Editorial

This is the tenth volume of *Aspasia*, the international peer-reviewed annual of women's and gender history of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe (CESEE). Most readers will know that each volume of *Aspasia* usually contains some general articles about women's and gender history in the region, and some articles related to a specific theme. Information about future themes, as well as general information about publishing in *Aspasia*, can be found on our website (<http://www.berghahnbooks.com/journals/asp/>).

The call for papers for this volume invited historians to reflect on the current strong interest in archives in relation to the CESEE region. The questions we raised included: what is the state of the archives in the country you are working on? How has the archival landscape shaped research on women's and gender history? Have you developed specific research strategies to find traces of women or to work around the limited sources available? And, does the digital revolution lead to a greater availability and visibility of women's archives or sources relevant for women's and gender history in the region? This last question was not taken up in any of the submissions we received, but projects to digitize archival sources in women's and gender history are beginning to make an impact on the field. Of particular relevance to *Aspasia* readers is a new online database called "Women and Modern Empires, 1840 to the present." This exciting project will contain 75,000 pages of documents pertaining to women in the global history of empires and postcolonial societies since 1840. Documents about women in the Habsburg Empire, the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East, the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, and the Russian Empire will be included in the collection. The first part of the project will be available online in 2016; the entire database will be completed in 2017.¹

The Theme section in this volume consists of two articles that both address a number of the questions raised by our call for papers. The first is by the US historian Michelle DenBeste, whose contribution has the striking title "NOT Finding Women in the Archives: The Case of Evgeniia Serebrennikova, Pioneering Woman Physician in Late Nineteenth-Century Russia." DenBeste's article has a double focus: it examines the life of one of Russia's first female doctors, Evgeniia Serebrennikova (1854–1897) and reflects on the difficulties DenBeste experienced when she tried to research Serebrennikova's life in the archives. Some of the issues the author discusses are specific to doing women's history, whereas other problems apply to doing archival research in Russia more generally. DenBeste concludes that it takes extraordinary effort, including travel to multiple archives, to get the "complete story" of women such as Serebrennikova, whose work was pioneering but brought them only limited fame.

Such research requires significant financial support, which, as DenBeste notes, is not available to everyone.

The second article in this section is by the Turkish historian Elif Mahir Metinsoy, who reflects on "Writing the History of Ordinary Ottoman Women during World War I." Similarly to DenBeste's article about Russia, Mahir Metinsoy's article has a double track. She first explores the reasons why ordinary women are among the least known subjects of Ottoman Turkish historiography, which she attributes to conventional and feminist historiography's prioritizing of the elite and middle classes rather than poor and working-class women, as well as the way in which the Turkish archives are organized. Mahir Metinsoy then discusses her own innovative findings about these women, which are based on posing new questions and using less conventional sources.

The General Article section opens with another innovative contribution in the field of Turkish women's and gender history: Pinar Melis Yelsalı Parmaksız's article about "Paternalism, Modernization, and the Gender Regime in Turkey." Yelsalı Parmaksız argues that whereas scholarship about Turkish twentieth-century history has used the concept of paternalism, paternalism's profound role in shaping the Kemalist gender regime has not yet been fully understood. Her main focus is on the single-party years of the Turkish Republic (1923–1946), but she ends her article with a short discussion of the different but powerful influence of paternalism on the gender regime of the current reigning party, the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party, AKP).

Krassimira Daskalova's intriguingly titled article, "A Woman Politician in the Cold War Balkans: From Biography to History," focuses on Tsola Dragoicheva (1898–1993), one of the most visible and prominent female politicians in Bulgaria and Eastern Europe after 1944. Based on a wide variety of archival materials from Bulgarian and international archives, the periodical press, and oral history interviews, Daskalova provides a biographical account of Dragoicheva's life and discusses her communist and feminist politics. The article provides a very well-grounded contribution to the ongoing debate regarding the character of state-socialist women's policies and what the author refers to as the "gender contract" in the countries of the region during state socialism.

Under the rubric "The Source," Melissa Feinberg discusses an "Information Item" produced by Radio Free Europe in 1954, during the high Cold War. The mission of Radio Free Europe (RFE) was to broadcast "the truth" about communism to people in Eastern Europe. As Feinberg explains in her introduction, researchers affiliated with RFE interviewed recent refugees and travelers from Eastern Europe. The information they collected was submitted in report form to RFE and filed as "Items." Feinberg analyzes one of these Items, titled "The Decline of Family Life," which tells the story of a young Czech man who fled Czechoslovakia in 1954 to escape the attention of the state security service. Feinberg's exemplary analysis identifies and examines the anticommunist and gendered assumptions that went into the document.

This issue also contains a Forum, which is connected to the Forum in *Aspasia's* first volume in a number of ways. For our 2007 volume we asked Forum contributors whether communism and feminism were a "contradiction in terms." In the current Fo-

rum, seven contributors—Chiara Bonfiglioli, Krassimira Daskalova, Alexandra Ghit, Kristen Ghodsee, Magda Grabowska, Jasmina Lukić, and Raluca Maria Popa—revisit the relation between communism and feminism. They consider the influence of new historical research published since 2007 and new theoretical contributions emphasizing that the meaning of feminism should not be limited to “a very specific set of liberal, Western, political goals” (as Kristen Ghodsee recently put it),² and conclude that communism and feminism are not necessarily contradictions, as historical research shows they were not for many women activists in different parts of the world during the twentieth century. In addition to providing contributors the opportunity to reflect on new trends in historical research on communism and feminism, the Forum also allowed them to comment on the debate that this work has ignited, which they do in different ways. Together, the Forum contributions make a strong case, we believe, for more research into the history of women’s organizations in socialist states, particularly since many of these organizations left substantial archival collections that remain largely untouched by historians.

The Book Review section opens with a review essay by Rochelle Goldberg Ruthchild about three important recent books about Russian and Soviet women’s history. This is followed by eighteen reviews of books about the region, which highlight the diversity of topics in the still developing field of women’s and gender history in CESEE. We conclude with News and Miscellanea, which presents two reports about new women’s archives in the region. The first is a report by Monika Rudaś-Grodzka and Katarzyna Nadana-Sokołowska on an interesting project at the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences called Archiwum Kobiet: Piszące (Archives of Women: Writing). The second, by Anna Borgos and Dorottya Rédei, introduces the newly established Lesbian Herstory Archives Hungary (LHAH).

As always, we would like to thank all those colleagues who have done blind peer reviews for *Aspasia*, and express our thanks for the support of the members of the Editorial Board. Special thanks go again to Melissa Feinberg for her significant contributions as editor and to Rochelle Ruthchild for her editing assistance with the book reviews. Selin Cagatay has been a truly excellent editorial assistant, whose historical knowledge and sharp eye have made noteworthy contributions to this volume.

This is my last issue as *Aspasia* editor. Beginning with the next volume, Svetla Baloutzova and Raili Marling will take over as managing editors. The ten years that I have worked on the yearbook have been extremely rich and rewarding, and I would like to sincerely thank all former and current colleagues for their work for *Aspasia*. I would like to mention one colleague in particular: Krassimira Daskalova, who has been an *Aspasia* editor since its beginning and its book review editor since volume 5. She has also designed and edited two important *Aspasia* Forums: one on Women’s and Gender Studies in CESEE (a two-part Forum published in *Aspasia* vols. 4 and 5), and one on Women’s and Gender History (also two parts, published in *Aspasia* vols. 6 and 7). I also use this opportunity to express my great appreciation for publisher Berghahn’s trust in us and for the professional work of the Berghahn editors and others involved.

The *Aspasía* editors welcome contributions in any area of women's and gender history in Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe on an ongoing basis. Notes for contributors can be found on the inside back cover of this volume. For more and updated information about *Aspasía*, please visit berghahnjournals.com/aspasia.

Francisca de Haan, on behalf of the *Aspasía* editors

◆ Notes

1. For more information about "Women and Modern Empires, 1840 to the present" see <http://chswg.binghamton.edu/wasi/wame-about.html> (accessed 1 October 2015).
2. Kristen Ghodsee, "Untangling the Knot: A Response to Nanette Funk," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 22, no. 2 (2015): 248–252, here 251.