

Call for papers

Hosts the 30th International Comeniological Colloquium:

Fines – Limes – Termini. A border between a philosophical category, social interaction, and cartographic notation

12–13 October 2016

According to Georg Simmel, one of the founders of the sociology of space, borders are result of the social practice of demarcation. This comprises identification processes of various kinds, creating the conceptions about groups, defining processes, construing and perceiving differences, emphasizing (or, on the other hand, putting an end to) barriers, etc. As part of this demanding agenda, human communities and their members try to specify the units that, in their opinion, should be differentiated from each other, mentally or materially, legal, administrative, narrative, or other reasons. The nature of social interactions that take place inside separate communities or between the communities determine what should be differentiated, and how. Hence, the origination, existence, status and character of the borders depend on forms of life of the society.

Since these forms have been changeable throughout the history, historical changes have also influenced the motives and manners of the demarcation (on the practical level), notation of the borders (on the media level), and also the realization of the border (on the cognitive level).

The study of the borders, in its own right, has a similar valence to the social context. It was not incidental that, in European historiography, the interest in studies of historical forms of borders rose enormously during the 1990s, when the relevance of European borders dramatically changed, as did their international legal status and the cross-border movement. It is an ambition of the 30th International Comeniological Colloquium to help continue such studies and offer a platform for examining the border phenomenon – last not least because issues related to this topic have recently become extremely topical. At the same time, the Colloquium tries to examine them from a new conceptual perspective that may cast new light, e.g., on cognitive aspects of the perception and (cartographic) notation of borders, practical impacts on the everyday life in the borderland, possible reactions to a presence of a border, symbolic import and mythology of a border, as well as manners in which it has been portrayed in art and literature.

While the borders within the meaning of the social practice, as described above, did not necessarily have to be visualised, it were the territorial borders that have become the embodiment of the term in our times. However, was it always a case, even in past centuries? What was the semantic meaning of terms like limes, termini, determinatio, confinium, margo etc.? By which acts the demarcation was implied? Was there any reflection of the demarcation process in place? It is often stressed whenever the question of territorial borders is examined from an international comparative perspective that those of the Czech Lands have remained unaltered for quite a long time and have experienced more years of peace than of war (see the

2009 Colloquium). This leads to further questions. Can we assume that, due to the long-year stability, Czech citizens had a stronger understanding of the immovability of the borders than people of other nations? Or, vice versa, did not perceive the existence of something as unproblematic as the borders at all? Or else, should we revise the notion that Czech national borders have been stable (fostered especially by German historians like Robert Luft, Hans Lemberg et al.) in view of historical details and contingencies?

The Colloquium is open to all scholarly fields and experts that may contribute to the understanding of the process of creation of physical and mental borders and of the demarcation, but also the opposite process of overcoming and ignoring such borders. We welcome papers focused on partial subjects and case studies,

especially those focused on establishing, abolishing, experiencing, crossing, perceiving, and depicting borders, but also general concept monographs dealing with the Europe's political, religious, and intellectual demarcation. Authors can make use of related events and anniversaries, e.g. that of the Battle of Lucké Pole, which actually took place in a borderland, though without any strictly delineated border. The focal point, however, is the early modern period, particularly the times of J. A. Komenský, which introduced numerous new aspects into the demarcation process, starting from the confessional

division that redrew European borders, to the development of geodesy and cartography, which made possible (and also necessary) more precise measuring and cartographic notation of space, including the borders. Logically enough, such papers may also overlap preceding and following periods.

The Colloquium will be divided into three sections focused on the issues of borders and demarcation in the Middle Ages, early modern period, and modern period. Each section will have its expert guarantor.

Conference languages: Czech, Slovak, English, German.

Timing of conference papers: 30 minutes, contributions/interventions: 15 minutes.

Applications containing a brief résumé of your papers should be sent before **30 April 2016** at the address:

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The Organizing Committee, in cooperation with guarantors of the respective sections, will select suitable papers and contributions by the end of May 2016.