

Evaluation of the Research and Professional Activity of the Institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences (CAS) for the period 2010–2014

Final Report on the Evaluation of the Institute

Name of the Institute: Institute of Philosophy of the CAS, v. v. i.

Fields, in which the Institute registered its teams:

History and archaeology

Observer representing the Academy Council of the CAS: Pavel Baran

Observer representing the Institute: Tomáš Marvan, substitute observer Petr Kitzler

Commission No. 11: History and archaeology

Chair: Prof. Dr. Marie-Elizabeth Ducreux

Date(s) of the visit of the Institute: October 22, 2015

Programme of the visit of the Institute: see attached Minutes from the visit

Evaluated research teams:

No. 7 - Department of Comenius Studies and Early Modern Intellectual History; No.

11 - Centre for Medieval Studies

A. Evaluation of the Institute as a whole

1. Introduction

Since Commission 11 –History and Archeology has not been appointed to evaluate the whole Institute of Philosophy and was responsible for evaluating two of its twelve teams, only the two sections of the report concerning these teams will be fully filled in. (See: B. Evaluation of the individual teams). Thus will be only highlighted some distinctive features.

The Institute of Philosophy has a special standing among Humanities and Social Sciences Institutes of the CAS: It includes 12 teams with 209 employees (155.2 FTE : 122, 3 FTE employed in positions for university-educated members of scientific teams, 32, 9 FTE as administrative and service employees), 4 joint research centres, 4 doctoral programmes with universities. It has got a joint accreditation with three faculties at two Czech universities for doctoral programmes from the Ministry of Education and has strong cooperation with Charles University and other universities in the Czech Republic. So it cooperates actively in supervision of theses and teaching. A peculiarity of the Institute of Philosophy is the existence of 4 joint centers, which were founded in the 1990's together with Charles University and introduce a dynamical integrated way of making collective scientific work in humanities.

During the last four-year periods, it had 40 monographs published abroad. The Institute publishes 8 journals, owns the publishing house "Filosofia"; there are 2 libraries with 110.000 volumes. The part of grants financed projects in its budget has reached 4.1 mil. Euro for 69 successful applications, what can be considered as outstanding. However, the part of institutional subsidies still represents 73 % of the budget.

The Institute of Philosophy provides a very valuable service to the 2 evaluated teams (conference room, publication house, facilities).

The 2 evaluated teams represent the second priority area of the Institute of Philosophy: Medieval Studies and Early Modern and Modern Intellectual History. Other priority areas are: Philosophy and Ethics (as the 1st) and Classical Studies, Biblical Studies and Latin and Neo-Latin Studies.

Strengths and Opportunities

- 4 joint centres with Charles University and joint accreditation for doctoral programmes;
- Joint projects with universities;
- Significant pedagogical activities
- Active and successful international cooperation;
- Good publication strategy;
- A balanced age structure;
- Attractiveness to foreigners – 10 foreign employees in 2014, 3 from the USA, 2 from France, 3 from Slovakia, 1 from the UK and 1 from Norway.
- Short - or mid-term stages for foreign researchers –from 6 months to 1 year
- Two-level evaluations of employees (internal evaluation –attestations of the researchers employed in the teams organised by the Institute)

2. Weaknesses and Threats

-Insufficient funding, in spite of successful grant projects. Questionable is here the funding structure (Grants in 2014: 18% of the Institute's wage expenses), and not necessary the financial resources. Foreign financial funding through involvement in many international projects doesn't cover expenses.

-Relative low success rate in EU programmes, which are not always adapted to institutions providing basic research in their field, and do not take in account their needs.

As consequence: low wages and uncertainty in employment sustainability.

Recommendations

Detailed evaluations

Declaration on the quality of the results and share in their acquisition

Declaration on the involvement of students in research

Declaration on societal relevance

Declaration on the position in the international and national context

Declaration on the vitality and sustainability

Declaration on the strategy and plans for the future

B. Evaluation of the individual teams

Evaluation of the Team No. 7: Department of Comenius Studies and Early Modern Intellectual History

1. Introduction

The Department of Comenius Studies and Early Modern Intellectual History, known as “Department of Studying and Editing the Work of J.A. Comenius” until the end of 2013, is the only team dedicated to Comenius’ s life and work in the Czech Republic. Despite its name, it covers a wider scope of competence, as reflected by its three main themes of research: 1) the life and work of J. A Comenius; 2) Early modern intellectual history; 3) the history of modern Comenius Studies and the place of Comenius in collective memory –both in the Czech Republic and abroad. It employs 10 researchers in 2014 (average aggregate FTE: 9, 20 – against 7, 80 in 2010 and 8 in 2012-2013).

2. Strengths and Opportunities

- Integration of the team as “closest international partner” (see http://www.culturesofknowledge.org/?page_id=2) in the international cooperative and interdisciplinary research programme “Cultures of Knowledge”, based at Oxford university and funded by Andrew Mellon Foundation
- 12 (of a total of 16) publications selected for the phase I. ranked as world leading;
- Journal *Acta Comeniana et Historica* ranked A in ERIH with articles only in English, German or French and attractiveness for foreign contributors
- High quality and productive research
- Publications in foreign languages and at leading foreign publishers
- Understanding of Intellectual history as a place for interdisciplinary area in humanities (including digital editions)
- Participation on a COST project.
- Strong presence of young researchers, well-balanced age structure.
- Given the researchers’ small number: Impressive involvement of all of them in teaching at four universities and seven faculties (BA. and MA courses and thesis supervision (11 supervisors), supervision of doctoral dissertations (2 supervisors, which deliver courses for doctoral students too).
- 3 doctoral students were involved in the Team research during the 5 past years

3. Weaknesses and Threats

- Insufficient institutional funding (the same applies to the whole Institute of Philosophy); Research based mostly on grant funding.
- Consequences: 1) difficulty to keep on funding one of the main themes of research in 2014-2018; 2) difficulty to recruit a needed young classical philologist for going on with the edition of Comenius’s *Opera omnia*; 2) possible turn-over and instability of employees: in 2010 2 other workers besides researchers, in 2011, 2, 8; but in 2014, 1, 60 (average aggregate FTE) and 6 researchers had to leave this very dynamical, productive and internationally successful team.

4. Recommendations

-Necessity to keep on with the interdisciplinary structure of the Team, which ensures for a good part its ability for a successful international cooperation

-To strengthen the teams involved in the projects (with a more permanent funding?)

-To think about possibilities for a further involvement of more doctoral students in team activities. The politics of their involvement is already a good one (two of the 3 doctoral students who were already integrated as fellows when writing their dissertations are now post-doctoral fellows), but it would be great to improve it quantitatively.

-Despite the high quality level of the publications and monographs in foreign languages, and despite the fact that the Department is responsible for an indexed journal ranked in the best European category (what is on itself very demanding), it should be possible to increase the number of papers published in foreign journals indexed in databases (in ERIH etc.).

This is to be strictly distinguished from the fact the Department had 0 articles published in journals with impact factor, a general case for the humanities in Europe and for Central European historians including Austrians. So the Commission didn't want to take this formal feature into account for any historical institutes or departments (excepting perhaps the two archaeological institutes).

5. Detailed evaluations

Declaration on the quality of the results and share in their acquisition

-The Department is dealing with three dominant areas: the life and work of J. A. Comenius, early modern intellectual history and the history of modern Comenius studies and the place of Comenius in collective memory. A long-term project, critical edition of all Comenius's works (*J. A. Comenii Opera omnia –Dílo J.A. Komenského*) is the key programme of the team. Publishing the Comenius's work (*Opera omnia*) as critical book series is without doubt very creditable and hereby difficult and time consuming work. The two other areas are implemented through international cooperation (Cost Programme, Andrew Mellon Foundation Programme) and bring valuable and recognised results both at international and national level.

-Noteworthy is that nearly all (12 of 16) publications selected for the phase I. were ranked as „world leading “. Intellectual history can be viewed as a kind of “bridge interdisciplinary topic” in humanities research, and Czech intellectual history in Early modern times is still little known outside the Czech Republic. Thus the team is well-situated for bringing to international discourse new themes and new approaches.

Declaration on the involvement of students in research

-Given the researchers' small number: impressive involvement of all of them in teaching at four universities and seven faculties (BA. and MA courses and thesis supervision (11 supervisors), supervision of doctoral dissertations (2 supervisors, which deliver courses for doctoral students too).

-3 doctoral students have been involved in the Department's research during the 5 past years, 2 of them are now post-doctoral fellows cooperating on the project "Between Renaissance and Baroque".

Declaration on societal relevance

-The publication of Comenius's complete works is a very important task for understanding the memory and cultural inheritance of the Czech Republic; on the other hand, it provides an invaluable service for intellectual history, history of knowledge, of education, pedagogical studies, theological studies.

-The same applies for the Critical Edition of Comenius's correspondence.

-Courses taught at four universities and seven faculties (BA. and MA courses and thesis supervision (11 supervisors), supervision of doctoral dissertations (2 supervisors, which deliver courses for doctoral students too).

-3 doctoral students have been involved in the Department's research during the 5 past years, 2 of them are now post-doctoral fellows cooperating on the project "Between Renaissance and Baroque".

Declaration on the position in the international and national context

-The Department is well established in international context. Very noteworthy and prospective is its participation on the COST-project: "Reassembling the Republic of Letters, 1500-1800: A digital framework for multilateral collaboration on Europe's intellectual history".

-The team is evaluated as closest foreign partner by Oxford teams coordinating the Mellon-funded and wide-ranging project "Cultures of Knowledge", dealing with the transformations of communication in Early—Modern times. Thereby the team has developed a unique opportunity to renew Comenius studies and rethink their international place, which is not a small achievement.

-Integration of the Database of J.A. Comenius's correspondence into an international online database based at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, the Early Modern Letters Online (EMLO) as a first step for the critical edition of Comenius' letters.

-Close cooperation with other foreign scientists through the Team's journal *Acta Comeniana et Historica* (with ERIH best ranking)

Declaration on the vitality and sustainability

-A well-balanced age structure;

-High professional quality of all employees, including post-doc fellows;

-Active involvement in improving post-docs' qualification profiles.

-The programmes, all demanding in term of erudition and specialised knowledge, are attracting highly qualified young scholars.

-New themes and approaches were recently introduced or deepened (Gender aspects, early-modern patriotism in comparative perspective, cultural heritage, understanding the place of Comenius in modern memory, construction of national canons, Patočka's relationships with the Comeniologists etc.)

Declaration on the strategy and plans for the future

-The Department will maintain its present 3 main themes of research, however the 3d one – the history of modern Comenius studies and Comenius as a specific site of memory has still to be funded. The two other ones will be funded on the basis of two new

grants projects (GAČR), a standard one (the Philosophy of Jan Amos Comenius) and one Centre of Excellence in History of philosophy and science, understood here as multidisciplinary (literature, philology, theology, philosophy, communication, history, early modern medicine) and as integrative of cultural and societal history (*“Between renaissance and Baroque: Philosophy and Knowledge in the Czech Lands within the Wider European Context”*). The Centre of Excellence includes 2 other institutions or teams in the Czech Republic.

-Preparation of 2 volumes of Comenius's correspondence, and of a monograph on Comenius 's network of correspondents.

-A further volume of Comenius *Opera Omnia* will be published.

-The European project COST will continue until 2018 and will be an opportunity to strengthen the already good and productive relationships with Oxford University, as well as with other perspective partners in Germany and elsewhere.

-Contacts with the Wartburg Institute (London), with the Collegium Artes Liberales in Warsaw will be dealt with in further depth, including visits to Prague of foreign postdoctoral fellows, or negotiated (with Japanese Specialists of Comenius Studies).

Evaluation of the Team No. 11: Centre for Medieval Studies

1. Introduction

The Centre for Medieval Studies was established in 1998 as a joint workplace of the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences and of Charles University. Its first director and founder, Prof. František Šmahel, is now deputy director, the present director being the archaeologist and historian Petr Sommer. From the beginnings, it intends to develop medieval studies on an international and interdisciplinary basis together with a highly-qualified support to the formation of doctoral students in all fields of the Medieval Studies. The Centre works as a national network of medievalists with strong links with foreign medievalist research and has earned an international reputation of excellence. The Centre currently employs 18 part-time researchers and 6 PhD students (stable or similar numbers during the evaluated four-year period), it has 106 associate Fellows and 11 foreign partners. It houses or collaborates in several programmes funded by the European Commission, the GAČR, the Czech ministry of Education, provides databases and the resources of its unique library with fundamental editions of sources as well as the newest publications in medieval studies. A mark of its active involvement in transversal reflexion of societal relevance is the fact that its director coordinates one AV Strategy 21 programme.

2. Strengths and Opportunities

-A real integrative role within medieval studies in the Czech Republic;
-A valuable action in the formation and professionalization of young medievalists;
-Remarkable successes in grants, ability for developing several leadings projects running in parallel;

-capacity to cooperate with and to house ERC grants and COST programmes.

-A high number of high quality publications in Czech and in English and German;

-A clever publication strategy, combining publishing at renowned local publishing houses and publishing abroad at leading foreign publishers, with as consequence a better integration of the findings and results of Czech medievalists in the world;

3. Weaknesses and Threats

-Insufficient funding, despite successful applications and participation in grant projects.

4. Recommendations

-To continue in the current role of integration and dynamic stimulation of domestic medieval studies

-To keep on with the successful publication strategy

5. Detailed evaluations

Declaration on the quality of the results and share in their acquisition

-The Centre for Medieval Studies is a leading place for Research in interdisciplinary Medievalistics from the 10th to the 15th century, it is well established and internationally well recognized and renowned, with 4 main programmes dealing with history, history of Arts, archeology, literature, publications and digitalization of sources. It has also an invaluable role in doctoral formation and post-doctoral specialization in the Czech Republic.

-During the 2010-2014 period, the CMS has housed a Centre of Excellence project (until 2011) „*Christianity and Czech Society in the Middle Ages: Norms and Reality (the European contexts of Czech themes)*“ together with the Catholic Theological Faculty of the Charles University, funded by the Ministry of Education, its outputs have won several national awards. It has cooperated with a highly ranked international program initiated by scholars of Cambridge University (*Christianisation and the rise of Christian Monarchy*), the results of which were published into 2 monographs, in English and in Czech. The CMS has carried out a NAKI project, „*Culture and Arts of the Benedictine Order in Central Europe 800-1300*“. running from 2011 until the end of 2015, with contributions of experts from Germany, Hungary, Austria, Poland etc., and including two exhibitions, a very successful one at the Wallenstein Riding School in Prague on the one hand, and a traveling exhibition in Broumov area on the second hand, as well as the making of a Database of Benedictine abbeys connected with specialised maps in a GIS.

-Number and quality of the publications: in the 2010-2014 period, the CMS has published 129 chapters in professional books, 35 professional books, 36 articles in scholarly journals and 6 contributions to proceedings.

-The CMS has developed very successful politics of high quality publications –besides monographies in Czech, papers in foreign languages in leading international journals, monographies in English at prestigious academic publishers (Brill, Brepols, etc.). Total number of outputs: 206, Evaluated outputs: 18, with 9 ranked in the world-leading quality category, 4 in the internationally excellent quality category, and 5 in the internationally recognised quality category.

-The CMS publishes twice a year 1 journal, *Mediaevalia Bohemica*, with papers in Czech, but also in English, German or French, as well as Slovak and Polish.

-Being a joint workplace of the CAS and Charles University for Medieval Studies, it cooperate with researchers from two other Institutes of the CAS: the Institute of History and the Archeological Institute in Prague, as well as with researchers from Charles University through projects and programmes.

Declaration on the involvement of students in research

-Besides the direct employment of 6 PhD Students and the involvement of other students in the projects of the Centre, some researchers acted as supervisors and co-supervisor for BA, Master and Doctoral thesis (3+2+3) and 5 bachelor theses as well as 4 doctoral theses were defended in 2010-2014. In 2012-2013, the CMS got internships from the Faculty of Arts of the Charles Universities as an additional support for doctoral students' work.

-The CMS organises a course for doctoral students, open to foreigners and attracting PhD students from the United States and European countries (Erasmus students).

-PhD Students from Charles University participated in the making of the database of the Benedictine Central European abbeys

-Involvement of the PhD student employees in the ERC grant, co-located at the CMS.

Declaration on societal relevance

-Supervision of Students' theses.

-As a joint workplace of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Charles University, the CMS cooperates regularly with CU faculties, but provides also teaching at other Czech Universities. Its researchers have taught a semester course at the Humboldt University in Berlin.

-Coordination of and participation in one Strategy AV 21 project (Europe and the State: Between Barbarism and Civilisation)

-The CMS supervises the continuation of several long-term publication series (*Archiv český*, *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, or Jean Hus' Complete works, which are of crucial importance and relevance both for the Czech national heritage and the national and international community of historians.

Declaration on the position in the international and national context

-Several PhD students from the United States and European countries (through Erasmus programme) have attended the course on Central European History organised by the CMS for doctoral Students, and other teachings dedicated to them.

-Successful networking and research cooperation with foreign institutions (for instance: a bilateral agreement signed between the CMS and the Austrian project SFB 42 Visions of Community (VISCOM) (Austrian Academy of Sciences and the University of Vienna) ; successful participation as co-recipient in one Starting Grant project of the ERC (*The Origins of the Vernacular Mode. Regional Identities and European Networks in Late Medieval Europe*) in 2011-2016.

-In 2012-2014: Organisation of 7 sections of the International medieval congress in Leeds;

-Participation in the COST action "New Communities of Interpretation: Context, Strategies and Processes of Religious Transformation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe".

-Organisation of other successful international and national conferences and projects.

Declaration on the vitality and sustainability

- A well-balanced age-structure of the scientific team with many young researchers: 1 employee in 25-30 category, 5 in 30-35, 5 in 35-40 (= 11 under 40), 5 in -40-50, 1 in 50-55, 3 in 65-70, 2 over 70. The eldest researchers are leading historians with high international recognition.
- PhD Students are directly employed in grant projects, national and international programmes and thus can benefit from being involved in high-quality medievalist etworks at the national and international level.
- Attractiveness of the CMS summer school, which was already attended by 250 PhD Students.

Declaration on the strategy and plans for the future

- Some of the above mentioned international interdisciplinary projects are still running and will be completed (Culture and Art of the Benedictine Order in Central Europe 800-1300, Cultural Codes and their Transformation in the Hussite Period, The Origins of the Vernacular Mode). It will cooperate, together with the Institute of History of the CAS and with the University of Trier, with the new project “Coexistence of the Christian and Jewish Populations in Medieval Bohemia”. It will continue to prepare the publication of Jean Hus’ *Opera Omnia* at Brepols Publishers.
- Continuation of the long-term project Czech medieval sources on-line
- Enrichment of the library as a Central European medievalist library.
- The CMS will maintain its irreplaceable connection with Charles University and other Czech universities, to insure quality training of PhD Students (seminars, courses, teaching, MA and PhD theses supervision, summer schools).
- Further recruitment of PhD students as direct employees.

Date: December 18, 2015

Commission Chair: Prof. Dr. Marie-Elizabeth Ducreux