

Jury-report concerning the joint ICHTH & INTH International Book Prize for the History and Theory of Historiography, 2022

After a long process of selection and deliberation the jury of the joint ICHTH & INTH-Bookprize 2022 has come to a conclusion. We received a high number of books of which many were of exceptionally high quality. 24 submissions were accepted, as fulfilling the necessary criteria as mentioned in the call.

In order to assess the books we used the criteria of their theoretical and methodological originality, the clarity and strength of their argumentative structure and the way they develop, rethink or open up key questions and debates in the fields of the history and theory of history.

Given the high average quality and the great diversity of the submitted books it was a difficult task for us to come to a decision about their ranking. After repeated deliberations the jury ended up with an ex-aequo at the top of its shortlist and therefore decided to exceptionally award the prize to **two books**. The ex-aequo winners of the joint ICHTH & INTH International Book Prize for the History and Theory of Historiography are **Hans Ruin** with his '**Being with the Dead: Burial, Ancestral Politics and the Roots of Historical Consciousness**' (Stanford University Press, 2018) and **Zoltán Boldiszar Simon** with his '**History in Times of Unprecedented Change: A Theory for the 21st Century**' (Bloomsbury, 2019).

Hans Ruin has written a highly original book which offers a very novel and fairly atypical contribution to the field of history and theory of history. The central thesis of the book is that primordial forms of historical consciousness, and the intellectual structures that developed from it – including history and other human sciences such as anthropology and archaeology - - are driven by a fundamental and transcultural desire to be with, care for and communicate with the dead. Throughout the book Ruin reflects on the ontological, ethical and epistemological dimensions of how societies relate to the dead and how we can philosophically (re)think the strange existence of the dead. Taking inspiration from a very wide range of thinkers such as philosophers Patočka, Derrida and Heidegger, anthropologist Robert Herz, historian De Certeau and memory studies pioneers Jan and Aleida Assmann, Ruin argues that the dead cannot be reduced to a simple absences or non-beings, but should be thought of as having an ambiguous ontological quality that he calls a 'having been'.

On the basis of his profound reflections on the phenomena of death, mourning and the dead as well as the social practices of burial and ancestor worship, Ruin is able to offer some very inspiring ideas about the sense of history and the meaning of pastness, the intellectual project of historicism and the dynamics of cultural memory. The jury has especially appreciated the book's strongly interdisciplinary focus and was impressed by Ruin's broad ranging interest and great erudition. The book's strong focus on ethical and political drives and tensions underpinning historical consciousness and the culture of historicism makes it very timely and it is of great interest to anybody who wants to reflect on the changing contemporary societal relations to the past and their epistemological and ethical implications.



Zoltán Boldizsár Simon has written the pathbreaking book **'History in Times of Unprecedented Change: A Theory for the 21st Century'** (Bloomsbury, 2019). The book is an attempt to theorize and conceptually capture how – in midst of technological and ecological changes of previously inconceivable character, scope and effect – Western societies conceive of themselves and the world historically in the first decades of the 21st century. The author builds its theory on its historical thesis which locates the emergence of a new historical sensibility in the middle of the twentieth century. By conceptualizing this historical sensibility as “unprecedented change,” the book presents a theory of historical change which intends to capture how change is perceived in the technoscientific and ecological domains: instead of conventional historical processes of developmental continuities, change is increasingly conceived in these domains as taking the shape of game-changer outbursts that disconnect from past experiences. Contrary to the modern idea of history which smoothed past experiences and expectations of the future into deep continuities (no matter how far such experiences and expectations moved from each other), “unprecedented change” is the recognized rupture that cannot be smoothed into such continuities. In its argumentation, Zoltan Simon explores how the emerging new historical sensibility of “unprecedented change” relates to history writing and the political domain. In its overall argument, the book is a call to develop a new agenda of understanding towards the crises of the challenges to our era.

Also on behalf of the jury members Antonis Liakos, Edoardo Tortarolo and Berber Bevernage.