



## Gunnar Hering Lectures

Gunnar Hering (Dresden, 2 April 1934 – Vienna, 22 December 1994) was a prominent historian of South East Europe. Having held various academic positions in Mainz, Freiburg im Breisgau and Göttingen, Hering eventually became the first professor of Modern Greek Studies at the University of Vienna in 1983. Known as a specialist in Greek and Bulgarian cultural history and church history as well as in the history of political parties in South East Europe, with excellent skills in a number of East and South East European languages and cultures, Hering decisively opened his field of study to interdisciplinary and trans-national approaches. He developed several research projects dedicated to the travel literature and conceptual history of modern South East Europe. With this lecture series, we honour his memory and aim to promote a lively academic dialogue on Greek and South East European history.

[PRE-REGISTRATION](#) for this event is mandatory.

Wearing an FFP2 mask throughout the event is mandatory.

### In cooperation with:

ÖGNS/Austrian Society of Modern Greek Studies

Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies

Faculty of Historical and Cultural Studies of the University of Vienna

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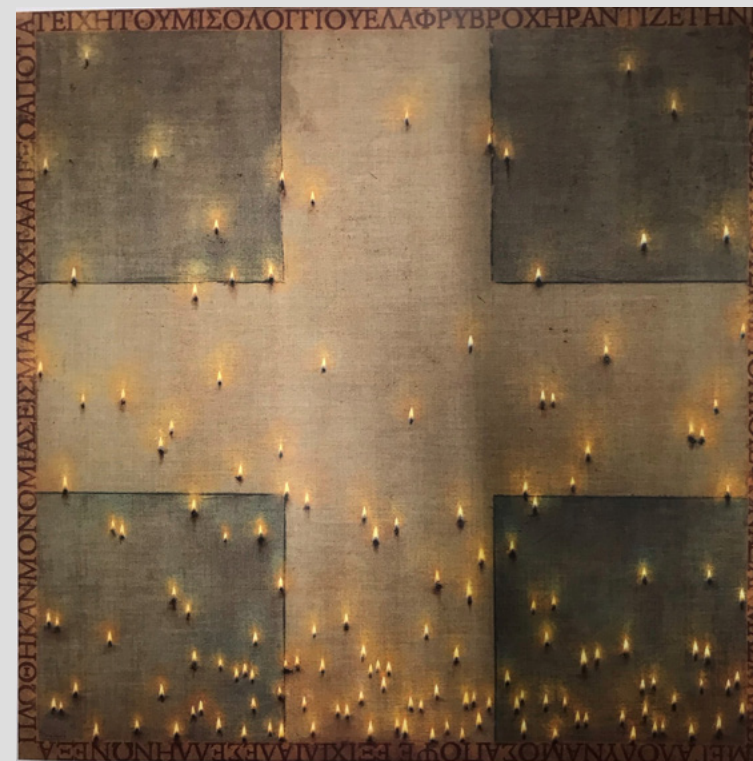
Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Augasse 2-6, 1090 Vienna

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# 6th Gunnar Hering Lecture Attempting to understand the Greek War of Independence

Tuesday, 26 April 2022, 18:15

Elise Richter Hall, Main Building of the University of Vienna  
Universitätsring 1, 1010 Vienna



## 6th Gunnar Hering Lecture

### Attempting to understand the Greek War of Independence

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Attempts to understand the Greek War of Independence often treat the event as a deterministic outcome of preceding transformations, especially regarding the economic, political and intellectual growth of Orthodox populations under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which is in turn linked to the 'decline' of the Ottoman Empire.

The War of Independence was the product of many years of preparation and of specific goals, regardless of whether those goals were finally achieved or not. Any attempt to understand this process cannot neglect the formation of the Philike Etairia and the manner in which it infiltrated or failed to infiltrate social groups in power that could act as a catalyst. None of the groups with economic, social and political authority over the Christian population took part in organising the war effort –with the exception of a few marginal and unimportant cases. It was a small-scale mobilisation that created the conditions for a war against the Ottomans and sparked its outbreak.

After all, the task of organising the Greek state was not assigned to those who participated in the War of Independence. As the new Greek state served their pursuit of stability in the context of the Restoration, the main responsibility for its establishment actually belonged to the Great Powers which made it clear from the outset that they would let neither popular mobilisation nor local elites take over. The struggle only ended with King Otto's fall in 1862 or, by other accounts, in 1875 when the political system came under the control of the political elite with the adoption of the parliamentary principle.

#### **This year's speaker:**

Kostas KOSTIS is professor of Economic and Social History at the Department of Economics of the University of Athens. From 2006 until 2009 he occupied the Chair of Modern and Contemporary Greek Studies at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris. He is a member of the administrative council of the Greek General State Archives and consultant to the Alpha Bank, Athens. His recent publications include: *History's Spoiled Children: The Formation of the Modern Greek State*, London 2018; *The wealth of Greece. Greek economy in the 20th and 21st century*, Athens 2019 (in Greek).

## Programme

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Welcome address

**Sebastian Schütze**

Dean of the Faculty of Historical and Cultural Studies

**Christophe Erismann**

Head of the Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies

**Maria A. Stassinopoulou**

President of the Austrian Society of Modern Greek Studies

**Dimitris Kousouris**

Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies

**ATTEMPTING TO UNDERSTAND THE GREEK WAR OF INDEPENDENCE**

**Kostas KOSTIS / University of Athens**

Respondent:

**Claudia KRAFT**

Professor of Contemporary History, Research Platform for the Study of Transformations and Eastern Europe, Research Center for the History of Transformations.  
Her recent publications include: (together with Jerzy Kochanowski eds.), *Rooms for manoeuvre: another look at negotiating processes in the Socialist Bloc*. Göttingen 2021.