The Impact of Political Ideologies on the Lexical Development of Indonesian: From bahasa revolusi to bahasa pejabat"
– 2016 NFU Conference 2016: Beyond North and South: Constructing Global Governance

for the 21st Century, panel Asian Transformations, University of Oslo, Norway, paper "Walking a fine line: reflections on China´s cultural diplomacy in Malaysia"
– 2017 AAS-in-Asia Annual Conference, Korea University, Seoul, South Korea, paper "Islamic Vigilantes in Indonesia: A Serious Threat or a Spent Force?"
– 2018. Association of Asian Studies Annual Conference, Washington, D.C., USA, paper "From bahasa revolusi to bahasa reformasi and beyond: Indonesian as a vital political and state-making tool"
– 2019 EUROSEAS Conference, Humboldt Universität, Berlin, paper "Czech maverick: on the centennial of Harry J. Benda (1919-1971) – a legendary figure of Southeast Asian studies."

Jaroslav Strnad continued in his long-term project of producing an edition of a medieval Rājasthānī manuscript which includes the oldest version of poems and distichs attributed to the Hindī mystic and poet Kabīr. The article "A Note on the Analysis of Two Early Rājasthānī Dādūpanthī Manuscripts" (*Asiatische Studien – Études Asiatiques* 70,2, 2016) attempts to establish the absolute date of the analyzed text and its relative chronology vis-à-vis other known versions of the same Kabīrian corpus. Valuable sets of data offered by the manuscript make it possible to trace the development of the internal structure and format of the collection. Further analysis allows us to postulate its relationship to other pre-existing models that bring us to the very beginnings of the scriptural history of the *Kabīr vāṇī* within the context of the religious history of early modern Rājasthān. Another related contribution on the problem of situating the analyzed text within a broader historical and literary context is presented in "Searching for the Source or Mapping the Stream? Some Text-Critical Issues in the Study of Medieval Bhakti" (In: Tyler Williams, John S. Hawley and Anshu Malhotra (eds.), *Texts and Traditions in Early Modern North India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018). Investigation of a greater number of manuscripts containing creations attributed to the same author may reveal significant variations not only in their form, but—not infrequently—also in their content. The author maintains that this kind of variation is closely related to the strongly performative character of many poems and that in the broad current of a living tradition borne predominantly by oral and performative presentations with a significant degree of improvisation it is futile to search for the "authentic" or original version of a particular poem. Rather than looking for "Ur-texts," the philological and comparativist method should be used to map the dynamic flows, currents, and cross- and undercurrents that form a particular tradition. A short but comprehensive description of the corpus of texts attributed to Kabīr in the early Sikh scriptural tradition is presented in the encyclopedia entry "Kabīr in the Gurū Granth" (In: K.A. Jacobsen, G.S. Mann, K. Myrvold, E. Nesbitt (eds.), *Brill's Encyclopedia of Sikhism, Volume I: History, Literature, Society, Beyond Punjab*. Handbuch of Oriental Studies / Handbuch der Orientalistik, Section Two: South Asia, Vol. 31/1. Leiden – Boston 2017). Dated using its earliest layers to the 1580s, Gurū Granth includes some of the oldest extant versions of poems attributed to Kabīr and invites comparisons with other strands of Kabīrian scriptural and oral traditions of North India. Dr Strnad also participated in the large collaborative project mapping the legitimacy of power in the Middle Ages and contributed a chapter dealing with this question in the context of the South Indian Hindu empire of Vijayanagar ("Vidžajanagar: budování legitimity státní moci ve středověkém multikulturním světě" [Vijayanagar: constructing state power legitimacy in the medieval multicultural world]), and, together with Jan Filipský, a more general overview *Představy o zásadách správné vlády ve středověké jižní a jihovýchodní Asii* [Ideas of right governance in medieval South and Southeast Asia]. Of his Czech publications mention can be made of the *Textbook of Sanskrit*, written together with D. Zbavitel (*Učebnice sanskrtu*, 3rd expanded ed., Karolinum 2019). He participated in conference panels focused on Old Hindī and medieval Hindī literature and international seminars/workshops devoted to interpretation of Old Hindī texts:
– 2016 25th European Conference on South Asian Studies, Warsaw, Poland, paper "Remote survey of two Rājasthānī Dādūpanthī manuscripts"

– 2018 13th International Conference on Early Modern Literatures in North India, University of Warsaw Poland; head of panel
– 2019 6th Braj Bhasha / Early Hindi Workshop, Gatchina-St. Petersburg, Russia, session leader in the class devoted to the interpretation of Old Hindī religious texts.

Research activity and characterisation of the main scientific results

In 2015–2017 Drs. **Jakub Hrubý**, **Ondřej Klimeš**, and **Jarmila Ptáčková** participated in the collaborative project ***China's Cultural Diplomacy: Role of Non-State Actors and Regional Variations*** (GA ČR GA15-21829S) awarded by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic, which also involved colleagues from the Department of South Asia (Dr. Petrů, Dr. Veselá) and the Department of the Middle East (Dr. Čuřík). Supervised by **Dr. Jens Damm**, the research team conducted a comparative study of Chinese cultural diplomacy (CD) in Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia in order to contribute to the broader theoretical debate on China's increasing soft power in International Relations. Specific attention was paid to China's new forms of CD, focusing on regional variations and the involvement of non-state actors. The regions listed above were selected after due consideration of expected differences. In Europe, culture and the arts play an important role in China's soft power strategies. In Southeast Asia, Chinese CD encounters a Chinese diaspora and has to adapt to various specific local circumstance. China's portrayal of itself as a Muslim country, together with a limited formal political space, characterize its relationship with the Middle East. Finally, Central Asia is a region where China is competing with both Russia and the West, and strategic considerations have the highest priority.

Chinese and area specialists worked together as research teams examining the situation in different regions and striving to go beyond the current understanding of China's cultural diplomacy as a solely state-driven and propagandistic tool for coercive soft power. Particular attention was paid to the regional variations in China's CD, including descriptions of these variations and analysis of the underlying reasons for the differences (cultural and strategic factors), and the new actors in Chinese cultural diplomacy, including non-state actors, ethnic minorities, and trans-migrants. Based on close readings of available documents (Chinese official statements, programs, materials, academic discourse on China's CD), as well as materials related to non-state actors and field research on the practices of China's CD in specific regions, the teams highlighted the similarities and differences in values, tools, and strategies that China employs in its cultural diplomacy efforts in the four regions, providing an important contribution to existing scholarship in the form of a comparative perspective focused on the new forms of China's CD.

As the output of the project, the members of the department published a number of articles and book chapters. In **"China's Cultural Soft Power: The Central Concept in the Early Xi Jinping Era (2012–2017)"** (*Acta Universitatis Carolinae Philologica – Orientalia Pragensia* 4, 2017) **Dr Klimeš** examined the conceptual framework of China's cultural soft power during the first term of Xi Jinping's leadership. Drawing mostly on official statements by central party organs, the article identified the rationale, values, and instruments of China's cultural soft power and national image-building and briefly assessed the limitations of these strategies.

In **"The Silk Road of Friendship: China's Cultural Diplomacy towards the UAE"** in *China in a Global Context: Perspectives on and from China* (Berliner China-Hefte 2018) **Dr Ptáčková** argues that while stressing the long tradition of peaceful cultural exchange along the Silk Road and shared Muslim culture plays some part in China's relations with the Middle East, economic interests and incentives seem to be of far greater importance for Chinese diplomacy towards the UAE.

Dr. Hrubý's article (co-authored with Tomáš Petrů from the department of South Asia), **"China's cultural diplomacy in Malaysia during Najib Razak's premiership"** (*Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies* 12.1, 2019), aims to provide an analysis of China's cultural diplomacy in Malaysia in the latter years of the premiership of Najib Razak (2015–2018), revealing an intricate pattern of networks involving various actors, both Chinese and Malaysian, and state, semi-state, and non-state, pursuing their own particular interests, which tend to converge and overlap with the aims of Chinese CD.

Beside individual contributions, members of the department prepared two collective monographs. The main result of the project, co-edited by **Drs. Ptáčková, Klimeš, and Damm** (together with Gary Rawnsley) is going to appear this year as ***Transnational Sites of China's***

Cultural Diplomacy: Central Asia, Middle East, Southeast Asia and Europe Compared, published by Palgrave Macmillan. It will contain chapters by Drs. Klimeš, Ptáčková, and Hrubý, as well as colleagues from other departments (Exnerová, Petrů). The second monograph, *Kulturní diplomacie Číny a její regionální variace* **[Chinese Cultural Diplomacy and Its Regional Variations] (**Academia 2018), targeted a domestic audience, examining the cultural diplomacy of the PRC in the early Xi Jinping period (2012–2017), along with its regional variations, as one of the instruments used to attain the status of a global economic and political power. Six out of eight chapters were authored by researchers of the OI and explored China's cultural diplomacy in the framework of domestic propaganda trends (Klimeš), in a historical perspective (Hrubý), and in the regional contexts of Central Asia (Exnerová), Southeast Asia (Petrů), and the Middle East (Ptáčková and Čuřík).

In addition, **Dr. Hrubý** also published a series of Czech language articles in the OI's household journal *Nový Orient*, explaining further historical developments and basic notions underlying the practice of Chinese Cultural Diplomacy for the benefit of the Czech academic community and wider audience. **"Čínské vidění světa – ideologické pozadí tributárních vztahů"** [Chinese World View – Ideology behind Tributary Relations] (72.2, 2017) and **"Rétorika kulturní nadřazenosti a realita zahraničních vztahů v dějinách císařské Číny"** [Rhetorics of Cultural Superiority and the Reality of International Relations in Imperial China] (72.3, 2017) introduce the ideological background of the universalistic claims of Chinese culture within the traditional sino-centric worldview and follow the development of these ideas in a historical perspective, stressing the obvious tension between the ideology of the so-called tributary system and the reality of inter-state relations dictated by geopolitical needs and pragmatic interests of the respective imperial regimes. Two other articles—**"Buddhistická diplomacie Číny I. Jižní a jihovýchodní Asie"** [Chinese Buddhist Diplomacy towards South and Southeast Asia] (73.3, 2018), and **"Buddhistická diplomacie Číny II. Snaha získat rozhodující slovo v rámci světové buddhistické komunity"** [Chinese Buddhist Diplomacy Towards the International Buddhist Community] (73.4, 2018)—explain the PRC's use of Buddhism in the context of a long-lasting effort to present China as an inherently peaceful civilization, and thereby alleviate fears caused by its recent rise. Based on several case studies, the articles argue that the ostentatious state support for Buddhism and invocation of a shared Buddhist past with various countries in the region primarily serve the strategic interests of the PRC, with Beijing trying to enhance its political clout by gaining influence within the international Buddhist community.

Power and Strategies of Social and Political Order

In April 2015 the East Asia department launched the research project *Power and Strategies of Social and Political Order*, which later turned into a long-term research initiative transcending geographical boundaries, and eventually attracted colleagues from other departments. Conceived as an interdisciplinary and comparative investigation of power, the project combines the traditional strengths of Oriental studies as a form of historical-philological scholarship with impulses from the humanities, social sciences, and other disciplines, deepening our understanding of Chinese history and society as well as various developments in contemporary China through a methodologically and theoretically informed study of the *longue durée* based on a close examination of primary sources.

Proceeding from a broad conception of power as the heteronomous reduction of individual and collective autonomy that can be effected by military, economic, ideological, and political means, the project addresses a range of questions pertinent to the study of Chinese civilization from the ancient past to the present, contributing a deepened historical, sociological, cultural, and anthropological understanding of the emergence, stability, and transformation of political and social structures more generally.

In a wider sense, the project also strives to open up comparative vistas on a number of issues of global significance, such as discourses about a desirable social order and the means to achieve it; the inculcation of values and their effectiveness in bringing about order; the social basis and organization of security agencies and their interactions with the population; and

reactions to top-down attempts to impose order, ranging from internalization and compliance over open resistance to withdrawal and the creation of alternative value systems and forms of social organization.

The project is further structured into three interrelated, topically, and disciplinarily framed research panels:

- *Foundations of Power* focuses on ideological, religious, and philosophical facets of power and various strategies of its justification in political, moral, historical, or religious terms, which make the presence of power relationships appear unquestionable or agreeable by presenting them as inevitable, benign, or beneficial. This panel investigates how power relationships are conceptualized and contested in interactions between non-state actors as well as between social groups and the state and, through comparative analysis, sheds light on the moral and ideological convictions that have made hierarchical social relationships acceptable in various contexts or, on the contrary, on historical ruptures which mark times when received justifications of power become contested.

- *Representations of Power* focuses on symbolic forms of representation through which power enhances its abiding influence. Displays of power may assume various guises, such as conspicuous consumption, patronage of artworks, displays of military potential, royal progress, elaborate ritual, and monumental architecture. This panel explores various projections of power, using the approaches of art history, archaeology, and cultural history.

- *Structures of Power* is devoted to the institutions and administrative structures utilized by the state to assess and extract resources, to enforce laws and regulations, to threaten and apply violence internally as well as externally, and to gather and process information. The same structures, however, are used by various social groups and organizations, such as lineages, guilds, provincial associations, religious orders, and temple associations, in order to pursue their collective interests vis-à-vis the state or other non-state actors. The research within this panel thus analyzes the structures through which power is concentrated and exercised both on the level of the state and the level of society.

During the evaluated period eight members of the department (Klimeš, Dluhošová, Weingarten, Ptáčková, Toyosawa, Hrubý, Alsford, and Sou) participated in the Power project and published a number of monographs and articles based on meticulous research and close readings of the primary sources and/or evaluation and analysis of data acquired during ethnographic field research. Here, we would like to provide an overview of individual contributions, introducing the research interests of the respective researchers and their major publications connected with the Power project:

Ever since his PhD studies, **Dr. Klimeš** has specialized in the history and politics of modern and contemporary China, focusing on the Uyghurs in Xinjiang and state policies towards this region. In his monograph ***Struggle by the Pen: The Uyghur Discourse of Nation and National Interest, c. 1900-1949*** (Brill 2015) he explored the emergence of national consciousness and nationalist ideology among Uyghurs in Xinjiang during the first half of the 20th century. Through a careful analysis of various texts written by modern Uyghur intellectuals, politicians, and propagandists he traced the construction of modern Uyghur national identity and demonstrated that the modern Uyghur intelligentsia envisaged their people as citizens of a modern republican state founded on the principles of representative government.

Later Dr. Klimeš combined his interest in the Uyghurs with wider research on the uses of language and ideology in the PRC. Besides organizing conferences and workshops on this topic (listed in the relevant section) he has co-edited (together with Maurizio Marinelli) a special issue of the *Journal of Chinese Political Science* on ideology, propaganda, and political discourse during the Xi Jinping era (23.3/2018) so as to shed more light on the fundamentals of governance in today's China. The contributions in this volume show how the Communist Party of China intensified and diversified its argumentation patterns and discursive strategies, consolidating ideational governance over the individual values, beliefs, and loyalties of its citizens. These trends are seen as an overall reassertion-cum-innovation of previous Maoist and post-Maoist uses of ideology, propaganda, and political discourse, primarily aimed at

strengthening one-party rule. Dr Klimeš's contribution **"Advancing 'ethnic unity' and 'de-extremization': Ideational governance in Xinjiang under 'New circumstances' (2012–2017)"** examined the party-state's ideational governance in Xinjiang, i.e. efforts to define and regulate Uyghur values, beliefs, and loyalties so that they are instrumental in maintaining the political stability of the PRC. It introduced Xi Jinping's novel approach—particularly the advancement of centripetal inter-ethnic relations (officially called "ethnic unity") and the eradication of religious or cultural practices deemed as potentially subversive ("de-extremization")—raising the broader question as to whether the party-state's resolve to strengthen its ideational governance over the Uyghurs will bring about a change in the security situation in Xinjiang.

Another facet of Chinese party state-ethnic minority dynamics is explored in the work of **Dr. Ptáčková**, who focuses on state development policies and sedentarization of pastoral communities in Tibetan areas. Seeing the state-induced development and modernization of the predominantly rural areas of Western China as a demonstration of Chinese power over Tibetan areas, she points to severe ecological and social problems resulting from development strategies such as pasture enclosures (**"The Enclosure Movement in Eastern Tibetan Pastoral Areas: An Analysis of Objectives and Realities,"** in *Tibetan Pastoralists and Development: Negotiating the Future of Grassland Livelihoods*, Reichert Verlag 2017), resettlement policies (**"Making Space for Development,"** *Inner Asia* 18, 2016**)**, sedentarization (**"Hor - A Sedentarisation Success for Tibetan Pastoralists in Qinghai?"** *Nomadic Peoples* 19.2, 2015; **"Orchestrated environmental migration in Western China,"** in the *Routledge Handbook of Environmental Policy in China*, Routledge 2017), and the urbanization of Tibetan nomads (**"Urbanisierung im Naturschutzgebiet der Drei Flussquellen in Qinghai: Die Sesshaftigkeit tibetischer Hirten als Folge von Umweltschutz- und Entwicklungsmasnahmen,"** in *Raum und Grenze in den China-Studien*, Harrassowitz 2016). In her most recent article, **"Traditionalization as a response to state-induced development in rural Tibetan areas of Qinghai, PRC"** (*Central Asian Survey* 38.3, 2019), Dr. Ptáčková concentrates on the repression of minority culture brought about by governmental development projects, arguing that the local population's various practices of traditionalization, as demonstrated through an emphasis on the maintenance or (re)invention of representative cultural forms, can be understood as efforts to counteract socio-economic and cultural assimilation measures or even as a form of political resistance.

Other aspects of state power are explored in the publications of **Dr. Dluhošová**, whose research focuses on modern Taiwanese history and literature. In her article, **"Censorship and Publication Control in Early Post-War Taiwan: Procedures and Practices"** (*Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 47.2, 2018), she analyzes various means of exercising power and projecting authority used by the Kuomintang government in order to shape the literary scene and literary production in Taiwan during the early post-war period (1945–1949). Based on understudied archival records, the article provides an analysis of censorship practices and their motivation, broadening our understanding of various strategies employed to legitimize sociocultural norms. The relationship between literary production and the state before WWII is further explored in her article **"Trajectories of Ideas and the Role of Intellectuals Within and Outside the State: The Mainlanders in Taiwan"** (*Studia Orientalia Slovaca* 18.2, 2019). Following sociology of knowledge theory, Dr. Dluhošová uses Critical Discourse Analysis to scrutinize texts written by three Mainland Chinese intellectuals active in Taiwan, who are treated as representatives of contemporaneous social groups and bearers of knowledge. By identifying the key concepts and the broader semantic fields in which they are embedded, the article analyzes prevailing ideologies which dominated late Republican society.

The philosophical and ideological underpinnings of power relationships and social and ethical norms are part of the ongoing research of **Dr. Weingarten**, who focuses on the intellectual history of Ancient China and the textual history of early Chinese writings. In his chapter **"The Unorthodox Master: The Serious and the Playful in Depictions of Confucius"** in *A Concise Companion to Confucius* (Wiley 2017), Dr Weingarten explores images of and narratives about Confucius from ancient to medieval China (ca. 3rd c. BCE–7th c. CE) which

lie outside the mainstream of canonical scholarship, drawing on a broad range of hitherto unused sources such as archaeologically retrieved texts, early medieval "records of the strange," "apocrypha" (chenwei), "transformation texts" (bianwen), and mantic writings from Dunhuang, tracing a tradition existing in parallel to the well-known authoritative persona of the canonical Sage. A similar approach is used in the article **"Chunyu Kun 淳于髡: Motifs, Narratives, and Personas in Early Chinese Anecdotal Literature"** (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 27. 3, 2017), which undertakes a comprehensive study of ancient Chinese anecdotal and dialogic sources on Chunyu Kun. It shows how early anecdotal literature reused certain motifs and topics, imbuing them with different meanings, and outlines how—in the process—Chunyu Kun came to serve as a stock figure in different types of discourse.

Our Japanese Studies specialist, Dr. Toyosawa, joined the OI in 2017. Her research covers the cultural and intellectual history of early modern and modern Japan, focusing on the formation of Japanese identity and the processes of knowledge production. In her monograph *Imaginative Mapping. Landscape and Japanese Identity in the Tokugawa and Meiji Eras* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2019) Dr. Toyosawa analyzes how intellectuals of the Tokugawa and Meiji eras used specific features of the landscape to represent their idea of Japan and produce a narrative of Japan as a cultural community. By detailing the continuities and ruptures between a sense of shared cultural community that emerged in the 17th century and the modern nation state of the late 19th century, this study sheds new light on the significance of early modernity, which is not defined by temporal order but rather by spatial diffusion of the concept of Japan. This was possible due to the circulation of guidebooks and other spatial narratives which transformed a landscape imbued with local histories and identities into the medium for the construction of Japan as a unified cultural body. Dr Toyosawa has also guest-edited a special issue of the *Japan Forum* (31.4, 2019), "Rethinking the Past, Culture, and Identity in Early Modern Japan," which presents evidence of indigenous intellectual development in the Tokugawa era (1603–1868) that represents an alternative path toward modernity. Her own contribution, "Art and Politics of the Landscape: Tani Motokatsu (1778–1840), Ezochi and Nineteenth-century Japan," in which she analyses a travel record and images produced by a painter, Tani Motokatsu, who participated in the shogunate's mission to directly rule the northernmost island of Ezo in 1799, underscores how cultural and artistic productions function as medium and mediator for the expansion of knowledge.

Besides contributing to international scholarship, members of the department also participated in various activities of the *Power* project aimed at the domestic audience. Dr. **Jakub Hrubý** (together with Dr. Ondřej Beránek, OI, and Dr. Pavlína Cermanová, Centre of Medieval Studies, Philosophical Institute) edited the collective monograph ***Jedno slunce na nebi, jeden vládce na zemi: Legitimita moci ve světě 14. století*** [One Sun in the Sky, One Ruler on the Earth: Legitimacy of power in the 14th Century World] (Academia 2017). Exploring the question of the formation and sources of ruling authority in different parts of the world in the long 14th century, this book project gathered together for the first time dozens of Czech specialists, historians, philologists, and culture anthropologists from various institutions (OI, Philosophical Institute, Institute of Slavic Studies, Institute of History, Charles University, Masaryk University, Institute of International Relations). Based on selected case studies, 33 chapters provide a comprehensive overview of theoretical concepts, practices, and representations of the legitimacy of power, as well as the ways in which it has been shaped and enforced in different political systems around the world. Dr. Hrubý's chapter, entitled **"Legitimita moci v rámci císařské vize zakladatele dynastie Ming"** [Legitimacy of Power within the Imperial Vision of the Ming dynasty Founder] focuses on Zhu Yuanzhang, the founder of the Ming dynasty, and his strategies of political legitimization—both traditional, based either on Confucian orthodoxy or Buddhist beliefs, and less orthodox, connected with specific notions forming the imperial vision of Zhu Yuanzhang. The book also included chapters by Dr. Ptáčková and members of other departments of the OI (Beránek, Exnerová, Filipský, Petrů, Strnad).

As a part of the *Power* project the department opened new postdoctoral positions which were advertised with specific demands connected to the topic of the project. During the evaluation period we hosted two postdocs, Dr. Alsford (2015–2016) and Dr. Sou (2016-2018).

Dr. Alsford specialized in the anthropology and modern history of Taiwan, focusing especially on the pre-colonial period. His monograph **Transitions to modernity in Taiwan: the spirit of 1895 and the cession of Formosa to Japan** (Routledge 2017), published as a result of his stint at the OI, examines the establishment of a "settler society" as well as the creation of a sojourning British community in the market town of Dadaocheng in northern Taiwan, showing how they became a precursor of modernity and "middle classism" in Taiwan. Using 1895 as a year of enquiry, it ultimately challenges the current orthodoxy that modernity in Taiwan was simply a by-product of the Japanese colonial period.

Dr. Sou focused on the cultural, social, legal, and intellectual history of early Chinese empires. In his article **"Crossing Borders: Control of Geographic Mobility in Early China"** (*T'oung Pao* 104, 2018) he analyzed the mobility of the subjects of the Qin and Han Dynasties (221 BC – 220 AD) and restrictions imposed by the government, providing a more nuanced view of administrative control and arguing that even though the state required people to have permission to travel, they were still free to move from place to place. His conclusions thus throw new light on the nature of early Chinese empire and help us better understand the processes of bureaucratic control which later became a defining feature of the Chinese state and have remained so to this day.

Apart from publishing the results of their research, departmental staff also organized various academic events under the aegis of the Power project and were active in networking as well as outreach to universities, state institutions, non-state actors, the media, and the general public (for details see the relevant sections of this report).

Individual research

During the evaluation period **Dr Weingarten** published extensively on various aspects of ancient Chinese thought, focusing on the master-disciple relationship, intertextuality, forms of argumentation, rhetoric and mnemonic functions of certain literary forms in ancient Chinese texts, and the evolving image of Confucius. In **"What Did Disciples Do?: *Dizi* 弟子 in Early Chinese Texts"** (*Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 75.1, 2015) he explores the Confucian "scene of instruction" as the most influential model of discipleship for the Warring States through the Han period. It provides a novel and more nuanced understanding of the broad range of social roles expected of disciples in early Chinese texts, arguing that close reading of the sources shows increasing similarities of the master-disciple relationship to that of the patron-retainer, including the potential for aggression and expectations of material returns. **"The Singing Sage: rhymes in Confucius dialogues"** (*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 79.3, 2016) analyzes short prose narratives and dialogues attributed to Confucius, in which versified proverbs or apothegms are employed as tools of argumentation, demonstrating how, in early imperial China, the image of Confucius was remolded to fulfil different functions and satisfy diverse needs beyond his by now familiar role as philosopher and as patron saint of an intellectual tradition and state ideology. Appropriation of the same figure across different discourses is the topic of another article, **"The Figure of Yan Zhuoju 顏涿聚 in Ancient Chinese Literature"** (*Monumenta Serica* 63.2, 2015). The question of intertextuality is pursued **in "Debates Around Jixia: Argument and Intertextuality in Warring States Writings Associated with the State of Qi"** (*Journal of the American Oriental Society* 135.2, 2015), which argues that intertextual relationships are more likely to shed light on the intellectual concerns of scholars at Jixia, analyzing specific dialogues in the book Mengzi which are part of a wider political debate on princely wastefulness, also reflected in other ancient compilations such as Guanzi or Yanzi chunqiu. In his latest article, **"Intertextuality and Memory in Early Chinese Writings: A Case Study from *Huainanzi*"** (*Early China* 42, 2019), Dr Weingarten uses analytical approaches to early Chinese writings, focusing on the internal and distributional patterns as well as the qualitative properties of

textual overlaps with other extant writings, which suggest a composition process that involved a particular type of textual memory.

Dr. Hana Třísková specializes in the phonetics and phonology of Modern Standard Chinese, focusing on the implementation of theoretical outcomes in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. In her works **"De-stressed words in Mandarin: drawing parallel with English"** in *Integrating Chinese Linguistics Research and Language Teaching and Learning* (John Benjamins 2016) and **"De-stress in Mandarin: clitics, cliticoids and phonetic chunks"** in *Key Issues in Chinese as a Second Language Research* (Routledge 2017) she examines the role of Chinese monosyllabic function words in the speech rhythm of fluent Standard Chinese, introducing the novel concept of phonetic chunks based on the research of cliticoids which might be employed in pedagogical practice, helping learners improve their oral performance.

As well as contributing to the collaborative Power project **Dr Dluhošová** pursues her own individual research on modern Taiwan. In 2017–2019 she was working (together with Alvin Cheng-Hsien Chen from National Changhua University of Education, Taiwan) on a bilateral project awarded by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic and Taiwanese Ministry of Science and Technology called **Concepts in Context – A Corpus-based Approach to Literary Field in Early Post-war Taiwan and its Application to the Sociology of Literature**. Taking the early post-war literary field in Taiwan (1945–1949) as a case study and employing methods from digital humanities and corpus linguistics, the project aimed at a combined investigation of language, ideology, and social relationships, enabling a comprehensive reconstruction of the literary scene and its social and political characteristics. Opening up a methodologically innovative path to the sociology of literature, it built a Taiwan Early Post-war Corpus, which in turn became the basis for the corpus-linguistic analysis. The linguistic findings were contextualized within contemporaneous social structures suggesting hitherto unknown or overlooked relationships among various agents within the Taiwanese literary field.
While the major outcomes of the project are still in the process of being published, two articles are already available. In **"How Don Juan Came to Taiwan: Fictional Worlds in Ye Shitao's Early Post-war Fiction"** (*Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 31.1, 2019) Dr Dluhošová analyzes the work of Taiwanese writer and literary historian Ye Shitao and the ways in which he engaged with historical knowledge, transforming it into imaginary worlds. The co-authored article (with Alvin Chen) **"Digital Humanities Methods for Reconstruction of the Literary Fields in the Early Post-war Period of Taiwan"** in *Shuwei renwen: Zai guoqu, xianzai he weilai* 數位人文：在過去，現在和未來 [Digital Humanities: Between Past, Present and Future] (National Taiwan University Press 2016) uses a Digital Humanities perspective to shed more light on the literary landscape in the early post-war period. Instead of relying on prominent figures to reconstruct literary history this novel approach endeavors to reconstruct the literary field through a quantitative analysis of 47 post-war periodicals and hundreds of their contributors, uncovering multifaceted relationships among various agents who aimed to attain the dominant position in the field by accumulating the largest amount of symbolic capital.
As a part of her research Dr Dluhošová also developed the **Taiwan Biographical Ontology (TBIO),** a database of biographical information about Taiwanese elites and those related to them which can be used for prosopographical studies of particular groups of people and for analyses of their life and career-path trajectories. Currently the database stores information about 19,391 persons, 49,967 organizations, and 1,239 various positions within these organizations. TBIO is designed as an open database where registered users can visualize and also download data (**http://tbio.orient.cas.cz).**

The scholarly interests of **Dr Vladimír Liščák** lie within the field of Chinese history, especially in religious interaction along the Silk Road and Christian missionary activities in East Asia. Besides numerous articles he has published a series of monographs on the history of Catholic missions in China in the 13th–18th centuries. The first to appear, *Františkánské misie v Číně (13.–18. století)* [Franciscan Missions in China, 13th-18th Century] (Academia, 2015),

presents a detailed overview of the activities of Franciscan missionaries from the first contacts between East and West under the Mongol Great Khans up to the persecution of Christians during the High Qing. The second monograph, ***Mezi tolerancí a intolerancí: první dvě století novověkých katolických misií v Číně*** [Between Tolerance and Intolerance: First Two Centuries of Catholic Missions in Chin] (Academia, 2017), follows the changing fortunes of Christian missions established in China by various Catholic orders during the 16th–17th centuries, highlighting the rivalry between the Franciscans and the Jesuits. His most recent monograph, ***Bratr Odorik a jeho zpráva o východních krajích světa: Styky Evropy a mongolské Číny ve 13. a 14. století*** [Friar Odoric and his report on Eastern parts of the world: Contacts of Europe and Mongolian China in 13th and 14th centuries] (Academia 2019), presents the first comprehensive study of friar Odoric and his times to appear in Czech. The result of twenty years of research and study of all available sources on the life and legacy of Odoric of Pordenone, a 14th century Franciscan pilgrim and missionary, this book provides the reader with an introduction to Odoric's time and the history of the first contacts of Europeans with the Mongolian East, as well as an assessment of its influence on Western knowledge of China in the Medieval period.

Besides her activities within the scope of the *Power* project **Dr Ptáčková** also participates in a larger international initiative, the **Amdo Research Network** (ARN), run by the Humboldt University in Berlin (for details see the next section). So far, Dr Ptáčková has co-edited two collective monographs which were published by the Oriental Institute—*Mapping Amdo: Dynamics of Change* (co-edited with Adrian Zenz, 2017) and *Mapping Amdo: Dynamics of Power* (co-edited with Ute Wallenboeck and Bianca Horlemann, 2019).
She also takes part in a collaborative project of the OI and the Humboldt University Berlin, the **Tibetan-English-Czech Context Dictionary** (https://linguatools.info/tibendicts), and is responsible for a **digitalization** project **of rare Tibetan periodicals** from the 1950s in the collection of the OI's Tibetan Library.