

Universal Reformation: Intellectual Networks in Central and Western Europe, 1560-1670

An International Conference at the University of Oxford
St Anne's College, 21-23 September 2010



An Intellectual Geography of the
Seventeenth-Century
Republic of Letters

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Call for Papers

For decades before the Thirty Years War, Protestant communities in Poland-Lithuania, the Czech lands, and Hungary-Transylvania, lacking fully functional local universities responsive to their needs, sent their sons westward to study in Germany's numerous universities and academies. The resulting contact and reciprocal influence knit the intellectual histories of these regions together in inextricable ways. The three decades of war which followed disrupted many of these institutions and replaced these patterns of academic travel with fresh waves of intellectual refugees fleeing in all directions: not only to Transylvania, western Poland, and Polish Prussia, but also to Scandinavia, the Netherlands, and the British Isles. At the same time, the trauma of displacement transformed long-nurtured aspirations toward ecclesiastical reunification, political pacification, pedagogical improvement, and philosophical reform into an all-embracing programme of universal reformation. As formulated above all by the exiled Moravian pedagogue Jan Amos Comenius (1592-1670), this vision was disseminated in England by the circle around the displaced 'intelligencer' from Polish Prussia, Samuel Hartlib (c.1600-62).

For much of the twentieth century, the intrinsic difficulty of surveying this vast network was exacerbated by profound national rivalries and ideological divisions. Following the revolutions of 1989 and the expansion of the European Union in 2004, however, transformed political conditions allow an unprecedented assault on this problem. With this in mind, this conference invites both emerging and established scholars to contribute their perspectives on this huge system and the unfamiliar intellectual traditions exchanged within it. Discussions are intended to range outward chronologically from the wartime period to earlier and immediately following developments connected with it, and geographically from central Europe in all directions. Intellectual traditions to be explored include the following:

- Universal **education**: *institutional networks and intellectual exchange*
- Universal **wisdom**: *encyclopaedia and pansophia*
- Universal **communication**: *the early modern European media revolution*
- Universal **communion**: *ecclesiastical reconciliation in central Europe*
- Universal **history**: *millenarianism, prophecy, and propaganda*

Abstracts of **300 words** should be sent to the
Cultures of Knowledge Project Director, Professor
Howard Hotson, at cofk@humanities.ox.ac.uk by
31 December 2009



Detail from *The Siege of Bautzen* by John George I of Saxony, September 1620, by Matthäus Merian. Wikimedia Commons.



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