

Canadian Association of Slavists (CAS) President's Report

May 9, 2025

I am pleased to present my report to the members at the CAS conference, the highlight of our academic year. This has been another challenging year for all of us. Still, despite our growing concerns about the increasing instability worldwide, CAS members continue to deliver outstanding work in all disciplines that comprise our membership. During the years of Russia's war against Ukraine, many of us have worked to rethink and diversify our fields of study, pushing our research into new directions. You will find in the CAS Newsletter an account of the remarkable accomplishments and energy that have characterized the past year.

I want to change the traditional order of the president's report and begin with **a note of thanks to conference organizers**. This year, for the first time, the CAS conference is taking place independently of the Congress for the Humanities. It is safe to say the move has been successful! The program committee, Luc Beaudoin, Nigel Raab, Daniel Pratt, and the organization committee in Edmonton, Heather Coleman and Jelena Pogosjan, have done an outstanding job.

Those of us who have done this work know how much time and energy it requires, but the organizers faced new challenges this year. Thank you for your hard work, attention to detail, and clear-headedness.

Here are some of the achievements of CAS members. I am pleased to formally announce, for the record of today's AGM, the winners of our annual prizes.

CAS / Taylor & Francis Book Prize

This year's Canadian Association of Slavists / Taylor & Francis Book Prize in Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies was awarded to Natalie Kononenko's *Ukrainian Ritual on the Prairies*. The committee noted:

The book has a uniquely Canadian context. It reflects community-engaged research on Ukrainian Canadian ritual life in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Kononenko identifies what remains of old-country customs and what has been transformed by Canadianization. The book covers the research environment, the researcher's position and method, and various aspects of the Ukrainian Canadian community's ritual life.

The committee also awarded honorable mentions to the following two books: *Laboratory of Modernity* by Sirhiy Bilenky and *An Unsettled Nation* by Eduard Baidus.

Thank you to the book prize committee members John-Paul Himka, Ann Komaromi, and Veronika Makarova for your work in reviewing the entries and deciding the award. We are grateful also to Taylor & Francis for the \$500 prize that comes with this award. The Jury's full

commendations are part of this year's Newsletter, and I recommend them to you. Congratulations, Natalie, Sirhiy, and Eduard!

CAS / Taylor & Francis Article Prize

This year, the winner is Oleksandr Pankieiev for his essay, "Changing Motifs in Digital Folklore Characters of the Russian-Ukrainian War."

The article appeared in *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue canadienne des slavistes* 66, nos. 3–4 (2024): 484–511. In recognition of Dr. Pankieiev's achievement, our publisher, Taylor & Francis, will make the article available for free access until May 2026.

The jury commended Pankieiev's cutting-edge approach to the theme of war heroes, and how it is constructed and transformed by the digital humanities across social media platforms in contemporary Ukraine under the very real circumstances of war. See the full citation on the CAS website.

We thank our publisher, Taylor & Francis, for sponsoring this prize for the best article. Prize winners receive \$250, a certificate, and publicity for their articles.

Thanks also go to Piotr Kajak, Donna Orwin, and Christine Worobec, members of the CSP/RCS editorial and advisory boards who served on this year's jury.

CAS Student Essay Prizes

This year's winners of the CAS Student Essay Prize competitions are Kevin Milne and Jackson Pinkowski.

The winning graduate essay is by Kevin Milne, "Bounty and Decline in the Poetic Landscape of Leonid Aronzon," U of Toronto, supervisor Dr. Ann Komaromi.

In the undergraduate essay category, the winner is Jackson Pinkowski, "Woman, What Have I to Do with Thee?": Effacing the Feminine in Dostoevsky." McGill U, instructor Lyudmila Parts

Congratulations to Kevin, Jackson, and their supervisors. Thank you to the Student Essay Prize jury members Kristy Ironside, Elena Baraban, and Ela Rossmiller. Kevin and Jackson will receive a one-year paid membership in the CAS. Additionally, the essays will be considered for publication in the association's journal, *Canadian Slavonic Papers/Revue Canadienne des Slavistes*.

Canadian Slavonic Papers Our journal co-editors James Krapfl and Rolf Hellebust will provide their report in a few moments, but I would like to underscore that our journal continues its rich and high-quality publication record. Thank you to Rolf Hellebust and James Krapfl, as well as to Assistant Editor Antony Kalashnikov and the journal's Editorial Office staff, Natalie Cornett.

Thank you all for your energetic and thoughtful editing and production of the journal, and coordinating our book and essay prizes, and our Newsletter. Your work requires a huge amount

of attention, energy, and thought, and it has done the journal and the association proud. Thank you, too, to Associate Editors Heather Coleman and Piotr Kosicki, and to Book Review Editors Jakub Burkowicz, Jane Hacking, Eva Plach, and Megan Swift.

Other items:

On behalf of CAS members, I wrote to the President and the Dean of Arts of Dalhousie University to express our concern about the decision to close the Department of Russian Studies. Their reply, polite as it was, disregarded these concerns.

Also, on behalf of CAS, and following a discussion with the CAS Executive, I nominated Heather Coleman for the ICCEES Award for Distinguished Service in Central, East European, and Eurasian Studies.

The CAS Executive. This year, as before, I have been helped by all members of the Executive, and I would like to acknowledge the members to whom I have regularly turned with questions this past year: Mark Conliffe, James Krapfl, Heather Coleman, Kristy Ironside, and Nigel Raab. All of you have guided and helped me, and I am fortunate to have such a supportive and committed Executive.