The Institute for Advanced Study and the Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies at CEU cordially invite you to the workshop

**Dangerous Gifts & Pernicious Transactions from Antiquity to the Digital Age**

19–20 May, CEU Budapest
Nádor u. 15, Room 103

“Gifts make slaves as whips make dogs.” Dangerous, violent, and self-destructive gift-giving remains an alluring challenge for historians and anthropologists almost a hundred years after Marcel Mauss’s landmark essay on the gift. Globally, the notion of toxic and fateful gift has haunted mythologies, folklores, and literatures for millennia. Yet even in everyday practice—to say nothing of more brittle spheres such as politics or religion—it is not always easy to draw a line between voluntary giving and coercion, between generosity and excess, between benevolence and insult, and between gratitude and bribery. No matter how much modern consumerist ideology pursues and tries to exploit the idea of a “pure” gift that is gratuitous, wholesome, and pleasing, the ambiguity of gift-giving is deeply embedded in human culture: the dark side of the gift is the shadow of the perfect gift.

Drawing together anthropologists, historians, literary scholars and theologians, this workshop pursues the controversial and dazzling subject of dangerous gifts and pernicious transactions from antiquity to the digital age. We ask what is the politics of dangerous gift-giving? When do gifts do the donor more harm than good? In what circumstances are religious gifts ambivalent? When do they become treacherous? And are digital gifts more dangerous than beneficial?

**Keynote: Russel Belk**

Also featuring papers by Erica Benner, Shervin Farridnejad, György Geréby, Sandor Hites, Ellen Litwicki, István Perczel, Tudor Sala, Tracey Sowerby, Davide Torsello, Alexandra Urakova, Neguin Yavari

Attendance is free, but registration is required. For further information and to register please see [https://ias.ceu.edu](https://ias.ceu.edu)