Precarity of History - Collecting of Identity-shaping Myths and History in Eastern Europe in the “long” 19th century

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The “long” 19th century was knowingly the time of the “invention” of modern national identities (Anderson) that based on ethnocultural communities in Europe. Next to language, the fundament of this consciousness of belonging formed shared most of all myths, tales, and history. To that end, scholars of different ethnicities all over Europe collected myths, folklore and historical sources. The intention was to give material and immaterial resources to the historical longevity of the own ethnocultural “nation” and to form a sense of ethnocultural belonging. This is most true for the Slavic, Hungarian, “Albanian” and Romanian and further peoples of Eastern Europe. While peoples of Western and Central as of the Western Mediterranean Europe as of Greece could draw on (“invented”) traditions (Hobsbawm) and antique Greek-Roman or “Barbarian” history including a rich material and immaterial remnants both in literature as in archaeological remains, peoples of the East lacked these richness.

This panel intends to reconstruct this process of collecting of material and immaterial sources like myths, language idioms and historical sources in East Europe during the “long” 19th century (late 18th to early 20th century) with the purpose of creating ethnocultural identities. In doing so, it shall contribute to the discussion of the role myths as historical studies played and still play in the invention and imagining of nations.

Please send a short abstract (up to 250-300 words) with a short biography to daniela.haarmann@univie.ac.at until February 28 2022.

The panel will be in-person. I sadly cannot cover for travel, accomodation or participation costs. ASEEES membership is required to participate.