Humanitas

What makes human beings unique? This question was taken up again during the Renaissance period upon reading the works of the Roman writer Cicero (106–43 BCE). For him, it was the rationality of language that differentiated humans from all other living beings; it needed to be applied in a refined and precise manner, since the nurturing of the intellect – and this is expressed through language – is said to be the nourishment of human dignity (humanitas); humanitas implies, over and above the modern use of the term “humanity”, the aspect of „man as defined by his comprehensive intellectual wisdom“. Language, in its proper application, should aim for truth and the common good.

Such linguistic and philosophical remarks touched a contemporary nerve amongst the Renaissance scholars, for the reigning academic and cultural drift of the times had reduced language to a practical framework which had to be structured, classified and definable; freedom of thought and aesthetic growth were not called for. Along with socio-political changes the question of human dignity took on a particular dynamic, especially during this period of transition. Based on the Classical archetype one now undertook studies that defined Man, the so-called studia humanitatis, that had far-reaching consequences. For, along with the dissolution of existing thought patterns the individual was now called upon to apply his reason and his language, to question authority and traditional knowledge, to form one's own opinion, to take political responsibility, to bring in the value of one’s own experience, to get an idea of the world through one's own curiosity and to convey the same, and to open one's mind in all possible manner beyond existing limits. These are the values upon which modern Europe should build itself.
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The marvel that is Europe: In dubio pro libertate

Dr. Arpad-Andreas Sölter, Director of Goethe-Institut Sweden

The solidarity of Europe and discourses on its common history and shared values have a high priority in the work of the Goethe-Institut as a German cultural institution with a European perspective. This has motivated us to actively engage within the framework of an association of European cultural institutions (EUNIC) in giving shape to Europe for the future. By promoting the emergence of the multilingual European citizen, we see ourselves as a mediator of European thought. While presenting contemporary viewpoints we also strive at the same time to revitalise the cultural treasures of the past. For provenance is the future. However, has the brilliance of the canon of values once created in Europe dimmed after all? The possible answer to this question could be illustrated with the help of two anecdotes.

Europe is apparently in the dock, said a Brazilian delegate at the opening of an international debate on European values at a recent event in Goethe-Institut Stockholm. Its defence is no longer viable. In view of its appalling history of violence and for the crimes committed through colonialism, imperialism and racism, it deserved the highest punishment. She called for a non-Euro centric perspective that goes beyond the so-called Western world. A Swede would like to contradict that statement. Without the idea of human rights and human dignity developed in Europe on the one hand, and, on the other, the International Court of Justice headquartered in The Hague, such criminal proceedings would be neither possible nor viable – not even as a notional tribunal. The values of Europe are one thing. Its history and practice till date are another. Does the latter then invalidate the former?

Ironically, key aspects of the Western world, such as the varied forms of knowledge, economy and state that have taken shape therein, are repeatedly denounced. This often happens with argumentative patterns of criticism of culture and civilization. Buzzwords such as logocentrism and phallocentrism are used in the conceptual fog of discourses on decolonisation and globalisation that are critical of modernity. The impetus reads: Occidental thinking as such must be broken in order to overcome it! But to subject to criticism that is hostile to science, technology and the economy exactly those achievements of Europe that characterise the occidental civilisation in cultural comparison, means to underestimate its contribution to world civilisation. For they vouch for their freedom, prosperity and cultural wealth.

In order to recognise this, one need not pay homage to ethnocentrism nor sell oneself to European triumphalism: the greatest economy, the largest export, the best education for the vast majority (even if not for everyone), the only welfare state with human and civil rights. It would therefore be a mistake not to endure ambivalences and to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Rather, as an attitude, we need to be able to tolerate an ambiguity that does not supplant or sweep under the carpet the historical militarism, the centuries-long bloodshed in wars, the Inquisition, pogroms, multiple genocides right up to the breakdown of civilisation embodied by the Shoah (Holocaust) in Europe.

The Europeanisation of the world culminated in the status quo: The global civilisation thrives to a large extent on ideas that have...
arisen in Europe and the West. However, it also faces problems that stem from European and Western technologies and ideas. Right up till today, Europe’s inventions are more influential in the world than even Eurocentrics suspect. The global image of Europe is thus shaped by its inventions with world-wide success, for example, the automobile, television, the stock exchange, concrete, the drill book (even the men’s suit!). Not to mention the cultural wealth of Europe and its various blooming phases in music, art and architecture, literature and philosophy.

Capitalism and democracy are also European inventions. Until then, tyranny and despotism were the norm of the political order. Conquest and exploitation were common in the pre-industrial era. Pre-modern civilizations were mostly based on forced labour and brutal subjugation by the respective rulers. A privileged priestly caste interpreted theocratic structures and regulations as part of cosmic-religious systems of order. The oppression by those in power went hand in hand with tangible misery. For the economic growth was not sufficient to enable larger masses of the population to live above the physical subsistence level. Periodic famines, poverty, misery and endemic lawlessness, which can still be found in many countries around the world, have been overcome in Europe.

The liberal and democratic lifestyle in a constitutional state that is based on progress of technology and science in the capitalist system is an absolute exception in world history. This specifically occidental combination has brought prosperity and political participation to the masses. It is all the more alarming when these qualities are no longer evaluated as achievements that are not only worthy of approval, but also worthy of defence. These are signs of self-harm.

How did the European “special path” come about? How did Europe develop into a specific, a unique entity of world history? Why did modernity in science, democracy, the political state, administration, culture and society emerge only in Europe, and not anywhere else? A debate between economic and cultural historians, sociologists and philosophers revolves around the causes and nature of the European “special path”. Firstly, there were restrictions on government power. An extensive autonomy of science and economy followed suit. Finally, participation in political rule was enforced. This limitation and restraint in government activity is still a prerequisite for a prospering market economy, which in turn is a necessary prerequisite for a vigorous democracy. Modern capitalism, which is based on the performance principle, as a market-economy medium of industrial development, the taming of political and religious supremacy and the restriction of state and government power play a crucial role in the road to a liberal constitutional state. This model is characterized by representative democracy as a form of government based on parliamentarism, separation of powers (and mutual oversight through the division of powers) and sovereignty of the people as participative ruling. The rule of law, the autonomy of science and economy against state or religious interventions and attacks, and last but not least the oversight of a critical, investigative press and media, the public, civil society, also through culture, art and political satire (and without fear of criminal prosecution) – these phenomena mark the fundamental difference from premodern cultures, from authoritarian and repressive regimes and from “oriental despotism” (Karl August Wittfogel). The scope for creativity and self-determination, the spread of decentralised decision-making powers in a challenging environment, institutionalised critique instead of attempts to immunise, competition instead of bland agreement, critical examination and tough correction mechanisms in the event of wrong decisions in business, politics and science (namely bankruptcy, voting out of office and falsification) ensure effective control and incentives to find new solutions. They form the common denominator and inner connection to success – some even speak of the “European
miracle” (Eric L. Jones), of abstentious government activity, constant economic growth and uninterrupted progress in science.

Europe has developed social systems of freedom with all their facets; the course of political fragmentation led to a blossoming of diversity. This was made possible by the lack of a single ruler over the entire continent. This key factor – rivalry – did not exist to the same extent in other parts of the world. Under such conditions, economically productive people, for example, particularly successful minorities, can choose better locations that appear more advantageous to them. Several centres of power that compete with each other promote a healthy rivalry, including that of world views. Such pluralism develops and strengthens the protection of minorities and promotes broad-mindedness. This in turn is connected to the foundations of universalism and humanism, which brings into focus the dignity, intangible rights and personal freedom of the individual as fundamental social values. Safe havens for the individual equipped with basic rights and his understanding as a person and self are central to the European idea of freedom. In Western Europe freedom can be asserted as an individual claim, against the family, against the clan, against society and against the state. This is where the European idea originates from, here lies its fiery nucleus: Humanists have revealed and described a horizon of values that offers inspiration, guidance and orientation.

At the same time, red lines are marked if fundamental European values such as enlightenment, emancipation, tolerance, equality (not to be confused with parity or even egalitarianism!), cooperation, freedom of contract and freedom of movement are disregarded or even suppressed. These values are linked to the taming of state or religious arbitrariness, which is replaced by the rule of law, that enables free living without subjugation by foreign authorities and ensures reliable property- and disposition rights that favour economic development, beyond the rules which arise from external determination and oppression of subjects.

In non-authoritarian control systems, sanctions that determine human behaviour usually come from the play of forces themselves. This happens without any need for an external authority (except for one that maintains this order through a legitimate monopoly of power). The advantage is evident: It allows individuals a maximum of particular interests with a minimum of compulsion and consensus. Consistent criticism includes the fallibility of people in social construction who are subject to ongoing criticism, rational monitoring and constant review.

The thirst for knowledge and discovery, the spirit of invention, the power of innovation, flexibility of thinking, non-conformism and the right to deviate from the traditional, the ability to change and reform, the monitoring and limitation of political interventions in the system of power and governance, institutionalised distrust of all forms of absolute power and all custodians of moral doctrines, journeys to freedom for creative entrepreneurship, the process of rational examination and systematic criticism of proposed solutions that are in competition with one another and subject to sharp selection, self-reflection and consistent criticism as the motor of intellectual, social and economic development – these are guarantors for change, development and improvement that are deeply rooted in occidental culture. In other words: Without decentralised and comparatively secure property rights of producers and traders in relative economic freedom, there is no economic development. Only political fragmentation and robust rivalry within a civilisation can limit despotism and create relatively secure property rights.

History and cultural comparison demonstrate how wrong political decisions can lead to stagnation and decline. In the 15th century CE, China had an armada of ocean-going ships. Admiral Zheng He undertook worldwide
expeditions for the empire with his Chinese sailors. But then ocean shipping and overseas trade were banned. The political unity of China became an obstacle to innovation. The skills were eventually forgotten, even though Chinese seafarers had explored the Indian Ocean from Zanzibar to the West Pacific much before the Spaniards, Portuguese, Dutch and English did. In contrast, there was no ruler in Europe who could have enforced such an order in the face of small, rival European territories. After the year 1520 no supraregional authority, not even the Catholic Church, would have had the power to stop exploration, research and development in European civilisation as a whole. This cleared the way for Europe's supremacy over the world's oceans.

In a “culture of questioning” (Julia Kristeva) in the European tradition, it is easier to break new ground. From John Locke to Diderot and Kant, from Cartesian doubt to the critique of pure reason to Karl Popper’s critical rationalism, to critical theory and allied streams of thought, there is a common thread: A movement of criticism characterises this self-referential large-scale project. Enlightenment culminates in constant unrest. Ideally, it even leads to self-liberation. It creates an all-moving antidogmatic maelstrom of systematic questioning. No area, no person, no authority is thereby allowed the monopoly of interpretation. No immunisation against reasonable objections and radical questions is permitted. No authority is shielded from analysis and empirical investigation as sacrosanct. Not even the highest entity, God, is exempt from this. Apparent cognitive privileges of “His” mediators and representatives, seemingly absolute certainties, which are given out as claims of truth, narrow mental corridors of dogmas and ideologies, fundamentalisms and indoctrination, regardless of their origin, any euphoria of consensus or recourse to such, any so-called unquestionable authority, removed and insulated from critical thought – European Criticalism does not permit all of this in the long run. Criticism and challenge form the basis on which Europe’s real cultural capital is founded. It is from these resources that European Humanism has also grown. Because Europe is characterised by concern for the individual, by respect for the unique person. The focus lies on the distinctive Self and its inalienable rights as well as scope for autonomous thinking, quest and action.

Our exhibition “Europe – Legacy of the Humanists” enables a journey through time into an occidental world of thought, from which valuable sparks still emanate today. A huge chorus of humanistic voices resounds. As such, it symbolises the early achievements of this continent. As a project dedicated to cultural exchange across borders, this polyphonic concert invites you to a dialogical fusion of horizons with those that we must not forget. How does this contribute towards self-awareness? Those who are intellectually curious will also discover relatively less well-known personalities who are worth discovering. This multi-dimensional perspective draws a polyphonic panorama that revolves around key questions of European cohesion: What really are our values? Where do they come from, who invented them? How do they relate to each other? And how could they have arisen here? How do we want to nurture and apply them in the future? How do we want to develop them further? The appeal to critical, self-reflective reason is this: Let us check our standards! Let us correct mistakes – especially at a time of confusion that is perceived to be a turning point in history.

While some are evoking morbus occidentalis (“occidental disease”) or are committed to the revival of nationalism, we believe – even within a self-polarising Europe – in the European idea as a valuable asset that every generation has to acquire and redesign for itself. Likewise, the intellectual and geographical neighbourhood must always be developed and nurtured. Reflection and recollection as revitalising self-assurance of a shared basis of European Humanism form an ideal starting point for the common path to a more humane future. If we are experiencing creeping de-democratisation, the resurgence of authoritarian regimes and the dis-
regard for the European tradition of values outlined here, the task of humanist Europe will be to find suitable answers and solutions to put an end to destructive tendencies. Precisely because the degree of social realisation of humanistic ideas has been high in Europe. And because it continues to literally move the desires of billions of people who do not have it. But if no one can tell them what exactly Europe is at its core and its values, it would not be worth much.

The centre of Europe is not the Big Mac, but the Magna Carta (Charter of Freedoms). Europe’s culture is also more than a sum of its many national cultures and states. The cultural characteristics of Europe are rooted in its freedom, diversity, multilingualism, exchange and cross-fertilisation, even externally. The time is always ripe to let a more powerful and proud European consciousness grow: “European Humanism is a permanent process of reincorporation.” (Julia Kristeva).

**Literature**


Genesis of the exhibition “Europe – Legacy of the Humanists”

Dr. Christian Gastgeber, Austrian Academy of Sciences

On February 24, 2015 at the Austrian Museum of Folk Life and Folk Art in Vienna, EUNIC Austria presented itself for the first time as a newly founded institution to the general public. That evening saw the birth of the idea of an exhibition which would focus on the topic of a common Europe. At first it came as an encouragement from the then President of EUNIC Austria, Martin Krafl (Czech Centre), to write an exposé that he would then present at a future board meeting. Accordingly, the concept was presented in detail at the EUNIC board meeting in October of the same year. What was initially intended as a small project in three to five countries has developed into a large project with 23 countries.

The thematic basis came from our area of interest and work, namely European Humanism from the 15th century CE onwards. The idea, however, was not simply to remember influential humanists in biographical monuments, but to connect them with modern Europe. It aimed to show how the humanists contributed to changes in politics and society through thought that was revolutionary for their time. We wanted to lift the philosophers from the dusty corners of the (Latin) treatises to the podium of European Thought and convey to you how the sum of all these ideas shaped our modern Europe.

Several goals were set: Firstly, early European Humanism should not always be limited to the luminaries of intellectual history such as Petrarch or Erasmus, because every country and every major city had its own humanists, who have contributed locally and regionally to realising a new way of thinking. On the other hand, it should be conveyed to contemporary Europeans that values and social opportunities that are taken for granted today had a long and arduous phase of development. It took a long time to implement them, and scholars often had to pay dearly for their commitment to new ideas with hostility and persecution. The ideal of a Europe of peace and cultural ties needed a long time to come to fruition. The stimulus for self-reflection for every exhibition visitor in times of popular anti-European slogans resonated from the start as an important aspect: Prospective learning from the retrospective of the common cultural heritage.

We made a selection of scholars who crossed traditional boundaries in their thinking and set important ideas in motion on the following European values: tolerance, equality, emancipation (and thereby the dissolution of authorities that restricted freedom of growth), multilingualism (and thereby the recognition of the language and literature of “Others”), mobility (and thereby encounters with other cultures and reciprocal influences) and international cooperation.

Since the exhibition had to differ from traditional biographical presentations, a particularly sophisticated concept was developed, which reflects in its implementation the idea of European cohesion as well: Two humanists were selected for each country – according to present-day state borders – in the period from the 15th to 17th centuries CE. One of the two personalities should have migrated from another country as incoming and have had a lasting impact in the new country; the second person should be outgoing, i.e. born and raised in the country under consideration, and having an impact in a new country of residence. This emphasises the aspect of cultural mediation (all important places of activity were listed on the posters). We also tried to choose a woman, where possible. We reduced biographical details
to those areas of life and creativity that the humanists focussed on in their most important works with regards to the values mentioned above. And this would be complemented by a bon mot or a quotation by the personality.

The concept envisaged, however, another aspect of European cooperation: We did not want to select the scholars from other European countries ourselves, but that we should request an academic partner institution in the respective country to do this. We experienced moments of indescribable joy when 23 partners in the respective countries got involved with enthusiasm to realise this idea and contributed to the success of the project. This collaboration was an enriching challenge for the associated EUNIC-Austria partners (Switzerland, Georgia, Turkey, Ukraine), who also participated with great commitment in the joint project.

The result is significant. We were able to see how more and more countries are participating in the European project. Europe and its values truly have a unifying appeal.

*Georgia, Ukraine and Turkey, though not Lithuania, also belonged to the exhibition project of EUNIC Austria.

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**Humanism –**

**The source of European values**

**Freedom, self-determination, education and human dignity** – values that we take for granted in today’s Europe. However, they had to be painstakingly worked out and fought for over centuries.

The time period of the humanists of the 15th and 16th centuries CE, the Renaissance period, can be seen as the birth of these important ideas and terms. The so-called humanists – representatives of this new rationally-led positioning of man in society and in the world as a whole – worked as scholars at universities, at courts of the rulers, in monasteries, in libraries, as tutors of wealthy families or as private scholars. Living, teaching and publishing their works in Europe, and sometimes even beyond the borders of Europe, they left lasting monuments of a new stream of thought spread over a wide range of disciplines.

But what held them all together was the basic idea that language gives people their special place in the world – an ability that must be used critically to find truth, moving away from merely repeating authoritarian opinions and towards individual reassessment and critical awareness. This also lends special importance to dialogue.

Since it was precisely at this time (mid-15th century CE) that modern-day printing was invented – a turning point as revolutionary as the internet today – it was suddenly possible to disseminate, discuss and develop texts, writings and thoughts comparatively quickly in Europe and beyond. This powerful intellectual movement with its rational-secular ideas grew on the basis of values of the Christian Western world. From the 19th century CE it came to be known as Humanism.
Map of the European Humanists

Mobility
Emancipation
Multilingualism
Human Dignity
Tolerance

The dots mark the birth places of the humanists. The arrows show how the ideas of the humanists have spread across Europe.
Humanism in Europe

“I am insatiable when it comes to books ... Gold, silver, gemstones, purple robes, marble palaces ... only give silent and superficial enjoyment, books delight us in the innermost sense, they speak to us, advise us and begin, as it were, a living, deep friendship with us.”

Petrarch, letter to Giovanni dell’Incisa, *Epistolae familiares* 3, 18

**Petrarch**

20. 7. 1304 – 19. 7. 1374

As the son of an exiled Florentine lawyer, Petrarch spent his youth in Avignon – at that time an international centre of culture due to the presence of the Pope and the Curia (papal court). Financially secured by patrons belonging to the Colonna family, he was able to travel to Paris, Liège, Aachen, Cologne and Lyon, later also to Rome and devote himself to literary activity on a country estate in the Vaucluse. Although he always wanted to appear as an independent intellectual, he established relationships with Italian potentates, for whom a visit to the already famous poet meant social prestige: After his stays in Parma and Verona, among others, he spent years in the service of the Visconti in Milan with diplomatic missions to Prague and Paris. From 1368 Petrarch lived with the Carrara family of Padua; he owned a house in nearby Arquà, where he died and lies buried.

On account of his early familiarity with Roman classics such as Cicero and Virgil, as well as with the Father of the Church Augustine, Petrarch appeared as a revivalist of classical education after a period of darkness. The highlight of this self-presentation was the coronation of poets at the Capitol in Rome in 1341. His enthusiasm for the Ancient world led him to discover lost texts, to do philological work on corrupted traditions and to strive for knowledge of Greek. But it also found expression in his political activism to restore Rome’s former glory: He supported Cola di Rienzo’s action against Rome’s nobility (1347) through publication, he called for the popes to return and tried to get Emperor Charles IV to intervene in Italy.

If Petrarch is famous today as a poet *vogare* (sonnets to Laura), he cultivated his own image however as a Latin author of books – of biographies of the great Romans, of an epic about the 2nd Punic War (*Africa*) and religious and moral-philosophical works (of which *De remediis utriusque fortunae* about appropriate behaviour in times of happiness and misfortune was particularly successful), among others. Several letters corpora show his wide-ranging network (including one with Johann von Neumarkt, the chancellor of Charles IV), at the same time these were also consciously composed and frequently revised collections meant to preserve his image for posterity.
“I consider as the true noble not the one who lays gold bands around the neck or who decorates the walls and vestibules with paintings of ancestors, but the one who not only educates but also supports his homeland and his compatriots with true and good qualities of one’s own, that is with education, manners and eloquence.”

Erasmus
28. 10. 1466 – 12. 7. 1536

His life’s work has become the agenda of modern Europe. Like none other, he has shaped generations as an endlessly curious and critical mind with extensive language skills; Erasmus-awards and grants still underline his contemporary significance for Europe.

Upon completion of a good school education, financial reasons forced him, the illegitimate son of a priest, to live as a regular cleric at Gouda, until he was released from his vows and could study, with episcopal support, in one of Europe’s leading university cities, Paris. From then onwards he shuttled between Paris, Leuven and England. Through these journeys, through the expansion of his horizon of knowledge and circle of friends, his personality changed from that of a canon to an open-minded scholar. The culmination of his education came as the study of theology in Italy, the country of the humanists. Important stops were Turin, his place of study, and Venice, at the unique printing press of Aldo Manuzio. Travelling between the countries of Europe also determined his future life, interspersed with quiet phases in Basel and Freiburg im Breisgau. He briefly summarises his life’s work in “An Apology of Life” (1514):

... I lived for the study of literature, which kept me from many vices ... many admit that reading my books not only made them wiser but also better people. The quest for money never touched me, nor does fame affect me in the slightest ... wherever I lived – I may be allowed to express this a little arrogantly about myself, but it is true – I was valued by esteemed people and praised by lauded people. There is no place – Spain, Italy, Germany, England, Scotland – that does not want to invite me as a guest.

Erasmus contributed to the international discourse through significant works on critical thinking, including such against traditions. Most successful among them was his collection of over 4000 classical wisdoms and proverbs (Adagia) had the greatest success.
“He creates harmony and settles disputes; he prefers peace to war and puts the advantages of the subjects ahead of his own. He is generous without regret, avoids arrogance and pretentiousness, fears no witness other than his conscience. He maintains regal majesty in words and deeds, in glances and movements. He learns to patiently endure hunger, cold and heat, yes, with every act he shows self-control, follows prudence, keeps moderation, loves justice and fortitude. If he takes this to heart, I hope and wish, he will not only honour our family with radiant glory but also achieve the happiness that can be had with human power, and thereby be a unique example of virtue.”

Austrian National Library, Cod. 10573, On the education of a prince: Elisabeth to her son Vladislaus

Elisabeth of Habsburg

1437 – 30. 8. 1505

Born in 1437 in the Habsburg family as the daughter of Albrecht II (German king 1438–1439), Elisabeth grew up with her brother Ladislaus Postumus (1440–1457) at the court of Frederick III and benefited from early humanistic education at a high level: Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1405–1464) had created an educational programme for Ladislaus, his tutor Johannes Tröster († 1485) also followed humanistic principles. In 1454 Elisabeth married the Polish King Casimir IV Jagiellon (1427–1492) in Kraków; three of her 13 children succeeded their father to the throne. The eldest son Vladislaus (1456–1516) took over Bohemia and Hungary; his children Anne (born 1503) and Louis (born 1506) were married in 1515 to the grandchildren of Emperor Maximilian I in Vienna: after the disaster of Mohács in 1526 these nuptial ties were supposed to bring the Bohemian and Hungarian crowns to the Habsburgs.

Under Casimir IV and his sons Poland experienced a cultural boom, the Kraków court was open to humanists like Filippo Buonaccorsi (Callimachus Experiens, † 1497); Conrad Celtis also studied at the University of Krakow. Based on unusual self-confidence Elisabeth grew to be a patron of the arts even during her husband’s lifetime and afterwards as a widow.

When Elisabeth’s son Vladislaus got married in 1502, an educational tract was created for the future heir to the throne. It was given as a guidebook from a mother to her son, who represented the ideal of the educated and just ruler of peace. Even if the advice did not come from Elisabeth’s own words, it was authorised in her name and corresponded to her views. She reminds us thereby of the role of princely women in conveying humanistic values.

The illustration: Elisabeth and King Casimir IV Jagiellon, after Marquard Her-gott, Pinacotheca Principum Austriae. St. Blasien 1773, Taf. X (© UBW Vienna, III-58.960)
“Most of these manuscripts were full of dust, disorderly, smelly and almost in decay in a completely darkened room, where you would have had to light a candle even at noon. From there, as if from a dirty prison, I pulled out these poor manuscripts from their dreary abode of years to see the light of day, and I wiped them clean with my own hand...”

Commentarii de Augustissima Bibliotheca ..., vol. 1, 71; at the start of his work as a librarian in Vienna

Peter Lambeck
13. 4. 1628 – 4. 4. 1680

Born in Protestant Hamburg as the son of a teacher, Peter Lambeck embodies the ideal of a modern “Erasmus student”: his path of education took him to the most famous teachers in Amsterdam, Leiden and Paris. His uncle Lucas Holste, who was the librarian of the Biblioteca Vaticana (Vatican Library), continued to promote him in Rome, where he embraced the Catholic faith; he then continued his further studies in Toulouse and Bourges. Although trained as a lawyer, his real interest lay in Latin and above all Greek literature. In this he proved himself to be a humanist of the Italian tradition, who was particularly concerned with the preservation and dissemination of classical and medieval scriptural heritage. But in the Baroque period there was hardly any source of acquisition of Greek texts from the East; it was now much more important to refurbish the manuscripts acquired since the 16th century CE and to make them known to the public for further studies. It was here that Lambeck achieved pioneering work. As a professor of history in Hamburg (since 1651) and with his breakthrough preparatory work on a history of literature (1659) he had already shown his endeavour towards a comprehensive review of the cultural heritage – though sadly lacking in judgement in its execution.

His international reputation in the scholarly community of Europe owes itself to his pioneering catalogue at the Library of the Imperial Court, where he started his work as a librarian in 1662. The work was designed to have 25 volumes and include all the texts and languages that he had mastered. Ultimately though, there were eight printed volumes which set new standards in cataloguing written works of cultural heritage and had a considerable impact on the whole of Europe. For the purpose of specialised subject discussions Lambeck set up a network of scholars throughout Europe with its centre at Vienna.

In the illustration: Portrait of Lambeck by Johann Jacob Haid, in: J. Brucker, Ehrentempel der Deutschen Gelehrsamkeit. Augsburg 1747, 80 (© private ownership)
Hristofor Zhefarovich was born in the late 17th century CE in the city of Dojran which was at that time under the Ottoman Empire. He came from a Bulgarian pastor’s family and became a monk himself. As a well-read and enlightened wandering monk, he painted and traded in books, icons and liturgical vessels. In 1734 he became renowned as an icon-painter in Belgrade. He spent some time in the St. Naum Monastery in Ohrid. He was artistically involved with the mural paintings in the monasteries of Bodjani (RS, Vojvodina, 1737) and Siklós (southern Hungary, 1739) as well as with the iconostasis of the Church of St. Nicholas in Kozani (northern Greece). From 1740 he devoted himself exclusively to copper engravings and book illustrations.

On the medium of the book, he worked with Thomas Mesmer’s engraving studio in Vienna. He printed icons on paper and prepared for print copper engravings made by (Slavic) saints. With the help of the studio his art further found its way into works that propagated the Illyrian movement. The most important of them was *Stemmatographia* in Church Slavonic; the book was quickly disseminated amongst the South Slavs. In addition to 99 coats of arms of states, regions and cities, its distinctive features include 20 portraits of Bulgarian and Serbian rulers and saints as well as 56 coats of arms of Slavic and other Balkan countries with explanatory four-liners – the earliest example of modern secular Bulgarian and Serbian poetry.

The *Stemmatographia* plays a significant role in the spiritual awakening and growth of the Bulgarians and South Slavs and had a strong influence on the Bulgarian Renaissance culture. It became a century-long model for (icon) painters and book illustrators and created at the beginning of the 19th century a starting point when all the peoples of the Balkans started shaping their cultural and political activities with a return to their “old homeland” Europe and its structure of civilisation.

**INFLUENTIAL WORKS**
*Stemmatographia* (Vienna 1741), *Description of Jerusalem* (1748), school books

**PLACES OF LIFE AND WORKS**
Dojran, Ohrid (MK), Belgrade, Bodjani (RS), Siklós (HU), Kozani, Thessaloniki (GR), Jaffa, Jerusalem (IL), Moscow (RU)

**NETWORK OF HUMANISTS**
Honorary member of the imperial Academy of Sciences in Vienna and the Royal Academy in Munich

In the illustration: Bust in Star Dojran (Macedonia) (© private photograph)
“Just as the bee collects honey and wax from different and fragrant flowers, so has Filip Stanislavov, the Bishop of Greater Bulgaria, gathered and arranged his collection ‘Abagar’ from different books of the holy forefathers, and has presented it to his Bulgarian people so that they can carry this book as the potent relic of a saint.”

Ending of Abagar

Filip Stanislavov
c. 1612 – c. 1674

While the western European countries were witnessing their Humanist centuries, it was only in the 17th century that the first whiff of renewed memory of the past greatness of the Bulgarian state and its culture was felt. One such “harbinger” is the “international student” Filip Stanislavov, who was born in 1612 in the village of Oresh near Svishtov and who studied theology, history, geography, Italian and Latin at the Pontifical Illyrian College in Loreto from 1627 to 1633. He was also proficient in Turkish, Tatar and Wallachian languages. From 1633 to 1635 Stanislavov was in Rome at the papal court, where he was appointed the official interpreter for Slavic and other languages for Pope Urban VII.

Stanislavov took the educational mission home from the West: He taught many young people and set up a school. In his diocese Nikopol he held church service not only in Latin but also in Slavic. His great wish was to spread education among the Bulgarians; this prompted him to prepare a prayer book for printing on May 6, 1651 in Rome, Abagar – the first printed book in modern Bulgarian.

The importance of this first printed book of its kind is significant in several ways: It reminds today’s free Europe of the interrupted life of a great Balkan civilisation and the need to revive the memory of it, so that Bulgarian culture can once again take its worthy place in the European cultural scene.

The book is an appeal to the Bulgarians, to the neighbouring countries in the Balkans and to the European people, a call for solidarity and a shared humanistic search.

INFLUENTIAL WORKS
Abagar – a collection of sermons in Cyrillic script with Church Slavic, Serbo-Croatian and neo-Bulgarian linguistic elements (Rome 1651)

PLACES OF LIFE AND WORKS
Oresh (BG), Loreto, Rome (IT), Nikopol, Tranchovitsa (BG)

In the illustration: Excerpt from Abagar
(© National Library Sofia)
For over 20 years Didak Pir was constantly on the move: as a Jew, he was driven out of his homeland and he travelled through Europe until he found refuge in the Republic of Dubrovnik, where he spent most of his life. He was probably employed as a private tutor for young noblemen. When he came to Dubrovnik he was already known as a poet and there continued his literary work. His numerous verses about Dubrovnik showcase everyday life in the city as well as its glorious past, making them an important source of the city’s cultural history. His later work, on the other hand, shows a didactic approach, as one would expect from an experienced educationist who shaped his work to teach and enlighten the youth. Although he was based in Dubrovnik, he belonged to the international community of scholars and maintained close contact with them. During his travels, he met many humanistic companions. These meetings led to the exchange of ideas that enriched and fertilised new ones that inspired further literary creations.

During his stay in Ferrara, Didak Pir met the famous Renaissance philologist and poet Giglio Gregorio Giraldi, who introduced him to his circle of humanists and made the young poet a conversation partner in his dialogue on English, Portuguese and Spanish literature (with famous humanists like Antonius Antimacus, Francisco Porto and Andreas Grunther as other conversation partners). Didak Pir was in constant touch with his friends, and years later he wrote a verse letter to Paolo Manuzio, son of the famous Venetian printer Aldo, in which he praised his new homeland. Pir’s life was shaped by patience and perseverance despite his misfortune; he used the common scholarly language of Latin to maintain his contact with the international scholarly society. He took an active part in the cultural life of the various places that he lived in and allowed himself to be positively influenced by them. What distinguishes him was also his special effort to educate the next generation, the youth, in the spirit of his cosmopolitan outlook and to inspire their interest in cultural diversity.

**Didak Pir**

(Froma Koen, Didacus Pyrrhus, Lusitanus, Iacobus Flavius Eborensis) 5. 4. 1517 – 16. 5. 1599

“In human life is a kind of military service; and in every battle the winner will be the one who acts with patience.”

*Cato Minor*
“Through great works one tries, with manifold difficulties, to strive to earn the title of true honour for future times.”

*Poemata*. Metz 1589

“In order to parry the ridicule of those who accused her of a being deficient of graceful appearance, she used Sappho’s distich from Ovid: ‘If nature wilfully prevented me from having a beautiful appearance, I make up for the loss of beauty through talent.’ ... She loathed, as she said, the pedantry and aversion of men, something that is attested by her elegant poetry ...”

Boissard on Lacea, in: *Icones diversorum hominum fama et rebus gestis illustrium*, Metz 1591, 91

**Filipa Lacea**

(Philippa Lazaea, Lazea) 1545/1546 – 1576

As a feminist *avant la lettre* Filipa Lacea plays an important role – a humanist poet who was described by her friend and fellow poet, the French humanist Jean Jacques Boissard, as the “Illyrian Sappho”. She was born into an aristocratic family in the coastal town of Pula. Fleeing a plague epidemic in Padua and Venice, she ended up finally in Trieste, where she died at the age of 30. Boissard, the only source of her life and work, published a biography in 1591. Some of her poems were published along with his work (Metz 1589, Frankfurt a./M. 1596).

The case of Filipa Lacea is quintessential to the history of intellectual women: we know of her only because she was in contact with a male contemporary. Boissard praises her character and her talent for writing “the most charming Latin poetry”. Obviously, this is not just lip service, as he is known to be extremely critical of other Latin poets he was in touch with. Boissard notes that although of modest manner, Lacea had a habit of saying things freely “despite her gender”. Thanks to Boissard, her intellectual achievement is still remembered today, along with her tendency – as documented in her work – to cross the boundaries of gender-based roles that defined her time and age and thus encourage others to break with traditions.

**INFLUENTIAL WORKS**

Poems contained in Boissard’s works of poetry (Metz 1589); Dedicational poetry in: Jean Jacques Boissard, *Vitae et Icones Sultonorum Turcicorum* (Frankfurt a./M. 1596)

**PLACES OF LIFE AND WORKS**

Pula (HR), Triest (IT)

**NETWORK OF HUMANISTS**

Jean Jacques Boissard (FR), Laelius Cleopassus (IT)

In the illustration: Portrait in Jean Jacques Boissard, *Icones diversorum hominum fama et rebus gestis illustrium*. Metz 1591, 93 (© private ownership)
Franciscus Patricius
(Frane Petric, Francesco Patrizi) 25. 4. 1529 – 6. 2. 1597

Born on the island of Cherso (Cres in modern Croatian), Francesco Patrizi studied in Venice, Ingolstadt and Padua. He travelled to various Italian cities and also lived in Cyprus for some time, where he could improve upon his knowledge of the Greek language and collect Greek manuscripts. This was a decisive phase in his life which was dedicated to an in-depth study of the written philosophical legacy of antiquity. He travelled further to Spain and was later asked to teach Plato’s philosophy at the University of Ferrara (1578). There he stayed until he was subsequently invited by Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini to teach at the University of Rome (1592). Thus he spent the last years of his life as one of the few philosophers who taught Plato in the university environment of late Renaissance Italy. His most important contribution to the Renaissance philosophy and thereby to the foundation of further European intellectual development were his *Peripatetic Discussions* (Venice 1571) and his new universal philosophy (Ferrara 1591). It was no longer just about the reception of an authority, but about the critical examination of tradition. This required a detailed analysis of the work including criticism of Aristotle; this gave rise to his own anti-Aristotelian philosophy with its preference for the philosophical opposite pole of Plato. His interest in the tradition of antiquity and its utility in the present times was also reflected in his studies of the old Roman army and its tactics (1583, 1593). In addition to Plato, he also turned to Platonic philosophers, bordering even on the subject of magic in the work of the so-called Hermes Trismegistus. In conclusion: in 1592 this critical thinker landed on the index of forbidden books.

“The human mind is guided by reason alone, the mind only likes to follow rational thought. Reason draws out the intellect, whether it likes it or not... With merely a philosophy of rationality I have relied upon the true and divine philosophy, and I believe my extensive and exhaustive work has brought it to its destination.”

*Nova de universis philosophia*, dedicated to Pope Gregory XIV

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**EUROPE – LEGACY OF THE HUMANISTS**

**Cyprus**

“In the illustration: Portrait in *Philosophiae de rerum natura libri II priores* (© private ownership)

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**INFLUENTIAL WORKS**

*Discussionum peripapeticarum tomi primi libri XIII* (1571), *La milizia romana di Polibio, di Tito Livio e di Dionigi Alcarnasseo* (1583), *Della nuova geometria libri XV* (1587), *Nova de universis philosophia* (on the basis of Aristotle’s philosophy) (1591), *Magia philosophica* (Zoroaster and the Chaldean Oracles) (1593)

**PLACES OF LIFE AND WORKS**

Cres (HR), Ingolstadt (DE), Venice, Padua, Ferrara, Rome (IT), Cyprus

**NETWORK OF HUMANISTS**

Matthias Flacius (HR), Bernardino Tellesio, Jacopo Mazzoni, Prince Alfonso II d’Este, Ippolito Aldobrandini (Pope Clement VII) (IT)

In the illustration: Portrait in *Philosophiae de rerum natura libri II priores* (© private ownership)
Giasone De Nores
(Iason De Nores) c. 1530 – 1590

Born in Nicosia in 1510, Giasone De Nores came from a Franconian noble family in the kingdom of Lusignan in Cyprus. The family was originally of Norman descent, and Giasone belonged to the famous branch of the first Count Nores of Tripoli († 1542), who had bought the title from Venice. He studied philosophy in Padua (around 1530–1535), where he received his fundamental education from two humanists: Trifone Gabriel and Sperone Speroni. He spent his time partially in Cyprus and in Venice; in the latter city he joined the so-called Accademia Pellegrina in the 1550s. In the early 1560s he returned to Cyprus and married Caterina Syngletico, but the threat of the impending Ottoman invasion ultimately forced him to leave Cyprus. Shortly before 1570 he settled in Padua, where he was appointed professor of moral philosophy at the university there. By the time of his death in 1590 he had written 17 books on rhetoric, political science, philosophy, cosmography, geography and literary theory. Philosophically, he was an Aristotelian; philosophy should be of use as well, and his moral philosophy was thus intended to prepare the students for an active life in society. He paid particular attention to this aspect of social philosophy, which he also documented in tabular form. The only desirable good of all action within a society was the well-structured state. Apart from Aristotle, he also saw Cicero as the ideal of rhetoric, which he combined with moral philosophy in his work. De Nores’ teaching laid an important foundation of political thought among the late Renaissance Venetian patricians.

“It is difficult, if not impossible, that man as a ‘social being’ can achieve his own perfection in himself alone, outside of a perfect society. For, as he is a part of a whole, unless he is not completely unified within this whole, he becomes, to some extent, useless and superfluous, no different than an arm or a foot that is separate from its body.”

*Breve institutione dell’ottima república.* Venice 1578, 3

**Influential Works**
Annotations to Horace, *De arte poetica* (1553), *Breve trattato dell’oratore alla studiosea et valorosa gioventù de’ Nobili della illustissima Republica Venitiana* (1574), *Breve institutione dell’ottima república* (predominantly from the works of Aristotle) (1578), *Annotation to Cicero’s philosophy of life and morals* (1581), *Tavole del mondo et della sphera* (along with an introduction to the natural philosophy of Aristotle) (1582), *De constitutione partum universae humane et civilis philosophiae* (after Aristotle) (1584)

**Places of Life and Works**
Nicosia (CY), Venice, Padua (IT)

**Network of Humanists**
Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, Francesco Patrizi, Filippo Mocenigo, Trifon Gabrielli, Sperone Speroni (IT)

In the illustration: Cover page of *Breve institutione dell’ottima república* (© private ownership)

“In Venetia, appresso Paolo Maglietti, M D LXXXVII

BREVE INSTITUTIO N DE L’OTTIMA REPUBLICA:
El IAION DE NORES, rassimola in gran parte da tutta la Filosofia humana di Aristote, spezzando come una certa introduzione dell’Etica, Politica, & Economica.
AL VALOROSO ET ILLUSTRE SIG. ALYSIE Moconsio, del Clariss. M. Giovanni, Faccio & Signore offrendi.
INTRODUZIONE DEL ME DESIMO ridotta poi in alcune Tavole sopra i tre libri della Rietorica d’Aristote.
AL VALOROSO ET ILLUSTRE SIG. FRANCESCO Bernardi del Clariss. M. Andrea, parro, & Sig. offrendi.
CON PRIVILEGIO.

In the illustration: Cover page of *Breve institutione dell’ottima república* (© private ownership)
Bohuslaus Hassensteinius a Lobkowicz (Bohuslav Hasištejnský z Lobkovic) c. 1462 – 1510

Bohuslaus Hassensteinius a Lobkowicz, a Czech scholar from a noble family, studied law in Italy. After graduating he undertook a trip to Africa and Asia, which he described in his letters and in a travel poem. As a younger son, he was destined for a career in the higher clergy: thus he became a provost in Vyšehrad at first and afterwards applied for the office of bishop of Olomouc and coadjutor in Wrocław – though both without success. From 1502–1503 he lived at the court of King Vladislaus Jagiello in Ofen (today's Budapest). Disappointed with his court service as well as the church policy, which did not allow him to become a bishop in spite of being unanimously chosen so by the Olomouc chapter, he retired to his castle at Hassenstein near Chomutov and devoted himself to literature, astronomy and medicine. His grand and valuable library has been preserved as a Lobkowicz legacy in Nelahozeves castle.

Bohuslaus Hassensteinius a Lobkowicz was a talented poet with a passion for satire as well as a passionate bibliophile. Humanistic education meant a lot to him; he founded a private humanistic school at Hassenstein, whose pupils included Matthaeus Aurogallus who later became a professor at Wittenberg and assisted Luther in his translation of the Bible. He had a wide network of contacts with humanists abroad, and his unique collection of Greek manuscripts was used by editors well after his death.

**Places of life and works**
Bologna, Ferrara, Venice (IT), Prague, Bíšany, Hasištejn Olmütz (CZ), Vienna (AT), Budapest (HU)

**Influential works**
Small works (Opuscula) (Erfurt, c. late 1508); numerous Latin poems, letters and three treatises were published in Prague in the second half of the 16th century CE.

**Network of humanists**
Johann Geiler von Kaisersberg (FR), Peter Schott, Bernhard and Konrad Adelmann von Adelmannsfelden, Martin Pollich von Mellerstätt, Konrad Wimpina, Konrad Celtes (DE), Girolamo Balbi (IT), Augustinus Moravus, Johannes Sslechta, Victorinus Cornelius de Wssehrd, Rodericus Dubravus (CZ)

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“We are strong enough and brave, and we are capable of enduring all evil, but our mind suffers from the sinful burden of malicious deeds. You find no love for the homeland that is on the verge of ruin, and hardly any of its administrators are concerned about its well-being.”

from his satire on St. Wenceslas

“The heartache and worry associated with a woman hardly let your mind wander freely, maybe only if you were happy to have found such a wife, who not only has good manners, but also an active interest in literature. I have as much faith in the fact that our Bohemia can give birth to such a strange phenomenon just as much as I have in a child with two bodies or in fish under the hook plough.”

On marriage, around 1487, letter to Johann Ridne

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In the illustration: Portrait (© Library of the National Museum, Prague)
When four-year-old Elizabeth Jane moved to Bohemia with her family, no one could have imagined that she would one day become a poet who was admired by her contemporaries even more than William Shakespeare. With the help of a private tutor she learned Latin as well as German, Czech and Italian in the cosmopolitan milieu of the court in Prague. After her stepfather, the alchemist Edward Kelly, fell out of favour with the emperor and died in 1597, Weston began to seek support from rulers, courtiers, diplomats and spiritual dignitaries through learned Latin poetry. She quickly gained fame as an “exceptional talent” and members of the international community of scholars competed to get in touch with the “Sappho of Prague” and receive a poem from her. Weston knew how to deal with the gender stereotypes of her times, cleverly expressing her suffering, weaknesses and need for protection before the potential benefactors. Despite her poetic talent and success, she did not escape the fate of most women at that time – she married one of her learned admirers and died at childbirth (her seventh child) at the age of 31. Her work has, however, survived for centuries and is still a valuable jewel, combining her competence in creatively handling the male domain of classical heritage with the impressive emotional world of a strong protagonist of her times.

In the illustration: Portrait (© Library of the National Museum, Prague)

Elizabeth Jane Weston
(Alžběta Johana Vestonie) 2. 11. 1582 – 23. 11. 1612

"When I make mistakes while writing poetry or something seems confusing, just say so. For a young woman has given it to you. The time will come when (the god of poetry) Apollo will look down upon me from heaven and take away my worries; then I will give you better poems."

Poem to her patron Georg Martin von Baldhofen, Parthenicon

"I am writing to you because I could not conceal how your poems moved me – poems written by a woman of such a young age! The latter is rare, the former unique – but both astonish every person more than one would like to admit."

Joseph Justus Scaliger, 1540–1609, a leading contemporary European scholar on Weston
Nicolaes Cleynaerts
(Nicolaus Clenardus) 5. 12. 1493/4 – 5. 11. 1542

Cleynaerts studied languages, literature and theology at the University of Leuven. Under the influence of the college of three languages recently founded by Erasmus, he learned Greek and the oriental languages Hebrew and Arabic, which he is also supposed to have taught without an official professorship. As a priest and deprived of the hope of a professorship in Leuven, he seized the opportunity to come into contact with Arabists and Arab culture. Although he accepted the post of a librarian with Christopher Columbus’ son in Seville, he instead went to the University of Salamanca to deepen his knowledge of Arabic (in the meantime teaching the viceroy’s son). This was followed by an employment as a private tutor for the King of Portugal’s brother, whom he accompanied to Évora and Braga. Thereafter he improved upon his Arabic skills in Granada and spent one and a half years in Fez, Morocco for the same purpose. Financial constraints forced him to return to Granada, but further royal support was unavailable.

Cleynaerts displayed an open mind – less in theology than in language and literature, as influenced by the teachings of Erasmus. He also took a critical stance against traditional language learning methods and developed practical manuals. His success proved him right: His Hebrew grammar book resulted in 23 editions in the 16th century CE, and his handbook of Greek appeared in more than 500 editions and reprints.

Cleynaerts did not participate in the theological disputes between Catholics and Protestants. His focus was broader: At a time of conflict between Christians and Muslims, he was keen to have a thorough knowledge of Arabic culture and religion in order to promote dialogue in the process. He did not want to rely on other people’s translations but wanted to be able to read the texts himself. Of course, he was a child of his time and intended to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity and to convince Muslims to convert.

In the illustration: Statue in Diest (BE) (© private photograph)
“Marriage was established not so much for the production of offspring as for the sense of community and inseparable companionship. “Husband” does not refer to the fulfilment and satisfaction of pleasure, but a mutual connection (between husband and wife) in all activities of life.”

De institutione feminae Christianae II

Joan Lluís Vives

(Johannes Lodovicus Vives) 6. 3. 1492/3 – 6. 5. 1540

Educated in Valencia, Paris and Leuven, Vives was an all-round intellectual with ingenuity, impressive scholarship and a profound philosophical perspective. His meeting with Erasmus in 1516 was formative for his intellectual development; Erasmus’ humanistic programme which combined education with piety influenced him very much; Vives also shared his pacifist and educational ideas. Vives wrote on similar topics, but in a more systematic manner and not as literarily as Erasmus. After his teaching experience in Paris, Leuven and Oxford (still under the influence of Erasmus and Thomas More, avoiding sterile academic logic) he went his own way. As an independent scholar he broke away from the tradition of academic disciplines and focused on social problems. He was of the opinion that girls and boys are equal in their intellectual capabilities, campaigned for a literary education of girls (with particular emphasis on chastity) and emphasised the role of marriage as a bond of friendship between husband and wife (without denying the woman’s obligation of obedience to her spouse).

His agenda of caring for the poor laid the philosophical foundation for the necessary institutional aid to the poor and developed a series of measures (including commitment to work) for the impoverished “common people”. In this he influenced the social reforms of Emperor Charles V in German cities. Vives subjected a large number of scientific disciplines to critical examination (including mathematics, physics and medicine) and spoke in favour of expanding the curriculum through the systematic study of all disciplines. His curriculum was based on a full exploration of the human nature.

INFLUENTIAL WORKS

 Against the Pseudodialecticians (Leuven 1519), Annotations on Augustine’s De civitate Dei (Basel 1522), The Education of a Christian Woman (Antwerp 1524), On Assistance to the Poor (Bruges 1526), On Conflicts in Europe (Leuven 1526), Duties of a Husband (Brügge 1529), Areas of Science (Antwerp 1531), Rhetoric (Leuven 1533), On the Soul and Life (Basel 1538), Exercises in Latin (Basel 1539), The Truth of the Christian Faith (Basel 1543, published posthumously)

PLACES OF LIFE AND WORKS

 Valencia (ES), Paris (FR), Leuven, Bruges (BE), Oxford (GB), Breda (NL)

NETWORK OF HUMANISTS

Guillaume Budé (FR), Desiderius Erasmus (NL/BE/DE), Thomas More, Thomas Wolsey (GB), Adrianus Barlandus, Frans Cranevelt (BE), Damião de Góis (PT)

In the illustration: Statue in Madrid (© private photograph)
“I have dedicated myself to humanistic studies for a long time, and I have tasted theological studies with no more than just the proverbial tip of the tongue (because these alone are sublime and must not be had brazenly). But even from such a distance it has cast so brilliant a light upon my eyes that human teachings appear to me by comparison as shadows; they seem to exude a fragrance that has no comparable sweetness on earth.”

Foreword of Quincuplex Psalterium to Guillaume Briçonnet, 1509

Jacobus Faber
(Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples) c. 1460 – c. 1536

Born in Étaples (Picardy, north-western France), Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples is undoubtedly one of the most striking personalities of the first wave of French Humanism, who was often compared during his lifetime to the famous humanist Erasmus. He was an influential discoverer of texts, and his lectures in Paris had a great impact on all of Europe.

From 1492 onwards he began his editorial work as a mediator of texts that should shape Europe’s intellectual life, starting with Aristotle. His intention was to provide direct access to Aristotle’s text as a replacement for the scholarly commentaries that were difficult to understand. In this he was influenced by the methods of the Italian Ermolao Barbaro. Although Lefèvre’s Latin translation of Aristotle was still based on translations by the Italian humanists, he however revised them by referring to the Greek original.

His numerous travels brought him in contact with the philosophy of the great Italian humanists Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Marsilio Ficino. He visited Italy thrice in search of unknown texts. In a similar way he also explored libraries of the Benedictine monasteries in Germany and succeeded in discovering new mystical texts. To this end, he prepared the first printed edition of works by Hildegard von Bingen, Mechthild von Hackeborn, Elisabeth von Schönau and Jan van Ruysbroeck and published these texts.

Lefèvre was also interested in science, and thanks to him there are numerous annotations on music and mathematics, among others. Towards the end of his career he was particularly preoccupied by French translations of the Bible, which, however, resulted in his prosecution, against which he could defend himself only through royal protection. The introductions to his editions accurately display his working method and his sources: An incredible exactitude in understanding the works of the Classical authors paired with the intent of reviving the Christian life.
“I grabbed his travel report from last year, I have translated it into Latin. For, I said to myself, reading this book would certainly not be useless to those who do not understand French, given the wonderful variety of observations made by this author during his travels, which he has collected in these three volumes.”

Clusius on his translation of Pierre Belon, Les observations de plusieurs singularitez et choses mémorables trouvées en Grèce, Asie, Judée, Égypte, Arabie et autres pays estranges

Carolus Clusius
(Charles de L’Écluse) 18. 2. 1526 – 4. 4. 1609

Clusius, who came from northern France, was the nephew of the prior of the Saint-Vaast monastery. He was trained by Philipp Melanchthon in Wittenberg and worked for Guillaume Rondelet in Montpellier. He maintained epistolary connections with all the Naturalists in Europe and worked closely with the printer Christophe Plantin (or his successors) in Antwerp. Thanks to Clusius’ work there exists today original treatises exploring the flora of certain areas of Europe and collecting information about exotic plants. Despite poor health he was a restless traveller; he travelled extensively through Spain, Portugal, Germany and England. During his journeys he collected as many plants as books. In particular he was interested in the books of his contemporaries and he translated them occasionally in order to disseminate their content and make them accessible to readers across Europe. In this way he helped spread the work of the Jewish doctor Garcia d’Orta (who was working in Goa, India) through a summary written in Latin. In addition to purely botanical works he also devoted himself to Classical literature and published biographies written by the Greek philosopher Plutarch that were read as role-models. Emperor Maximilian II entrusted him with the management of the Botanical Garden in Vienna (1573–1587).

Europe further owes to this great Renaissance scholar the cultivation and widespread use of potatoes and tulips. Clusius exemplifies the humanist who was engaged internationally. He maintained a network of letters with scholars from all over Europe, sending plant-seeds and drawings from his travels to his contacts. The crowning achievement of his career was the new professorship of Botany at Leiden University in 1593, where he founded the Botanical Garden that still exists today.

In the illustration: Portrait (© Wiki Commons, Wellcome Library, London)

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In the illustration: Portrait (© Wiki Commons, Wellcome Library, London)
“The Jew is our Lord’s creation just as I am. When he stands, he stands before his Master; when he falls, he falls to his Master: Everyone will be accountable for himself. What can we judge about another soul? God is powerful enough to raise him up ... But I can very well judge that a lot of ill could result if we burned their scriptures.”

Johannes Reuchlin. Opinion piece on Jewish literature ... Augenspiegel. Published and translated (into German) by Antonie Leinz-v. Dessauer. Constance/Stuttgart 1965, 96

**Johannes Reuchlin**

29. 1. 1455 – 30. 6. 1522

**As vir trilinguis** – a man of three languages – Johannes Reuchlin not only mastered Latin, the universal language of his time in Europe, but also the original languages of the Holy Scriptures Greek and Hebrew. After his student years in France, among others, he worked as a lawyer at the court in Stuttgart. However, his work took him thrice to Italy – in 1482, 1490 and 1498. Here he became interested in the Kabbalah and in Hebrew, which had been devalued since antiquity due to Christian enmity against the Jews, but which, for him, had the positive connotation of the language of God’s revelation. He was the first to argue that it is not the Greco-Roman antiquity alone, but also Judaism, that form the foundation of the Christian European identity. Reuchlin witnessed the oppression of Jewish citizens. When Johannes Pfefferkorn, a baptised Jew, wanted to use force to convert his former fellow believers, Reuchlin wrote an opinion piece in 1510 for Emperor Maximilian I against the confiscation and burning of Jewish books. In 1511 this report was published in Augenspiegel. During the ensuing years of litigation, Reuchlin and other humanist supporters from several countries fought against the representatives of the Dominican Order and theological faculties.

The papal condemnation of Reuchlin to eternal silence in 1520 should be seen against the backdrop of the Reformation. His friendship with representatives of the Roman Church and the desire for unity did not allow Reuchlin to join the Reformation movement himself. But through his Hebrew studies he influenced Martin Luther’s theological ideas. Despite the judgment Reuchlin was able to hold the professorship for Hebrew that he had requested at the universities of Ingolstadt and Tübingen in 1520 and 1521. His ideas continued in the concept of ecumenism and in the dialogue between the three monotheistic religions.
“If someone attacks me because he does not agree with me on human matters, the authority of the Lord asks me to forgive. But whoever deviates from me in relation to faith, if he is wrong, does not attack me, but his Master. God forgives; but I do not forgive ... the errant is to be tolerated ...: And our hand should not intervene to persecute the errant, but rather to show the way ...”

Eirenicum, 159; Transl. (German): Tobias Sarx: Franciscus Junius d.Ä, 1554–1602, Göttingen 2007, 128

Franciscus Junius

(François Du Jon der Ältere) 1. 5. 1545 – 13. 10. 1602

During a lifetime full of forced relocations, the Calvinist theologian Junius had to painfully experience how intolerant the Christian denominations had become towards each other since the Reformation took place. This made him a champion of mutual tolerance between Catholics, Lutherans and the Reformed Church. Because of his evangelical faith Junius’s father had been murdered by members of the Old Orthodox Church. As a pastor in Antwerp, he himself had to flee from the fanaticism of the reformed iconoclasts as well as that of the Catholic Inquisition. During his time in Heidelberg (from 1573), he, along with the Jewish convert Immanuele Tremellio, produced a translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew that has been reprinted many times. The times ended however with the return of the Electoral Palatinate to an intolerant Lutheranism towards members of the Reformed Church since 1576. Junius took refuge as a teacher at the Calvinist University of Neustadt in the county of Pfalz-Lautern, before returning to Heidelberg in 1584 as a professor of theology – a place where the reformed direction of Protestantism now reigned and the Lutheran theologians had to leave. In 1592 he accepted an invitation to France from Henry IV, only to learn during his stay at Leiden that the king had meanwhile converted to Catholicism and no longer needed a Protestant theologian. Junius therefore continued working at the University of Leiden until his death. Here he also wrote his Eirenicum, in which he campaigned – not for the first time – for peace between the Christian denominations and for freedom of belief.
Sir – or Saint – Thomas More was not only A Man for All Seasons (like the title of a play from 1960 as well an Oscar-winning film from 1966), but he was also a man of contradictions. His famous work Utopia was inspired by the contemporary discovery of the New World (America). More, however, was fully educated in London and Oxford and never visited Italy, which at that time was a must for humanists. In fact, his first stint abroad was a diplomatic mission to Bruges in 1515 just as he was starting to write Utopia. At this point, however, he was already part of the international network that existed around the arch-humanist Erasmus, whom he met in England and whose satirical In Praise of Folly was partly a tribute to his friend and translator of the Greek satirist Lukian. But there were even more contradictions: In Utopia, the traveller Raphael Hythlodaeus tells More and Pieter Gillis about an imaginary island beyond the equator that was the model of a well-governed republic. It was intended as a criticism of contemporary European society, condemned as a “conspiracy of the rich”. Raphael warns of the dangers and worthlessness of slavish service to the great princes; but More was following exactly a similar career under King Henry VIII when he rose to become Lord Chancellor. Due to the need for only a few laws, all lawyers were banned from Utopia; this, though, was More’s profession. The Utopians practiced religious tolerance, but More saw the Protestants as a threat to society and persecuted them strictly as heretics.

However, his opposition to the king’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon and his marriage to Anne Boleyn led to his fall. After the break with Rome More refused to take oath for King Henry’s recognition as head of the Church of England. He was arrested, tried for treason and executed – as a martyr of his conscience and a monument to the difficult times.

“I have described to you, as particularly as I could, the constitution of this state, which I freely consider not only the best but the only one that may rightly claim the name ‘republic’ (res publica – a commonwealth). For everywhere else one speaks of the common good but only cares about the private wealth ... If I see all the countries that exist today somewhere in splendour – as I hope for mercy – I have no other notion than that they are a certain conspiracy of the rich, who, under the pretext of a ‘republic’, only pursue their private ends.”

Raphael Hythlodaeus, Utopia, Book 2, ch 12 (in praise of the state of Utopia)
“Although there are very many, large and rich nations in Europe and each has its own laws, those who prescribe to everyone else the way of government that they themselves follow, are acting in an arrogant manner. The Swiss have their republic, Germany – nominally an empire – operates as a legal monarchy, some German cities (as I hear) follow noblemen, the Venetians have a rule that is a mixture of all forms, Moscow is happy with the rule of tyranny. We have a small monarchy, but we have been free from foreign rule for 2000 years.”

De jure regni apud Scotos

George Buchanan
February 1506 – 28. 9. 1582

For the famous French printer Henri Estienne Buchanan was “simply the poet prince of our age”. In the backdrop of a turbulent century he became the country’s first internationally famous literary personality on account of his Latin poetry. His career spanned that of a university professor, a tutor for a prince, a propagandist and a political theorist. He attacked the Portuguese colonial enterprise in America, opposed the astronomical theories of Copernicus and Tycho Brahe and denounced the Roman Catholic Church, which he partly belonged to in his adult life. However, his appeal for a limited monarchy and for the principle of deportability of a tyrant prince proved to be a point of controversy, one which earned him a conviction through a parliamentary act.

He received his education in Paris, taught subsequently in Bordeaux, gave lessons to Montaigne and wrote Latin dramas. He went to Coimbra in Portugal to teach, where he faced the Inquisition; this compelled him to deny his Lutheran confession. At the same time, however, he dedicated his Latin translation of psalms to Queen Mary Stuart of Scotland, a Catholic. She supported him when he returned to Scotland but he later turned against her. After Mary’s forced abdication, he became the tutor of her son James VI, a Protestant, for whom he wrote De jure regni (The Law of the Monarchy). When he wrote his history of Scotland, he declared his intention as “cleaning up all English lies and Scottish vanity”. He characterised Scotland as a small country that only sought to manage itself and live in peace with its larger neighbours. Ironically, it was his pupil James who, as the successor of Queen Elisabeth, initiated the process of making Scotland part of a larger British state.

In the illustration: Graphic reproduction (© http://data.theeuropeanlibrary.org/Collection/a0480)
“I have been appointed to teach the Greek language and literature. But how much of a utility, what adornment and perfection they carry with them, how greatly the study of Greek literature has brightened and still brightens the Latin equivalent – that did not seem unreasonable to me to elucidate a little ...”

Chalkondyles, inaugural speech, Padua 1463

Demetrios Chalkokondyles
(Δημήτριος Χαλκονδύλης) 1423 – 9.1.1511

Chalkondyles was born in 1423 into an old noble family in Athens. He studied philosophy under the renowned professor and Platonist Gemistos Plethon in Mistra. Subsequently he joined the train of Byzantine scholars who fled to the West and arrived in Rome in 1449. There he met with the support of compatriots in the scholarly circle of Cardinal Bessarion (a Greek by birth). In this environment he became acquainted with the well-known humanist Theódōros Gazḗs, who was to become Chalkondyles’ teacher and friend. This Greek network created a bridge between old and new homelands. The debate that started at the time within this group of scholars was whether Aristotle or Plato represented the right philosophy (which a Christian could also accept). Chalkondyles was a Platonist himself, but due to his connection to Gazes he had to defend Aristotle. He contributed to the dissemination of Greek in the West and himself taught Greek at the major centres of Humanism – at the University of Padua, in Florence and at the court of Duke Ludovico Sforza in Milan. His successful teaching career bore lasting fruits and made a decisive contribution to the Humanist movement. Some of his students became leading humanists who shaped the culture of the time (Ianos Laskaris, Piero di Lorenzo de’ Medici, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Gian Giorgio Trissino, Baldassare Castiglione, William Crocyn as well as Johannes Reuchlin). Chalkondyles was part of a larger European network and had contact via letters with the famous French patrician Guillaume Budé (from whom he received the honorary title “Master of our Time”). In his opening speech in Padua in 1463, he emphasised the usefulness of learning the Greek language and literature and the need to gain an insight into classical literature – not only for the sake of learning, but for the education in humanity and human dignity, that is in humanitas.

INFLUENTIAL WORKS
Editions of Greek classical authors

PLACES OF LIFE AND WORKS
Athens, Mistra (GR), Rome, Perugia, Padua, Florence, Milan (IT)

NETWORK OF HUMANISTS
Gemistos Plethon (GR), Cardinal Bessarion, Thedóðros Gazész, Piero di Lorenzo de’ Medici, Francesco Ficino, Marsilio Ficino, Cristoforo Landino, Angelo Poliziano, Aldus Manutius (IT), Guillaume Budé (FR)

In the illustration: Portrait after P. Giovio, *Elógia virorum literis illustrium*. Basel 1577 (© archive.org)
Laskaris was born in Byzantine Constantinople, his family came from the area of Rhynhacus in Asia Minor. After the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, he left for the Peloponnes and thereafter to Crete. From there he turned to the west and came to Padua, where he studied under the direction of his compatriot Chalkokondyles (1463). He learned Latin and gave lectures on Greek literature in Florence (1475?), where he also became a cultural mediator and was sent twice to the East on behalf of the cultural patron Lorenzo di Piero di Lorenzo de’ Medici – to acquire through purchase works of Greek literature (Corfu, Adrianople, Mount Athos, Arta, Thessaloniki and Constantinople). He was able to save around 200 manuscripts. His efforts to spread Greek texts were also pioneering. For this purpose he created new printing types based on his own designs. He also worked as an ambassador on behalf of the French kings Charles VIII, Louis XII. and Franz I. As spiritual advisor to King Charles VIII, he was awarded the titles Docteur des pays de Grèce and Ambassadeur par excellence. As ambassador of the French court, he came to Venice (1503–1509), where he became a member of the famous “New Academy” created by the printer Aldus Manutius. At Laskaris’ suggestion the Pope founded a Greek college at the Quirinal in Rome, where Laskaris built a printing press. Laskaris also supported King Francis I of France in building the Royal Library of Fontainebleau. But he did not forget his homeland Greece and made an (unsuccessful) appeal to Emperor Charles V for liberation. As a promoter of the idea of humanism his influence remains unforgettable.

Ianos Laskaris
(Ιάνος Λάσκαρις) 1444/1445 – 7.12.1534

“Influentia books are printed, libraries are opened ... Now young men will be able to learn Greek and Latin in the same way ... They will benefit greatly from this, and they will acquire immortal fame.”

Lecture to students, according to H. Vast, De vita et operibus Jani Lascaris. Paris 1878, 31

**INFLUENTIAL WORKS**
*Editions of classical works:* Anthologia Planudea: Florence 1494; Kallimachos: Florence; Apollonios of Rhodos, Argonautica: Florence 1496; Lukianos: Florence 1496; *Edition of annotations to classical authors* (Homer: Rome 1517; 1518); *Annotations to the tragedies of Sophocles* (Rome 1518); *Short poems, epigrams* (Paris 1527)

**PLACES OF LIFE AND WORKS**
Constantinople (GR/TU), Peloponnes, Crete, Corfu, Arta, Thessaloniki, Athos (GR), Florence, Rome, Milan, Venice, Padua, Ferrara (IT), Paris, Lyon (FR), Madrid (ES)

**NETWORK OF HUMANISTS**
Cardinal Bessarion, Aldus Manutius, Markos Musuros, Arsenios Apostoles, Guarino Favorino, Lorenzo di Piero di Lorenzo de’ Medici, Pope Leo X., Zacharias Kallierges, Niccolò Ridolfi (IT), Georges d’Amboise, Guillaume Budé, Josse Bade, Jean Trechsel (FR), Erasmus (NL), Demetrios Chalkokondyles (GR)

In the illustration: Portrait after P. Giovio, *Elogia virorum literis illustrium*. Basel 1577 (© archive.org)
John Vitéz de Zredna

C. 1410 – 9. 8. 1472

John Vitéz (actually de Zredna, the name Vitéz is due to a later confusion with his nephew, John Vitéz the Younger) came from a small nobleman’s family in the county of Kőrös in present-day Croatia, where his father, Dionysius de Zredna, a former servant of King Sigismund, owned a few villages. John enrolled at the University of Vienna in 1434 and began soon afterwards his career in the royal chancellery. Despite great effort and desire, he never travelled to the homeland of humanism, Italy, to study this new cultural movement in Europe directly under the well-known teachers. During his work at the chancellery and after his arguments with Enea Silvio Piccolomini, the new chancellor of Emperor Frederick III, he saw the need for a fundamental stylistic modernisation of the chancellery: one could no longer use the old form of Latin to answer the classical diplomatic letters from Italian court humanists.

For this reason he created a new collection of his official letters, thereby modernising the chancellery’s Latin style. In 1467, as Archbishop of Gran, he tried to establish the Academia Istropolitana in Bratislava, a partly humanistic university with at least three departments (Artes liberales, Jus, Theology), to which end he invited several professors, including Italian professors. He created a large library of manuscripts of classical and patristic authors and showed great interest in books (e.g. he owned at least four copies of the works of the Roman historian Livius).

“Surely you have in hand the illustrious and famous letters of the great Ancients, in which the arduous efforts of the human spirit have created works of such high-quality that you will find them both worth studying and admiring. You should feed upon these refined works of reading...”

Foreword to a collection of letters, 1445
“Some people cannot convey anything to the others because they do not know much, be it out of a certain jealousy, or because they have no idea what the norm of teaching means ... However, you especially deserve true praise because you believe you have been created not only for yourself but for the benefit of the whole world. So you personally admonish the living, for the future, though, with the scriptures, so that you alone are owed a threefold life in a similar fashion. To the past you give back lost honour to the old classics, you strive towards the future with your feather, and in the present with your voice. For all these services you are loved, worshipped and praised by the entire scholarly circle.”

In praise of his teacher Guarino of Verona: excerpt on teaching

Janus Pannonius
29. 8. 1434 – 27. 3. 1472

Janus Pannonius was the first humanist poet in Central Europe to achieve widespread recognition among contemporary Italian humanists. He had mastery over not only Latin but also Greek, which he acquired at Guarino’s school, which was still a rarity in the mid-15th century CE north of the Alps. He began his poetic career with short Latin epigrams that mocked contemporary poets, classmates and even the Pope with characteristic irony and in the spirit of humanistic freedom. Because of his knowledge of Greek, he was able to imitate the style and sometimes even the obscenity of the Greek templates in Latin. In Padua he wrote long panegyric praise-poems to politicians and to his teacher Guarino, who symbolised for him the ideal humanistic teaching method; it thus became his most popular poem during the Renaissance.

After returning to Hungary, he was entrusted with administrative duties in the royal chancellery and found little time for poetry. In his elegies, which are characterised by unprecedented structural complexity and linguistic elegance, he often contrasted Italy’s highly developed humanistic culture with the backwardness of his own country.

INFLUENTIAL WORKS
Epigrams, panegyrics, elegies, translations from Greek original work (Homer, Plutarch)

PLACES OF LIFE AND WORKS
Csezmice (HR), Ferrara, Padua (IT), Pécs (HU)

NETWORK OF HUMANISTS
Guarino da Verona, Battista Guarino, Galeotto Marzio, Basilio da Parma, Tito Vespasiano Strozza, Francesco Barbaro, Francesco Durante, Vespasiano da Bisticci (IT), Nicolaus Lassocki (PL), John Vitéz (HU), Heinrich von Gundelfingen (DE)


National project partner: Dr. Farkas Gábor KISS, MTA-ELTE Budapest
Lendület research group Humanism in East Central Europe. EUROPA HUMANISTICA
Manuel Chrysoloras was descended from a noble Byzantine family. He had close ties with the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos, who had sent him on account of his excellent education and language skills to various diplomatic missions to Western Europe since the early 1390s. This opened a new chapter in the Italian Renaissance because he acted not only as a loyal diplomat, but more as a mediator of Greek knowledge. His unwavering commitment as an intellectual and as an ambassador was geared towards making the Western European scholars aware of Byzantium and its endangered existence – an existence that Western humanism so desperately needed. He thus renewed the connection between Greek and Western-Latin culture that had been interrupted for centuries. According to Chrysoloras, this should also include the return of the Greek (Orthodox) church to the Roman Catholic Church (he himself converted in 1406). A union of the Church for the different parts of the empire that had been separated for long would preserve Byzantium and Christian Europe as a single unit and secure their survival against threats and attacks.

Although his appointment as a Greek teacher in Florence lasted only three years, it was a landmark in the cultural history of Europe. Thanks to his efforts and that of his students, Greek was introduced as the second language in the school curriculum of the West, where it has been taught since then as a cultural significant language. In addition, Chrysoloras considered translation as a means of learning a language as well as a medium of culture. His work as a teacher triggered a wave of translations of classical literature into Latin, the cultural language of the time, and occasionally also into European vernaculars. He became famous as the author of a highly successful Greek grammar as well, a book that paid special attention to the needs of the Western public. It showcases a gifted teacher, who initiated a simple and practical approach to Greek and thereby surpassed other grammar books in circulation.
Guarino can be described as one of the founding fathers of humanistic education. He was probably one of the most influential teachers in Europe in the 15th century and thus decisively shaped humanism as it was subsequently adopted from Italy by other countries. Like some other European scholars, he was still able to study abroad in Constantinople, the centre of Greek culture; under the guidance of the scholar Manuel Chrysoloras he made great progress in Greek studies. The unique knowledge of Greek language and literature that he acquired there enabled him to act as an interpreter between Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic representatives at the Ecumenical Council in Ferrara in 1438.

His entire life was almost wholly devoted to teaching. His school in Ferrara became one of the most flourishing academic institutions on the continent, attended by numerous students from Italy and abroad (Croatia, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, Spain etc.). Not surprisingly, much of his literary output is related to his teaching. His Latin grammar (*Regulae grammaticales*) was thus a bestseller with more than 50 printed editions and numerous handwritten copies. Thanks to his translations, he contributed significantly to the knowledge and spread of Greek literature in Europe. He also differed from his humanistic contemporaries in that he almost completely refrained from literary polemics. He did not see the need to criticise new works by contemporaries, but recognised their constructive contribution, for everyone may have something interesting to say in the newly established European republic of scholars.

**INFLUENTIAL WORKS**
- How history is written, compendium of grammar by Chrysoloras, various translations of Greek authors (Plutarch, Herodotus, Isocrates, Strabo) and annotations to classical authors

**PLACES OF LIFE AND WORKS**
- Verona, Padua, Bologna, Rome, Venice, Florence, Ferrara (IT), Constantinople/Istanbul (GR/TU), Chios, Rhodos (GR)

**NETWORK OF HUMANISTS**
- Demetrios Kydones, Manuel and Ioannes Chrysoloras (GR), Francesco Barbaro, Antonio Beccadelli, Leonardo Bruni, Niccolò Niccoli, Poggio Bracciolini, Paola Strozzi, Flavio Biondo, Ermolao Barbaro, Angelo Decembrio, Valesio (IT), Ianus Pannonius, Giorgio Agostino of Zagreb (HR), John Free, William Grey, Robert Flemmyng (GB), Peter Luder, Georgius Boemius (DE), Henri Jeaffroy (FR), Henri de Bruges (BE)

In the illustration: Portrait on coin by Matteo de’Pasti, c. 1446 (© WikiCommons, Sailko)
“Human wisdom consists in none other than observing what is going on and knowing both current and future things by deriving them as a source of the past; of all sciences, this is probably best manifest in the historical science. And just as such wisdom strengthens all the arts dedicated to eternity, it equates the elders with the young, so that in the future they may act wisely. At the same time it empowers the elders by allowing them to assess experiences of misfortune, and those with less wisdom, by being aware of the unfortunate events of the past, to be more cautious in the present – those who have learned caution from others’ mistakes are considered happy.”

From the Chronicle

Motiejus Strijkovskis
(Matys Strycovius, Maciej Stryjkowski) 21. 3. 1547 – 1590

Strijkowski wrote the first printed history of Lithuania under the title Chronicle of Poland, Lithuania and All of Russia: Kiev, Moscow, Seversk, Volynia, Podolia, Podgorje, Podlachia etc., which has never before seen the light of day, in short Chronicle. In it, the author vividly tells the story of the state of the Lithuanians and Ruthenians from their legendary beginnings to the end of the Livonian War (1558–1583). (Residents of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 13th-16th centuries CE are referred to as Ruthenians, who are considered to be the ancestors of Belarusians and Ukrainians; Lithuanians and Ruthenians were the two largest ethnic groups in the multi-ethnic state.) In several forewords to his chronicle, Strijkowski explains the importance of historical science and knowledge of history as well as the value of a national history. Due to his poetic talent, he sang in verse about the most important events and people in Lithuanian history. Because of this his chronicle stands out among the historiographical works of the time in Europe. Strijkowski came to Lithuania in 1563 from Poland, where he was born and had attended school. From 1564 to 1574 he fought on the side of the Lithuanians against Moscow. During his military service he wrote the poem Messenger of Virtue (Goniec cnoty) which was published in Kraków in 1574 and at the end of which he wrote a short history of Lithuania. In 1576–1578, Strijkowski developed this short text into an independent and continuous poetic narrative titled On the Beginnings, the Origin of Families, the Power and the Deeds of the Glorious People of the Lithuanians, Samogitia and Ruthenians (published only in 1978). A significantly expanded version of 1578–1580 was published in 1582 under the new title Chronicle of Poland, Lithuania and All of Russia. Because of its topical content, artistic style and knowledge of the Polish language in large parts of Central and Eastern Europe, it witnessed an immediate and widespread distribution in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and its neighboring countries. Several Polish authors of the Baroque, the Enlightenment and the Romantic period drew inspiration from motifs of this important historiographical work.

INFLUENTIAL WORKS
Detailed songs of travel to Cracow and the coronation of the Duke of Anjou Henri Valois (Kraków, 1574), Messenger of Virtue, sent to the real boyars (Kraków, 1574), Short but detailed narrative on the freedom of Poland and Lithuania and the bondage of other kingdoms under the tyrannical yoke of the Turks (Kraków, 1575), Chronicle (Königsberg/Kaliningrad 1582)

PLACES OF LIFE AND WORKS
Brzeziny, Stryków, Krakow (PL), Jurbarkas, Varniai/Medininkai, Vilnius (LT), Karaliaučius/Kaliningrad (RU), Riga (LV), Slutsk, Vitebsk (BY), Istanbul (TR)

NETWORK OF HUMANISTS
Alessandro Guagnini (IT, LT, PL), Andrzej Taranowski (PL), Augustinas Rotundas, Jonas Chodkevičius, Jurgis Olelkaitis, Merkelis Giedraitis, Mikalojus Daukša (LT)

In the illustration: Strijkowski, 1582 (© Lithuanian Academy of Sciences)
The reputation of being the first printer in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania belongs to Skaryna for his *Little Book of Travel*, published around 1522 in Vilnius. *Letters and works of the apostles (Apostles, in short)* was also published from his printing press in 1525. He thereby introduced Lithuania to the most important technical innovation of the Renaissance – printing technology. Skaryna had learned about printing in Europe, especially in Poland, Italy and Bohemia. From 1504 to 1506 he completed his studies in Kraków with the Baccalaureus Artium. In 1512 he received his doctorate in medicine from the University of Padua. In 1517–1519 Skaryna published a translation of the Bible into the Slavic language, which was used in the Orthodox Churches of Eastern and Central Europe for the liturgy: the *Ruthenian Bible* (Ruthenians were the residents of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 13th–16th centuries CE are referred to as Ruthenians, who are considered to be the ancestors of Belarusians and Ukrainians; Lithuanians and Ruthenians were the two largest ethnic groups in the multi-ethnic state). In his forewords he explains the benefits of the Bible for the people, emphasises its importance as a source of all sciences and comprehensive knowledge. The *Ruthenian Bible* occupies a special place in the history of Bible translations as the first printed publication of the Old Testament in Church Slavonic. Prior to this the printed Bible was only available in Italian, German and Czech, apart from the canonical languages of Hebrew, Old Greek and Latin. The *Ruthenian Bible* was widely distributed in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and in the neighbouring countries with Orthodox Slavic inhabitants.

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**Francisk Skorina**

(Pranciškus Skorina, Francysk Skaryna) 1470 – 9. 1. 1552

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“All the seven liberal arts are presented here. If you want to master grammar, you can find it throughout the Bible, in the psalms – read them. If you want to understand logic, read the book of Job or the letters of the apostle Paul. If your goal is to master logic, read Solomon’s books. If you want to acquire knowledge of music, you will find poetic lines and sacred songs everywhere. If you want to know arithmetic, read the Fourth Book of Moses. If you are fascinated by geometry, read the book of Joshua. If it is astronomy, you will find explanations on the formation of the sun, moon and stars in the Book of Genesis, and in the holy gospel you will learn about a new star that rose at the hour of birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

From the foreword to *Ruthenian Bible*
“Faith thus allows everyone complete freedom to philosophise. There is nothing wrong in anyone thinking about any matter the way he likes. Only those who teach views that lead to disobedience, hatred, strife and anger will be condemned as heretics and apostates; and only those who exhort justice and love according to the powers of their reason will be deemed believers.”

TTP XIV, translation by S.H. Ewald in On scripture, Judaism, the right of supreme authority in spiritual matters and the freedom to philosophise, Gera 1787

**Benedictus de Spinoza**

(Bento d’Espinosa/Baruch de Spinoza) November 24, 1632 – February 21, 1677

Spi noza is an exception in this exhibition in that he was not a humanist – during his time humanism had served its purpose and paved the way for a new philosophy, represented by him. His Latin (a language he learned late after studying Hebrew) remains more awkward than that of any other author in this publication. Spinoza came from a Portuguese-Jewish immigrant family and as a young man he took over his father’s business of dry fruits. After the Portuguese-Jewish community drove him out in 1656 for unexplained reasons, he earned his living as a lens maker.

Spinoza has shaped modern thought, including modern humanism, like no other early modern philosopher. He defended the freedom of philosophising and declared that the power of religious authorities should be restricted, that the Bible is a man-made literary work, and that democracy is the best form of government. His works were extensively and vehemently condemned and banned by secular and ecclesiastical authorities alike.

Spinoza’s main tenet is that there is only one substance (God or nature), everything in the universe is a variation of it. This view is radically different from the anthropomorphic image of a good and wise yet transcendent God which takes the centre stage of Protestantism, Catholicism and Judaism. Everything that happens follows the laws of nature: there are no miracles, there is no overarching plan, divine rewards and punishments are superstition, nobody is immortal. Man (for Spinoza and his contemporaries, Man was male at the time) can achieve freedom and salvation by leading a meaningful life, loving his neighbour as himself, striving for a true understanding of nature and accepting the inevitability of what is beyond one’s control. No wonder Spinoza fascinates many till date.

**Influential Works**

- Tractatus theologico-politicus ([Amsterdam] 1670, published anonymously), 
- Ethica, Tractatus politicus, correspondences (all published posthumously in Opera posthuma, Amsterdam 1677)

**Places of Life and Works**

Amsterdam, several villages and cities in the province of Holland, The Hague (NL)

**Network of Humanists**

- Henry Oldenburg (DE/GB), Christiaan Huygens, Franciscus van den Enden, Adriaan Koerbagh, Johannes Hudde, Lambertus van Velthuyzen (NL), Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (DE), Robert Boyle (GB)

In the illustration: Portrait c. 1665 (© Wikimedia Commons/Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel)
“Religion has shown us that everything tends towards obstinacy rather than unity.”
Annales de rebus Belgicis 1, ch. 55, 1600–1612

“Even if other ties may be missing, the solidarity of all humanity and the natural sense of community mean that evil perpetrated against others affect us as well.”
De iure praedae, ch. 6, 1604–1606

Hugo Grotius
(Huigh de Groot) 10. 4. 1583 – 28. 8. 1645

Grotius was a descendant of a regenten (ruling regent class) family in Delft, who distinguished himself early on as a humanistic scholar as well as a lawyer and administrator. He made a name for himself as a government lawyer for the Province of Holland, as a learned spokesman demonstrating the ancient roots of the republican administration in Lower Germany, defending the legitimacy of the uprising against Spain and the course of the Dutch administration of the times. Afterwards he was also involved in the same government, which collapsed during the uprising of 1618. Grotius was arrested but he escaped when his wife Marie Reigersberg hid him in a returnee box for books (“Escape in a bookcase”). His book *de iure bell ac pacis* (“The Law of War and Peace”), was published in Paris in 1625 and was intended to present a social code of ethics based not on (controversial) religious principles, but one established on the norms of natural law that is the same for each individual as well as for states. He later became involved in the reunification of Christianity; his work *The Truth of Christian Religion* is an attempt to define the core Christian belief in as less dogmatic a way as possible. Since the 19th century he is considered as an important founder of international law and a “precursor” to the International Court of Justice at The Hague.
Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski

20. 9. 1503 – autumn 1572

In the early 40s of the 16th century CE, Modrzewski appeared in parliament and before the public with his Speeches on the Punishment for Murder. All of human life is of equal value – regardless of whether one is a nobleman or a farmer. However, not every kind of equality was considered by Frycz as good, as he expounded in his On Improvement of the Community around 1550. For a community to be successful it is imperative for its citizens to have the ability to think (self-)critically, to react against injustice and to develop the existing fragmentary laws into a generally understandable system. The human penchant for revenge, as juxtaposed by Frycz against Christian charity, has proven to be harmful. A community thus composed guarantees, through measured equality, the political representation of all its members, including the plebeians.

In later years Frycz examined the inner dimension of freedom as sober realism, communication skills, curiosity and mastery of one’s own passions also from a theological perspective. Following Erasmus of Rotterdam he defended the idea of Man’s Free Will. However, he also recognised some of Luther’s and Calvin’s observations about a corrupt human nature after the Original Sin as essential for political practice: political and legal reforms must be based on a realistic knowledge of social injustice.

In his final writings Frycz sought a basis for dialogue between the increasingly hostile religious denominations. He called for a recognition of deeper intuitions in each of the various attempts at ultimate justification from philosophical-theological perspectives. On the other hand, he advised caution while formulating dogmas: These not only mislead people to discriminate against those who think differently but also often stunt the growth of their own community with their empty phrases.
Wawrzyniec Grzymała Goślicki

(Laurentius Grimaldii Goslicius) 1530 – 1607

Wawrzyniec (Laurence) Goślicki (latinised as: Laurentius Grimaldii Goslicius) comes from a noble family of Mazowsze. He was born near Płock in 1530. Due to his talent in diplomacy and as an outstanding figure of the Church in Poland, he was one of the leading political personalities at the turn of the 16th to 17th centuries CE. He died in 1607 as the bishop of Poznań. He achieved widespread fame as the author of the two books *On the best senator (De optimo senatore libri duo)*. This work was first printed in Venice in 1568 and then in Basel in 1593 and is dedicated to the then Polish King Sigismund (Zygmunt) II Augustus. It describes the ideal statesman, the senator. Goślicki opted for a mixed monarchy with a lasting balance between the king and the nation through the senate. Many of Goślicki’s ideas contained the foundations of the Polish Nobles’ Democracy (1505–1795) and were themselves based on the writings of the 14th century scholar Stanislaus von Skarbimierz. *De optimo senatore libri duo* was also translated into English for the Anglophone countries, where the work served as an inspiration for political thought and the modern theory of political system. The concept of social contract is said to have inspired Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine when they created the constitution of the United States of America. However, this hypothesis has not been scientifically proven or confirmed.

“We wish for a king who abides by the law and feels bound to it, who strives for honesty and integrity, who follows the senate’s advice – this is how we imagine him. For in every state the highest principle is law. Whoever obeys the laws, thus obeys God, who is truly the highest principle. Therefore we also want our senators – who act in between the king and the people – to be like the king, to be endowed with the highest virtues, for the republic be governed at their discretion and for the highest good to remain intact forever. We want that all of their power and authority may consist of decisions, judgments and orders.”

*De optimo senatore libri duo;* translation (German): Aleksander Stępkowski, Warsaw

**INFLUENTIAL WORKS**

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<th>Title</th>
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<td><em>De victoria Sigismundi Augusti</em></td>
<td>Padua</td>
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<td><em>De optimo senatore libri duo</em></td>
<td>Venice (1568)</td>
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**PLACES OF LIFE AND WORKS**

- Płock, Kraków, Kamieniec Podolski, Chełm, Przemyśl, Poznań (PL), Padua, Bologna, Rome, Venice (IT)

In the illustration: Tomb sculpture (©Maciej Szczepańczyk/Wikimedia Commons)
Born in Aveiro in 1507, Fernão de Oliveira was educated at the Dominican convent there; at the age of 25 he went to Spain, to Castile and became a priest. In 1536 he returned to Lisbon and published the first Portuguese grammar, thereby contributing to the protection of national treasure.

Around 1541 he travelled to Italy in the service of the Portuguese kingdom, but upon his return he was accused of heresy by the Inquisition; he escaped to France, where he fought as a soldier against England. When he returned to Portugal, he was denounced again by the Inquisition and imprisoned (approx. 1547–1550). The Portuguese cardinal Henry freed him from this imprisonment in 1551; in the same year he was also part of an unsuccessful military operation against Africa, which led to the imprisonment of a large part of the team. Fernão de Oliveira was involved in the negotiations for release of the prisoners. Upon his return to Portugal he was again arrested, this time for his "unorthodox beliefs". After his release he published a treatise on maritime war (1555); afterwards he started to teach rhetoric at Coimbra University and worked with the university press.

In 1556 he returned to France. Although sketchily documented, the last phase of his life seems to have been the most productive. He translated parts of the work of Columella, the Roman author of agriculture, wrote a patriotic history of Portugal (against the royal union with Spain) and two important works on nautical sciences.

Through his works he criticised the Christian practice of the lucrative slave trade and tried to see the battles against the Arabs and the Ottomans from a less Eurocentric point of view, considering also the viewpoints of those opposing Christianity. He stood out for his harsh criticism: towards power without understanding, towards arrogant and uneducated "elites" – with tragic consequences, such as shipwrecks for which inexperienced captains of the aristocracy were responsible. His works on the nautical sciences which combined theory and practice were unique in Europe.
“They put the shameful and godless quest for profit before the Christian faith, despise the salvation of so many souls; but they truly have the keys with which they neither enter nor let others enter. Oh you insatiable greed, you unbearable nefariousness, that can be overpowered by all pious souls with weapons and the feather, yes with all possible powers.”

Damião de Góis to Pope Paul III in his report on Lapland. Leuven 1540

Damião de Góis
2. 2. 1502 – 30. 1. 1574

Born in Alenquer in 1502, Damião de Góis, began his service at the Portuguese court in 1511. In 1523 he was sent by King John III as secretary to Antwerp, where he served the Portuguese crown in commercial and diplomatic matters until 1545 in several European cities: Gdansk, Leuven, Paris, Vilnius, Strasbourg, Krakow. He met Martin Luther and Philipp Melanchthon in Wittenberg, he lived for a short time as a guest of Erasmus in Freiburg. He also had close relationships with German-speaking scholars such as Albrecht Dürer and Sebastian Münster. He went on to study at the university of Padua until 1539, travelled through Italy and made friends with the humanists Pietro Bembo and Jacopo Sadoleto. He completed his humanistic studies in Leuven, where he published a history of India in 1539 and in 1540 a religious-ethnographic work on the Ethiopians, which was influenced by Erasmus’ ideas and which made him famous amongst the European humanists.

In 1545 he returned to Portugal, hoping to receive the role of a tutor to the heir to the Portuguese crown. However, he was reported to the Inquisition and his plans fell through. In 1548 he became the director of the royal archive Torre do Tombo. He was commissioned by the Portuguese Cardinal Henry to write a chronicle on his father (King Manuel I); it was published in 1566, and that of Manuel’s father, John II appeared in the following year. In 1571 he was once again reported to the Inquisition, but this time without a defender at the Portuguese court. He was convicted of Lutheranism. He was imprisoned until December 1572 and he died in 1574. An important aspect of his work was the publication of the recent Portuguese discoveries in India and Ethiopia. The humanistic spirit also revealed itself in modern reflections on religious tolerance, which he learned and appreciated by virtue of his contacts abroad. He had created a network of friends in Europe, which – despite being labelled a heretic upon his return – he did not abandon.

INFLUENTIAL WORKS
History of India (1539), On the faith, religion and customs of the Ethiopians (1540), Chronicles of the Portuguese kings Manuel I (1566) and John II (1570), letters

PLACES OF LIFE AND WORKS
Lisbon (PT), Antwerp, Leuven (BE), Gdansk, Krakow (PL), Paris, Strasbourg (FR), Vilnius (LT), Wittenberg (DE), Padua (IT)

NETWORK OF HUMANISTS
Albrecht Dürer, Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon (DE), Erasmus, Glareanus, Sebastian Münster (CH), Pietro Bembo, Jacopo Sadoleto (IT)

In the illustration: Portrait, after Albrecht Dürer, graphic reproduction, reprint. (© private ownership)
“Care must also be taken to ensure that teachers are endowed with a good education and an honourable character such that, by their example, they dissuade students from vice and urge them to follow the path of virtue... Caution should also be exercised while speaking or otherwise so that teachers avoid stupid, useless or other such questions which go beyond the intellect of the boys."

*Catholicae ac Christianae religionis*... ch. 18, on the teacher

**Nicolaus Olahus**

(Miklós Oláh) 10. 1. 1493 – 15. 1. 1568

Olahus came from a renowned family, his father was the brother-in-law of the legendary Johannes Hunyadi, father of King Matthias Corvinus. He experienced both phases of the new Hungarian empire: its rise to one of the leading European powers that clearly sought alignment with the West, as well as its downfall when the empire fell apart after the death of Matthias Corvinus (1490) and was ultimately overrun by foreign powers. After his studies at the Cathedral Chapter of Oradea, Olahus began his career under Corvinus’ successor, Vladislaus II, the Jagiellonian King of Hungary and Bohemia, at the court in Budapest. Thereafter he chose the path of the Church and was ordained a priest; he made a remarkable career in this role, as the secretary of the bishop of Pécs to becoming the archdeacon of Komárom. In 1526, however, he returned to the secular world and became secretary to his successor Louis II and subsequently his wife, Maria von Habsburg of Austria. Meeting Maria von Habsburg was formative for his future life, because as her secretary he accompanied her to the parliament in Augsburg (1530) and to Belgium (when Maria was entrusted with the administration of the Habsburg Netherlands). In 1542 he returned to Hungary and became a royal adviser (to Ferdinand I of Habsburg; 1543–1568) and the bishop of Zagreb (1543–1548), followed by the bishop of Eger (1548–1553) and finally the archbishop of Esztergom (1553–1568). Throughout the fateful history of his times he witnessed the importance of education and its nurturing. It was particularly important to him as a church dignitary to work against dark machinations on the one hand, and on the other hand to promote in his dioceses the ideal of education which Matthias Corvinus had put forth with his legendary library in Buda. More than anything else, he did not want a new “disturbance” in religious teachings, which also made him a staunch defender of the Catholic Church against the Reformation. To support his interests, he brought the Jesuits into the country to initiate a new cultural movement.

**INFLUENTIAL WORKS**

_Doctrines of the Catholic faith (Catholicae ac Christianae religionis praecipua quaedam capita de sacramentis, fide et operibus, de ecclesia, iustificatione)_ (Vienna 1560), _Hungaria et Athila_ (Basel 1568)

**PLACES OF LIFE AND WORKS**

Sibiu, Oradea (RO), Budapest, Esztergom (HU), Brussels (BE), Trnava, Bratislava (SK)

**NETWORK OF HUMANISTS**

Erasmus, Cornelius de Schepper (NL), Camillo Ghilino (IT), Antun Vrančić (HR)

In the illustration: Portrait c. 1740, after a woodcut from 1560 (© A Magyar Nemzeti Galéria kiadványai 2008/3)
... therefore, none of the servants (of the Church) should come unprepared for preaching, trusting their innate loquaciousness, and waste time with useless trifles, just for the sake of habit and for the appearance of having done something, even though one has not contributed anything useful. It will also be necessary to rein in the teachers from foolishness and biting invectives, which alienate the listeners and often scorn the content of what is being said.

Reformatio ecclesiae Coronensis, chapter on teaching

Johannes Honter

Honter comes from Transylvania in Saxony and was born into a wealthy middle-class family in Brașov (Kronstadt) around 1498. In Brașov he received his early education in the ambit of the Catholic Church, possibly from the Dominicans. Thanks to his prosperous family, he was able to afford what was the basis of most thinkers and cultural mediators in Europe – travels to new countries and getting to know new intellectual environments that would influence one’s own ideas. In 1520 he enrolled at the University of Vienna where he earned his Masters’ degree in 1525. In the fateful year 1529 he fled to Regensburg, in 1530 he found himself in Krakow; this was followed by sojourns in Nuremberg and significantly in Basel, where he worked as a lector and wood carver in the printing industry. In 1533 he returned to Brașov. The knowledge that he gained in the West and his enthusiasm for the teaching material of the Reformation were to determine his subsequent work. Armed with new ideas he wanted to reach out to a wide audience, so he set up a printing press (1539) and a paper mill (1546) to publish his works. Except for a visit to Martin Luther in Wittenberg, he devoted all of his time and energy to setting up an educational institution along with a library (1547). A separate brotherhood (Coetus Honteri) was dedicated to the promotion of education. Even though Honter was considered a symbol of the Reformation of the East. his Cosmographia, which occupies a special place among his works, became one of the most popular handbooks in Europe, valued even by the Jesuits. His aim was to provide a comprehensive education for young people, which included Latin as well as Greek, and astronomy as well as geography.

In the illustration: Statue in front of the Black Church in Brașov/Kronstadt, designed by Hanno Magnussen (© private photograph)
Valentin Eck

(Valentinus Ecchius) 1494 – 5. 9. 1556

Valentin Eck was born in Lindau, Germany into a middle-class family that was later given the status of nobility. He studied in Leipzig, where he is said to have made friends with the famous humanist Rudolf Agricola the Younger. From there he went to Olomouc in Bohemia and subsequently to Krakow, where he received his degree of Baccalaureus Artium in 1513. During his stay there he associated with members of the humanist circle of Erasmus and himself led a circle of young poets. In 1514 he succeeded Agricola in the professorship for poetics. Three years later he moved to Hungary, mainly upon invitation of the influential magnate Alexius Thurzo, who had offered him the position of a teacher for his daughter Anna. In 1518 he was in Bardejov, where he became the rector of the city’s Latin school and where he left a lasting influence on subsequent generations of humanists. He was largely due to his remarkable textbook on Latin metrics, which earned him considerable reputation in humanistic circles. Apart from his contributions to the dissemination of humanistic ideas as an educationist, he also began to engage himself in political activities. Over the years he worked his way up in Bardejov from town clerk and notary to a member of the city senate and from 1526–1556 to the position of the sheriff. On account of his studies he gained considerable influence. He was subsequently entrusted even with diplomatic tasks, which brought him to the court in Vienna. There he continued to promote the interests of Bardejov. He was a prolific writer, with more than 30 known books or articles that were written between 1512 and 1545 and which often appeared in several editions. His textbook and the humanistic dialogue On the Usefulness of Friendship and Unity were pioneering works with far-reaching effects in for the geographic and cultural region of modern-day Slovakia. Similarly, his treatise On Public Administration which stated that the right form of government should rest on two pillars, legal and ethical, was of particular significance. He also worked as an editor of the works of classical authors including Horace, Prudentius and Augustine.

“There are many forms of natural law, but the most important are the following: to live honourably, not to harm others and to allow everyone that what they are entitled to.”

On Public Administration III, 7

INFLUENTIAL WORKS

- On the Art of the Verse (Krakow 1515),
- On the Usefulness of Friendship and Unity (Krakow 1518),
- On Aversion to the World and Regard for Virtue (Krakow 1519),
- On Public Administration (Krakow 1520)

PLACES OF LIFE AND WORKS

Leipzig (DE), Krakow (PL), Bardejov (SK), Vienna (AT)

NETWORK OF HUMANISTS

Rudolf Agricola the Younger (DE/PL), Georgius Werner, Jodocus Ludovicus Decius, Leonard Cox (PL), Augustinus Käsenbrot Moravus (CZ)

In the illustration: Cover page of the treatise On Public Administration (© private ownership)
Born in Tyrnau, Johannes Sambucus came from an influential family. His father Peter, ennobled in 1549, held the sheriff’s office several times and ensured that his only son received an excellent education. Sambucus enrolled as an 11-year-old at the University of Vienna and thus began a study tour lasting for more than 20 years in the spirit of a modern-day Erasmus programme: he attended several German universities. In 1551 he received the degree of Master Artium in Paris. In 1553 he went to Padua as the tutor of the nephew of Miklós Oláh, Archbishop of Esztergom. During his stay in Italy, he completed a medical degree. Unlimited mobility through Europe and studying at prestigious universities gave him an excellent education. His writings as well as the collection of books in his library also testify to the fact that he spoke several languages. During his travels, he made important connections with influential people who helped him, in the way of a social network, in his later work. At a little over 30 years of age he was appointed as the imperial historiographer and settled down finally in Vienna. Over the years he acquired countless books and valuable Greek manuscripts (thanks to his travels, among others) and built a unique private library that became famous throughout Europe; it contained over 3000 books and 600 manuscripts. The books served to broaden his intellectual horizons. He was also a writer himself: in addition to historical works he wrote poems. His emblematic verses resonated widely throughout Europe. He meticulously edited the manuscripts he acquired and through his editions he wanted to make the new texts accessible to interested specialists in the field. The legacy left by him in the Pannonian region matched that of the greatest pioneers of European humanism.

“In so far as there exists a sense of elegance: the language of Rome will always produce the values it brought with it, and such values will still be of benefit to the people.”

Johannes Sambucus
(János Zsámboky) 1531 – 1584

INFLUENTIAL WORKS
Poems (Padua 1555), Three dialogues on the imitation of Cicero (Paris 1561), Emblemata (Antwerp 1564), Portraits of classical and modern doctors and philosophers (Antwerp 1574)

PLACES OF LIFE AND WORKS
Trnava (SK), Vienna (AT), Paris (FR), Leipzig (DE), Padua (IT)

NETWORK OF HUMANISTS
Johannes Camerarius (DE), Johannes Sturm (FR), Miklós Oláh (RO), Miklós Istvánffy (HU), Paolo Manuzio (IT), Carolus Clusius (Flanders)

In the illustration: Cover page of With which (virtues) one preserves the state, Emblemata, Antwerp 1576, 2nd edition (© archive.org)
Inca Garcilaso de la Vega
12. 4. 1539 – 23. 4. 1616

Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, actually Gomez Suarez de Figueroa, was a writer and historian of Spanish and Peruvian roots. He was the first mestizo of the New World to reconcile both indigenous American and European cultural heritages and to create a work of intellectual brilliance. His command over Spanish, Quechua and Latin is particularly outstanding for his literary output. His work had a considerable influence upon Peruvian historians even till the end of the 19th century.

He was the son of a noble conquistador and an Inca princess from the ruling family. Thanks to his father’s privileged position, he received not only an exhaustive Spanish education in Cuzco, but also lessons in the mythology and culture of the Incas. Because of his paternal inheritance he was ultimately able to travel to Spain for his further studies. Once there, he lived with his uncle Alonso de Vargas y Figueroa in Montilla; in 1561 he moved to Madrid and started his military service. After Alonso’s death, Garcilaso left the army and became a cleric.

He nurtured a network of connections within the humanistic circles in Seville, Cordoba and Montilla. Following the European humanistic trend of the time, he delved into the study of history and the reading of poets of the classical and Renaissance periods. This resulted in the publication of his translation of Dialogues on Love by the Neo-Platonic philosopher Leo Hebraeus (Yehuda ben Isaak Abravanel) from Italian. It was the first literary work in Europe written by an American from the New World.

At the height of his creative career, he presented the history, culture and customs of the Incas and other peoples of ancient Peru, written down from his own childhood memories, the stories of his family, information from letters and visits from leading figures in Peru. It is considered his masterpiece and it became a starting point for Latin American literature. Inca Garcilaso died in Cordoba in April 1616.

INFLUENTIAL WORKS
History of the conquest of Florida (Lisbon 1605), A true commentary on the kingdom of the Incas (Lisbon 1609), A general history of Peru (Cordoba 1617)

PLACES OF LIFE AND WORKS
Cuzco, Lima (PE), Panamá (PA), Cartagena de las Indias (CO), Havana (CU), Lisbon (PT), Montilla, Madrid, Sevilla, Granada, Cordoba (ES)

NETWORK OF HUMANISTS
Luis de Góngora, Miguel de Cervantes (ES)

In the illustration: Cover page of his A true commentary on the kingdom of the Incas Lisbon 1609 (© WikiCommons)
Miguel de Cervantes was a soldier, writer, poet and dramatist. He stands as an outstanding figure in Spanish literature, famous for his novel *Don Quixote*, which is considered the first modern novel and one of the finest works in world literature.

As the third of seven children of an impoverished noble family, he learned under the humanist Juan López de in Madrid in 1566 and studied the writings of Aristotle and Erasmus of Rotterdam.

His life of adventure began while fleeing the Spanish judiciary. In Rome he worked as a valet of a cardinal, after which he travelled to Palermo, Milan, Florence, Venice, Parma and Ferrara. As a soldier of the Spanish navy he took part in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 and was wounded on the left arm. On his way home to Spain, Cervantes was kidnapped to Algiers as a slave. In captivity, he initiated four attempts to escape, but it was only later that he could be bought free. Apart from his work as a supply officer for the naval administration and later as a tax collector, he tried his hand at theatre as well. Eventually, Cervantes was sent to Seville prison for misappropriation of taxpayers’ money. It was there that he started to develop his novel *Don Quixote*.

His life fell into an era of upheaval as social ideals were being questioned by a new materialism. During this time, Cervantes’ work marked the beginning of realism as a literary aesthetic and he created the genre of the modern novel.

Miguel de Cervantes died on 22. April 1616 in Madrid.

**INFLUENTIAL WORKS**

- La Galatea (Alicia de Henares 1585),
- Don Quixote of La Mancha (part I, Madrid 1605; part II, 1615),
- Novelas ejemplares (Madrid 1613),
- Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda (Madrid 1617)

**PLACES OF LIFE AND WORKS**

- Madrid, Sevilla (ES), Rome, Palermo, Milan, Florence, Venice, Parma, Ferrara (IT), Algiers, Oran (DZ), Azores (PT)

**NETWORK OF HUMANISTS**

- Juan López de Hoyos, Lope de Vega, Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (ES)

In the illustration: Portrait of Cervantes (authenticity unconfirmed), oil on canvas, around 1600. Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid (© WikiCommons)
Erik Jönsson Dahlbergh

10. 10. 1625 – 16. 1. 1703

Erik Dahlbergh (Jönsson before his nobili-
tisation) is an exceptional person in Swedish
history. He came from a lowly parentage but
nevertheless rose successfully to high positions
in the up-and-coming Swedish state apparatus.
Dahlbergh’s primary occupation was in the
military, but he gained renown on account of
his richly illustrated topography of ancient and
contemporary Sweden. However, this work
could only be published after his death in 1716;
it contains more than 350 etchings based on
Dahlbergh’s original sketches of Swedish cities,
castles and other historical sites. With his
Suecia, Dahlbergh created the first systematic
image protocol in Sweden without any external
help. Some of his pictures show places that have
either disappeared over time or have completely
changed in their appearance. Dahlbergh thus
followed an antiquarian principle and wanted
to preserve a contemporary documentation for
posterity. As a result, his material has achieved
immense historical significance.

Through his numerous scholarly
travels through Europe Dahlbergh
gained profound knowledge of science
and technology.

These journeys included residences
in Frankfurt am Main, Venice, Rome,
Naples, Palermo and in some other Euro-
pean cities. He also utilised his stays
abroad to broaden his intellectual hori-
zons, thus he came into contact with a
few humanists and with new theories – to name just a few of the famous
scientists: Athanasius Kircher, Giovanni
Battista Riccioli and Mutius Oddo in
Italy. As a talented technical draftsman
and mathematician, Dahlbergh became
an outstanding militarist and fortress
builder. He was later awarded the super-
vision of all fortifications in Sweden; he
was also the main administrator of the
annexed areas of Bremen, Werden and
Livonia.

“The Elbe held him tight, the Rhine tempted him with a certain sweetness, the nymphs
of the Rhône laughed joyfully at him; he especially liked the Tiber ... Here he collected
what Kircher, Battista, Mutius Oddo and others who were blessed by divine knowledge
had spread through their learned writings; and he kept it faithfully for the benefit of his
homeland. Naples admires him, Florence praises him, Padua reinforces and prophesies the
same, that he will be a wise ornament in his Nordic empire.”

Olof Hermelin on Dahlbergh, Plausus et jubila ... Erico Dahlberg. 1696
Therefore it is clear: Since nature has created all human beings on an equal footing, it is right to reject the claim that some people are declared to be slaves by nature.

Disputatio philosophica de aequalitate humana. Uppsala 1689, 30

Virtue and all earthly happiness are based on the correct use of judgment, in practice as well as in theory.

Effluvia. Uppsala 1683, 38, appendix

Anders Spole

13. 6. 1630 – 1. 8. 1699

Anders (Andreas) Spole was a Swedish mathematician and astronomer. He studied at the University of Greifswald in Swedish Pomerania and afterwards at German research institutions. His career was geared towards mathematics, and he got employment at Uppsala University, specialising in pyrotechnics and navigation techniques. At the same time he took over the personal tutoring of the two young barons Sjöblad, whom he later accompanied during their Grand Tour through Europe; this took place in the years 1664–1667. Spole used this unique opportunity to get in touch with the leading scholars of his time and to gain new insight directly from the source of modern research. He met with well-known scientists like Christiaan Huygens, Robert Hooke, Robert Boyle, Nicolaus Mercator, Jean Dominique Cassini and Giovanni Battista Riccioli. According to his own testimony, he became acquainted with the aforementioned and had a familiar relationship with some of them. In this way he symbolised the ideal of the European scholarly society, which, regardless of national borders, respected the scientific and cultural achievements and valued their intellectual potential and character. He also accompanied the young counts of Douglas during their study trip. Upon his returned to Sweden he was appointed professor of mathematics at the University of Lund in 1668. From 1679 he held the professorship for astronomy at the University of Uppsala.

Inoue

Influential Works

Pars sphaerica et usus globorum (1694), Pars theoretica (1695), Treatise on the Midnight Sun (1695), Map of Sweden n Erik Dahlbergh’s Suecia antiqua et hodierna (1716, published posthumously)

Places of Life and Works

Greifswald (DE), Amsterdam, Emden, The Hague, Rotterdam (NL), London, Oxford (GB), Paris (FR), Bologna, Rome, Padua (IT)

Network of Humanists

Christiaan Huygens (NL/FR), Giovanni Battista Riccioli, Jean Dominique Cassini (IT), Ole Rømer (DK)

In the illustration: Lithograph by Otto Henrik Wallgren (© after G. H. Mellin, Sveriges store män ... Stockholm 1840/49, 397)
“His books are in circulation across the wide world, his reputation is not hidden even in some dark corner (...) All the teachings of confusing wisdom in lengthy books have often stalled a journey begun. The most beautiful joys of life perished and stared at doom, almost destroyed by wild barbarism. Glarean comes along and flees the decay all around, a haven and a life-force for the good studies. He revives the honour of the classics with tremendous effort and protects them from decay.”

*Complaint (poem) on the death of Glarean, composed by Iodocus Castner. Basel 1563, 12*

**Heinrich Glarean**

28. 2./2. 6. 1488 – 27./28. 3. 1563

**As a young man** Glarean came into contact with humanism through his studies at various educational institutions. In 1512, when he received his master’s degree from the University of Cologne, he wrote a poem on Emperor Maximilian I who gave him the title *Poeta laureatus* (crowned poet). Since 1514 Glarean got involved in the dispute over the humanist and Hebraist Johannes Reuchlin that was doing the rounds among the European scholars. The demand by the Dominicans in Cologne to ban the writings of Jews was not shared by Reuchlin and other scholars who had, in the wake of Renaissance Humanism, rediscovered and appreciated the Greek and Hebrew languages. Glarean also shared this view and subsequently left Cologne. In Basel, Paris and Freiburg im Breisgau he found a more open mindset as well as students from different countries.

**Glarean won accolades for editing classics from antiquity, for his studies on the chronology of the classical period as well as for Dodekachordon, which laid the foundations for the modern concept of major and minor key tones. He sent the latter work to various scholars in German-speaking countries, which, along with his correspondence, provides us valuable insight into his network.**

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**Influential Works**

**Places of Life and Works**
- Basel, Mollis, Bern (CH), Cologne, Rottweil, Freiburg im Breisgau (DE), Vienna (AT), Pavia (IT), Paris (FR)

**Network of Humanists**
- Johannes Aal, Aegidus Tschudi, Huldrych Zwingli (CH), Rudolf Götschi, Wolfgang Hunger (DE)
“Because so many and such valuable books of all kinds of wisdom have gradually been lost – partly destroyed by flames or in the turmoil of war, partly infested with vermin and mould due to age, but very many also destroyed due to negligence and hatred of the barbarians against literature – all good people who care about the scholarly state must make every effort to ensure that those best books, even if they are only a few, are at least preserved for us and, being saved by divine providence over many further centuries, that they are also preserved for the future, and are not lost through our carelessness. For if that happened, our descendants would be deprived of these wonderful resources in science, art and all kinds of teaching, and I do not think they would then differ much from other living beings.”

Gessner to Leonard Beckh von Beckhenstain, dedication to his Historia universalis. Basel 1545

Conrad Gessner

16. 3. 1516 – 13. 12. 1565

Conrad Gessner encountered humanism in his hometown of Zurich, where Zwingli preached and taught. As is well known, the reformer from Zurich was committed to the Renaissance humanism of northern Italy. Zwingli’s mindset was not only reflected in the nurturing of the three classical languages, but also in the importance given to the ancient authors in the study programmes at school and university. Gessner left Switzerland in his teens to study in France, where he met several humanistic scholars and teachers in Bourges and Paris. In 1545 he tried to record the entire handwritten and printed tradition of Europe which was available in Hebrew, Greek or Latin in his Bibliotheca universalis.

In Mithridates de differentiis linguarum (Mithridates or On the diversity of languages) he described over a hundred different languages, being also the first to include native American idioms from the New World.

With his Historia animalium (4 vols.) he achieved the status of the founder of zoology. In this, as well as in his unfinished Historia plantarum, he was supported by an extensive network of colleagues that ranged from England to Greece and from Spain to Lithuania.

In the illustration: Portrait of Conrad Gessner, oil on wood, 1564 (© Central Library of Zurich, call number: Inv 10)
CREATING
out of the cultural, religious and humanistic heritage of Europe, from
which the inviolable and inalienable rights of man such as freedom,
democracy, equality and the rule of law have developed as universal
values,

IN THE CONVICTION
that after painful experiences Europe, now united, wants to keep
moving forward on the path of civilisation, progress and prosperity
for the well-being of all its inhabitants, including the weakest and
the poorest, that it wants to remain a continent that is open for
culture, knowledge and social progress, that it strives to strengthen
democracy and transparency as the basis of its public life and to work
towards peace, justice and solidarity in the world,

IN THE CERTAINTY
that the people of Europe, proud of their national identity and history,
are determined to overcome the old contradictions and to shape their
destiny together, tightly united forever,

IN THE CERTAINTY
that Europe, “united in diversity”, offers them the best opportunities,
ensuring the rights of individual and aware of their responsibility
towards future generations and the earth, to continue with this great
endeavour that opens up a space in which hope can thrive,

DETERMINED
to continue the work that was begun within the framework of the
treaties establishing the European Communities and that of the Euro-
pean Union, while ensuring the continuity of the *acquis communau-
taire* (common rights) …

(Preamble to a treaty for the EU constitution,
Official journal 2004/C 310/1 of the European Union
dated December 16, 2004)
EUNIC

The mission of EUNIC – *European Union National Institutes for Culture* – is to advocate the European values and, through the cooperation of the European cultural institutes, to illustrate the cultural diversity of Europe both within and outside of the EU. EUNIC aims to put the cultural life of Europe more distinctly in the limelight. It thus strives to intensify cultural dialogue, cultural exchange and sustainable cooperation throughout the world.

Further information at [https://www.eunicglobal.eu/](https://www.eunicglobal.eu/)