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## PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY OF SCIENCE IN COLLABORATION WITH ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE USA IN 2019

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The past year, 2019, was marked by dramatic negotiations surrounding Brexit, whose outcome is still the source of apprehension and cautious questioning on the part of both British and European academic community, both of whom wonder what the new situation will mean for their current and future relations. During the past year, several remarkable events took place which are the outcome of either long-term or newly formed collaboration in the area of history of science in Britain. A report on these interesting meetings (invited lectures, workshops, academic exchanges, and publications) is an opportunity to draw attention to some British institutions where research in the history of science is especially active and fruitful.

Within the history of science, the University of Cambridge holds indisputably a most special place, especially its Department of Philosophy and History of Science. The Czech University of Pardubice, in particular its Department of Philosophy, Institute of Applied Physics and Mathematics, and Institute of Mathematics and Quantitative Methods, thanks to a collaboration of longer standing managed to organise on 2 August 2019 in Pardubice an interesting interdisciplinary conference on *Humanity in the Era of Specialized Knowledge and Science*. The two main invited speakers were holders of the prestigious Fernando Gil International Prize: Hasok Chang, professor of history and philosophy of science at the abovementioned Cambridge departments, and Ladislav Kvasz, professor of didactics of mathematics and associate professor of physics and philosophy at the Faculty of Education of the Charles University. Hasok Chang, whose starting point is his education in theoretical physics and philosophy of science, is aside from other things holder of the Lakatos Award in Philosophy of Science for his important book *Is Water H<sub>2</sub>O? Evidence, Realism and Pluralism* (Springer, 2012). The workshop offered a rare opportunity to meet with him. In his lecture in Pardubice, entitled *Beyond Correspondence: Realism for Realistic*

*People*, he focused on a critical reflection of traditional correspondence concept of truth in the context of methods of modern science. In the spirit of American pragmatist tradition, he posited a distinction between a “primary” and “secondary” truth and contingency of truth-making and truth-finding. Ladislav Kvasz gave a lecture entitled *Geometry in the Development of Western Painting*.

The Department of Comenius Studies and Early Modern Intellectual History of the Institute of Philosophy of Czech Academy of Science (IP CAS) led by Vladimír Urbánek has been actively participating in a broad and long-term international digitalisation project *Cultures of Knowledge: Networking the Republic of Letters, 1550–1750*, led by Howard Hotson, professor of Early Modern intellectual history at the University of Oxford (Faculty of History, St Anne’s College) for over a decade. Within this collaboration framework and jointly with the Centre for Formal Epistemology (IP CAS), the Department of Comenius Studies and Early Modern Intellectual History organised in May 2019 a series of invited lectures by Cornelis J. Schilt (University of Oxford, Linacre College), entitled “*Beware that thou be not found wanting in this tryall*”: *An Introduction to Isaac Newton’s Chronological and Prophectical Studies* (22 May 2019), *Editing Isaac: The Newton Project as a Scholarly Digital Edition* (24 May 2019), and *The Early Modern Prisca Scientia and the Foundations of Modern Science* (29 May 2019). In these substantively and methodologically extraordinarily interesting lectures followed in all cases by long and lively discussions, participants had a unique opportunity to familiarise themselves with current Newtonian studies. This is because Schilt is one of the foremost experts who work on transcription and interpretation of Newton’s manuscript within the framework of another international digitalisation project, the *Newton Project*, whose centre is also in Oxford. This current project is a direct continuation of *AHRC Newton Papers Project* (1999–2015), which focused on global and interdisciplinary investigation of Newton’s correspondence, publications, and manuscripts in a broad cultural context using both traditional, especially philological, approaches and the most up-to-date technological methods.

This Newtonian project has been led and its main editor is Rob Iliffe, professor of the history of science (University of Oxford, Faculty of History, Linacre College), co-editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Newton* (2015) and author of a more recent monograph *Priest of Nature. The Religious Worlds of Isaac Newton* (Oxford University Press, 2017), currently one of the foremost Newtonian experts in the world. Iliffe was in March 2019 hosted by the Department of Philosophy and History of the Sciences of the Faculty

of Science, Charles University (FSc CU), where he held a public lecture on *Changing conceptions of scientific creativity in Europe, 1720–1840* (29 March 2019) and introduced the Newtonian project at a seminar for doctoral students. His visit took place as part of a programme of strategic partnership between the Charles University and University of Oxford, in particular between the Department of Philosophy and History of the Sciences of the Charles University and the Oxford Centre for the History of Science, Medicine, and Technology based on a new joint project entitled *Creative Cities: Knowledge of Nature and Networks of Science*, which focuses on academic exchanges, research, and collaboration on publications. The Oxford Centre for the History of Science, Medicine, and Technology was created in 2017 based on both of the abovementioned global digitalisation projects and other research activities. It brings together researchers and teams from various Oxford colleges and university museums, especially the History of Science Museum, and it has also already launched a doctoral programme in the history of science. Iliffe's visit in Prague was followed by invitation to Jacques Joseph (Department of Philosophy and History of the Sciences of the Charles University) to participate in a conference on *The Religious Worlds of Isaac Newton* (22 June 2019, University of Oxford, Department for Continuing Education) with his contribution *Spirit of Nature by Henry More*. The main result of this collaboration so far was a joint conference for doctoral students, the *First Workshop of the Oxford–Charles University Prague International Network in the History of Science, Medicine, and Technology*, which took place in Oxford on 27 June 2019 at the Faculty of History. Twelve PhD students (seven from the Charles University, five from the University of Oxford) presented here their research projects (either the plan, if the project was just beginning, or results, where the project was more advanced) dealing with a wide range of subjects in the history of science from Renaissance to the twentieth century. Mutual interaction, confrontation of experiences, and discussions involving further guests turned out to be highly useful and helpful and as the name suggests, this was a first in a series of further planned meetings which should take place in following years.

Another institution that should be mentioned in this context is the Centre for History and Philosophy of Science, which is one of five research and education centres at the School of Philosophy, Religion and History of Science of the University of Leeds. This university also operates a Museum of the History of Science, Technology and Medicine, whose tradition spans to the seventeenth century. Gregory Radick, professor of history and philosophy of science and one of the former directors of this Centre, who focuses

on the history of Darwinism, genetics, and eugenics, has a longstanding connection with the Czech Lands also due to his interest in the history of Mendelism. In part thanks to this, the Department of Philosophy and History of the Sciences of the Charles University had several years ago formally established collaboration with this Centre on the basis of the Erasmus programme and since that time, several exchanges of students took place, two of them just last year. This Centre at the University of Leeds is one of the most important research centres focused on the history and philosophy of science in Britain. It is currently headed by Ellen Clarke, who specialises in the theory of evolution of culture, philosophy of biology, and theory of evolution. The Centre has over fifty permanent and temporary staff who conduct research in both Modern and recent history of sciences and technologies, and in the history of medicine. In addition to Greg Radick, our doctoral students collaborated mainly with Adrian Willson, who specialises in Early Modern history of medicine, especially obstetrics and anatomy. So far, this collaboration has been very fruitful, and it clearly has a potential for further development in future.

The title of this report contains also reference to the United States. It is for one simple reason: In September 2019, based on an invitation by the Centre for Science, Technology, and Society Studies (IP CAS), Michael G. Gordin, professor of modern and contemporary history at the Princeton University visited Prague. He delivered a lecture entitled *Einstein in Bohemia* (19 September 2019) and on the following day, he participated in a workshop organised by the Department for Philosophy and History of Sciences (FSc CU), which focused on science and pseudo-science, relations between regional and global history of science, science during the Cold War, and relations between science and ideology. His very well attended lecture included a thorough presentation of Gordin's research over the past several years, which led to the publication of a new eponymous book. Gordin is one of the most prominent researchers in the area of history of physical science of the twentieth century, especially during the Cold War, both in the Soviet context and within wider cultural and ideological settings. The subject of Einstein in Prague is relatively well known in the Czech Lands, especially in the relevant academic circles, but in international Einsteinian research, it had been rather neglected and constituted something of a lacuna. Gordin finally took this subject, dedicated several years of research to it, in the course of this work established professional contacts in a number of Czech institutions, became a good friend to the history of Czech culture and science, especially physics. Publication of his new book, *Einstein in Bohemia*

(Princeton University Press, 2020) is thus for us an event of extraordinary importance, an undertaking that is certain to bear further fruit and inspire further reviews and commentaries.

In our day and age, characterised standard daily international collaboration and academic exchanges on many levels, one report cannot describe all contacts between Czech and British or American institutions which take place in the various areas of studies. Even so, it seems that in the past year, these contacts and exchanges were even more lively and active than usual. And although they were the result of activities of several institutes, they converged and gradually coalesced with focus on several interconnected subjects. Moreover, it turned out that as long as coordination and information sharing is maintained, such activities are highly beneficial also to our domestic collaboration and better communication among departments and institutes belonging both to universities and the Academy of Sciences, in Prague and in the regions. It would bode well for further development of the history and philosophy of science in the Czech Republic if such contacts would continue to develop as well as they did in the year just past.