Enlightenment Decentred: Networks, Media, Practices

Magdalen College, Oxford
(Summer Common Room)
30 September – 2 October 2026

Convenors:
Avi Lifschitz (Oxford) & Anita Traninger (Freie Universität Berlin)

WEDNESDAY, 30 September

9.00 Welcome & Introduction
Anita Traninger (Freie Universität Berlin) & Avi Lifschitz (Oxford)

9.15 Session 1

Paris – Potsdam – Ferney – London: the incomplete rehabilitation of Emperor Julian
Avi Lifschitz (Oxford)

Caracas – London – Istanbul: cosmopolitanism and patriotism in the life and readings of an Enlightened, revolutionary criollo
Mónica Bolufer Peruga (European University Institute, Florence)

11.15 Session 2

Rome – Beijing – Seoul: a knowledge network and its media, 1644–1783
Eun-Jeung Lee (Freie Universität Berlin)

A methodology for intellectual independence: Enlightened strategies for modern knowledge in Guatemala, 1790s–1820s
Nicola Miller (University College London)

13.30 Session 3

Europe – the Sinosphere: the Eurasian Enlightenment in two keys
Chenxi Tang (University of California, Berkeley)

An English Enlightenment from Lausanne and Göttingen to St Petersburg and Pennsylvania: Gibbon and Bentham in Venturi's shadow
Brian Young (Oxford)

THURSDAY, 1 October

9.15 Session 4

Oviedo – Polling – Parnassus: alternative routes to an Enlightened ars critica
Anita Traninger (Freie Universität Berlin)

Eger – Vienna – Rome: Catholicism and improvement across borders in the Enlightenment (1750s–90s)
László Kontler (Central European University)

11.15 Session 5

Berlin – Venice – Madrid – Lisbon – Recife: making the Portuguese Jewish Enlightenment in the eighteenth-century Dutch Republic
Alicia Montoya (Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen)

Pierre Bayle: global history as Christian apologetics. Rotterdam – St. Andrews – Paris – Göttingen – Calcutta
Dmitri Levitin (Oxford)

14.15 Session 6

When the nomads met the naturalists: knowing and narrativizing the steppe from the Volga to the Amur
Shiru Lim (Leiden)

Florence – Châlons – Basel: Enlightenment projects of poor relief
Damiano Bardelli (Oxford)

16.15 *The Voltaire Foundation: an introduction*
Tom Wynn (Oxford)

FRIDAY, 2 October

9.15 Session 7

Berlin, Copenhagen and beyond: educational reform, public Enlightenment, and authority
Jonas Thorup Thomsen (Oxford) & Olivier Higgins (Oxford)

Enlightenment by comparison: Scotland and Naples revisited and continued
John Robertson (Cambridge)

John Pocock's decentred Enlightenments
Richard Whatmore (St. Andrews)

12.00 Concluding discussion

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