

Enlightenment in Moravia set in the European context: cultural transfer and the distribution of knowledge

24th-25th November 2022, Moravian Library

Sapere aude! Generally translated as “dare to know”, according to Immanuel Kant the phrase is a motto of Enlightenment (*Was ist Aufklärung*, 1784), and as such it is well-suited to be the slogan of the conference and exhibition held in November 2022 at the Moravian Library, Brno.

Contemporary European society oftentimes leans upon the ideas of Enlightenment, which are often a subject to debate and controversy (Lilti, 2019). Contemporary research, too, views Enlightenment as full of contradictions. Unlike earlier notions regarding it a unified movement, it is its multifaceted character which is nowadays explored. Enlightenment is understood as a set of responses to questions and issues which have arisen in the wake of the modernization of the European society. Scholars have been exploring the transfer of ideas and knowledge, their plasticity and adaptability to particular local conditions, and their circulation in Europe in relation to social and intellectual activities. All these phenomena, characteristic of the era of Enlightenment, will be addressed the conference.

Abundant historical sources and collections concerned with Enlightenment in the Czech Lands (both fine and applied arts, libraries, archives, architecture, music) were presented in a series of lectures and exhibitions *Rok osvícenské šlechty* (“Year of the Enlightenment Nobility”) organised by the National Heritage Institute in 2021. All such events, as well as earlier research (see Jiří Kroupa and Ivo Cerman), clearly demonstrate that the Czech lands within the Habsburg monarchy were rather open to European culture, and that Enlightenment thinkers were not confined within the limits of superficial cosmopolitanism, but were actively involved in the development of local structures. In Moravia in particular, a number of provincial institutions (schools, museums, libraries) owe their existence to Enlightenment scholars who sought to spread knowledge, following the motto *Sapere aude*. These very aspects of Moravian Enlightenment will be covered by the exhibition planned for autumn 2022.

In recent decades, several monographs and collective works have focused on Enlightenment in the Czech lands (Kroupa 2006; Cerman – Krueger – Reynolds, eds. 2011; Lorman – Tinková, eds. 2008). These are in line with research conducted by other European scholars (Kontler, Landais, Lebeau, Schilling-Vogel, Schmale) and also bear witness to new lines of research, exploring hitherto little-known aspects of the Enlightenment such as medicine, law, religion, the role of government and the bureaucratic apparatus, the changes in legal reasoning, the role of art within the society, the role of the books, etc. Recently, contemporary research sought to comprehensively outline the cultural and social particularities of the Czech Enlightenment, in an attempt to better connect the Enlightenment with the subsequent period traditionally referred to as the National Revival (*Cornova* 1/2020). The period was characterised by knowledge transfer, or ‘the vernacularisation of knowledge’, which led to the emergence of civil society and, consequently, to the transformation of the political scene. Authors of the papers in this special issue of *Cornova* point out the diverse means of the transfer of knowledge (education, visual arts, book culture), its development (from being a movement of the intellectual elites towards Enlightenment spreading across classes), and the crucial role of the local elites and the state. The latter sought to transform the society through external influence, whether it was at

the core of the Habsburg monarchy with its political centre in Vienna, in the newly annexed territories (in Halič in particular), or elsewhere in the Empire, Italy, or Western Europe.

The conference will thus explore two issues: the transfer of knowledge across social classes; and the relationship between local Enlightenment and the whole of European knowledge, in the context of the Habsburg monarchy and Central Europe. We are pleased to welcome scholars interested in the Enlightenment to discuss the subject from a decentralised perspective, focusing on the local particularities of the movement.

Please send proposals for contributions in the form of a short annotation together with a brief professional CV to: lumieres2022@mzk.cz.

Recommended literature

Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire, 2018, *L'Europe des Lumières*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2018.

Cornova 2020. Numéro spécial, Miroslav Hroch, Václav Smyčka, Pavelf Suchánek, Ivo Cerman around the article by Daniela Tinková, Enlightenment as 'Vernacularization of Knowledge'

Ivo Cerman, Rita Krueger, and Susan Reynolds, eds., 2011, *The Enlightenment in Bohemia: Religion, Morality, and Multiculturalism*. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation.

Johannes Frimmel, Michael Wögerbauer (eds.), 2009, *Kommunikation und Information in 18. Jahrhundert. Das Beispiel der Habsburgermonarchie*. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2009.

László Kontler, Translations, histories, Enlightenments. William Robertson in Germany, 1760-1795. New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

Jiří Kroupa, 2006, *Alchymie štěstí*. Brno, Era.

Benjamin Landais, 2013, Nations, privilèges et ethnicité à l'époque des Lumières : l'intégration de la société banataise dans la monarchie habsbourgeoise au XVIIIe siècle Thèse doctorat U. Strasbourg

Christine Lebeau, 2021, Échanger des modèles dans la République des administrateurs au XVIIIe siècle : des cadastres italiens au cadastre josphiste. De l'estime au cadastre en Europe. L'époque moderne (Mireille Touzery. Dir.), P. 247-263

Antoine Lilti, 2019, *L'Héritage des Lumières. Ambivalences de la modernité*. Paris: Seuil/Gallimard.

Jaroslav Lorman, Daniela Tinková, eds., 2008, *Post tenebras spero lucem. Duchovní tvář českého a moravského osvícenství*. Praha: Casablanca.

Lothar Schilling, Jakob Vogel, eds, 2019, *Transnational Cultures of Expertise. Circulating State-Related Knowledge in the 18th and 19th centuries*. De Gruyter Oldenbourg, Berlin 2019

Schmale W, editor. Multiple kulturelle Referenzen in der Habsburgermonarchie des 18. Jahrhunderts: = Références culturelles multiples dans la monarchie des Habsbourg au dix-

huitième siècle = Multiple cultural references in 18th-century Habsburg Monarchy [Internet].
Bochum: Verlag DrDieter Winkler; 2010. (Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Gesellschaft zur
Erforschung des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts; vol. 24)

Important deadlines

Submit your applications by: 15th April 2022

Reviewing the submissions: 15th May 2022

Conference: 22th-23th November 2022

Useful information:

Place: Moravian Library

No conference fee will be charged.

Languages: We will accept submissions in English, German, and French; the language in which the conference will be held will be specified according to the final programme.

The communication could be possibly published in the journal *Cornova*.

Research committee:

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Jaroslav Stanovský (Moravská zemská knihovna)

Daniela Tinková (Filosofická fakulta univerzity Karlovy)

Michael Wögerbauer (Ústav pro českou literaturu AV ČR)