Introduction: the Enlightenment in Bohemia

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The present volume endeavours to contribute to the current discussions on the European Enlightenment by pointing to the centrality of ethics within Enlightenment thought. The intention is not to interpret the whole European Enlightenment from this point of view, however, for we focus solely on Bohemia – a peripheral Catholic country in Central Europe. We will treat the Bohemian lands as part of the Habsburg Monarchy, which emerged in 1526/1527 through the union of the Habsburg hereditary lands and the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary.

We do not intend to shock the reader by overestimating Bohemia's significance, nor do we declare it to be a centre of the Enlightenment. Indeed, Bohemia was on the periphery, but even case studies on such peripheral areas have some bearing on the image of the European Enlightenment. Recently, John Robertson chose two peripheral locations, Scotland and Naples, as points ‘from which to observe the European Enlightenment’. Robert Evans has also made a similar claim for Wales, which he explicitly compared to Bohemia.

Despite its apparent marginality, Bohemia was a very interesting periphery, where Catholic intellectual culture was significantly enriched by a Jewish minority and a cosmopolitan nobility. It was certainly not a

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culturally homogeneous ‘national context’ and, indeed, few European countries were. In Prussia, for example, the Enlightenment was significantly enriched by the French-speaking Huguenot minority and the Jewish Haskalah in Berlin. We could sketch a similar picture for Poland, Italy, Spain and so forth. In the 1980s, the Czech Mikuláš Teich and the Englishman Roy Porter showed the Bohemian Enlightenment ‘in a national context’ in a collection of studies that marked the beginning of a new trend. We hope that this volume will help readers to see the European Enlightenments not just in a national context, but in a multicultural context that takes account of the varied and interwoven cultural spheres of eighteenth-century Europe.

The present introductory article addresses three topics. Firstly, we will look at current Enlightenment scholarship to establish a basis for a focus on morality. Secondly, we will survey the currents of Enlightenment moral philosophy to show the alternatives open to people of the eighteenth century. Thirdly, we will offer a brief survey of the Enlightenment, considered as a quest for new foundations of morality, in Bohemia. This short account provides the context for articles that follow in the volume because Bohemia’s intellectual history, with the exception of that of Rudolf II’s Prague, is quite unknown in the English-speaking world.

The labyrinth of European Enlightenments

In recent years, the image of the European Enlightenment has changed in terms of methods, intellectual content and geographical scope. The most important methodological innovations may be summed up as the emphasis on intellectual history, the pluralisation of Enlightenments, and the rehabilitation of religion as a fundamental aspect of both eighteenth-century experience and the Enlightenment.

The reasons for the recent revival of intellectual history were elucidated by Jonathan Israel in his groundbreaking interpretation of the European Enlightenment. It cannot be denied, however, that criticism of the ‘old intellectual history’ was justified. From approximately the 1960s, the historians of the Enlightenment focused on the social contextualisation of ideas because they perceived that the ‘old style’ intellectual history showed ideas as ‘socially disembodied’ and failed to integrate the achievements of ‘great thinkers’ into social and political developments. The result was a preference for ‘externalist’ approaches,

namely the social contexts of ideas, the diffusion of ideas and the new cultural history.\textsuperscript{9}

The ‘externalist’ approaches, however, have also become unsatisfactory, as Jonathan Israel shows in his bold interpretation of the Enlightenment.\textsuperscript{10} It is certainly not desirable to return to the history of ideas that had focused on a canon of ‘great men’ isolated from social contexts. Israel proposes a ‘new, reformed intellectual history presiding over a two-way traffic, or dialectic of ideas and social reality, and focusing less on finished theories [...] than the reconstruction of polemical, frequently unresolved arguments, [...] in which the chief emphasis is less on thinkers and theories than on “thinking” and debates’.\textsuperscript{11} It is this history of ‘thinking’ that this volume addresses.

Recent developments in the intellectual history of the Enlightenment have also abandoned the single Enlightenment model and set off on the journey towards multiple Enlightenments. Although this is a new enterprise, older research had also implied a division of the single movement along confessional or national lines, beginning with the influential volume of Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich published in 1981.\textsuperscript{12} Much of this work, however, implied the parallel coexistence of various Enlightenments.\textsuperscript{13} In contrast to these older views, the newer models of multiple Enlightenments imply a tension between contesting opposites connected through a dialectic relationship.\textsuperscript{14} There have been several versions of this dialectic. First of all, there was Darrin McMahon’s portrait of the Catholic Counter-Enlightenment, which he positioned as a partner and contestant of the Enlightenment.\textsuperscript{15} The competition was subsequently transferred into the heart of the German Enlightenment by Ian Hunter, who envisaged a war between the jurisprudential or civil Enlightenment and the regressive metaphysical or intellectual Enlightenment.\textsuperscript{16} Hunter

\textsuperscript{9} The terms ‘externalist’ and ‘internalist’ come from Steven Shapin. The first term denotes the broad spectrum of methods and questions in cultural and intellectual history that forestall research specifically into ideas, whereas the interest in ideas may be called ‘internalist’. Steven Shapin, \textit{The Scientific revolution} (Chicago, 1998), p.196-200.


\textsuperscript{11} Israel, \textit{Enlightenment contested}, p.23.

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{The Enlightenment in national context}, ed. R. Porter and M. Teich.


\textsuperscript{14} I do not mean here the dialectic of social history and ideas, of which Israel speaks in his work.


coupled the second strand with political traditionalism and an effort to save scholastic metaphysics. Finally, there is Israel's dichotomy of ‘radical’ and ‘mainstream Enlightenments’, which puts forward the fundamental truth that there was never only one Enlightenment.17

At first glance, it seems that Israel has brought the multiple-Enlightenments approach to a higher level because he has enriched the number of contesting Enlightenments. He has not only envisaged the radicals and the mainstream, but also divided the mainstream into Leibnizian–Wolffian and Lockean–Newtonian currents, which spread across Europe while checking the expansion of radical thought. Using military metaphors, Israel shows the conquests the two schools made and creates a new mind-map of Enlightenment Europe. The Lockean–Newtonian model was victorious in England, France and Italy, whereas Central and Eastern Europe were conquered by the Leibnizian–Wolffian school. The main battle was fought over France, where Voltaire allied with the Jesuits to promote the Newtonian model, but was soon defeated by the radical Enlightenment led by Diderot. In spite of this over-multiplication and the dynamics he describes, Israel’s model lacks the dialectic tension we have mentioned because he attributes all the merits solely to the radical Enlightenment. Modern values, however, cannot have been invented by any single genius from the past, not even Spinoza.

Israel’s approach is also a step back from the tendency to re-evaluate religion, which is the third major change in recent Enlightenment scholarship. This tendency had been more noticeable, however, in the changing interpretations of great Enlightenment figures18 than in general surveys.19 Usually, the approach to religion has been selective. Traditionally, heterodox religious currents such as Pietism and Jansenism were appreciated, while those loyal to established churches were rarely assigned to the Enlightenment.20 In recent years, views about

17. Israel, Enlightenment contested, n.7.
some established churches have changed as well. In light of the rediscovery of some Enlightenment theologians and the acknowledgement of some philosophers’ religious beliefs, it is high time to admit that the defining feature of the European Enlightenment was not the enmity to religion.

Israel’s interpretation, however, shows the Enlightenment again as a campaign against religion. He even envisages a contradiction between morality and faith. It is paradoxical that he returns to an anti-religious orientation while appreciating the fact that the chief figures of the European Enlightenment were not atheists. Instead of accepting this as an impulse for new research, Israel simply shifts all the well-known Enlightenment icons, such as Voltaire, Rousseau and Kant, into the misguided mainstream, which committed the error of trying to combine faith and reason. He acknowledges that the theistic mainstream was the strongest tendency at the time, but claims that it was bound to fail, implying that atheism is a ‘modern value’. A further implication of his conclusion is that ‘modern values’ comprised a ready-made programme that only needed to be pushed through against the resistance of the forces of traditionalism and reaction.

Consequently, in spite of Israel’s impressive achievement, the benefit of the multiple-Enlightenments approach has been lost. Without the tension of the dialectic mentioned above, the (mainstream) Enlightenment becomes shapeless and seems to include basically any person, idea or school that can fall into one of the subcategories of the Enlightenment. Fania Oz-Salzberger and John Robertson have complained on different occasions that the Enlightenment has lost its intellectual identity. Robertson responded to this loss of identity by reaffirming the notion of the single Enlightenment and stressing that its intellectual coherence lay in ‘the commitment to understanding, and hence to advancing, the causes and conditions of human betterment in this


22. Israel, Enlightenment contested, p.511-12, 787.

23. Israel, Enlightenment contested, p.12, 503, 562; Israel, A Revolution, p.175-76.

24. Israel, A Revolution, p.15, 152.


26. According to Peter Gay, the Enlightenment’s defining features were ‘atheism, republicanism and materialism’. For a further discussion see R. Porter, Enlightenment: Britain and the creation of the modern world (London, 2000), p.3-9.

world’. He tested his thesis through an inventive comparative study of the Enlightenment in two peripheral areas – Scotland and Naples – and reached the conclusion that there were ‘two contexts, but one Enlightenment’.

Another answer to the present quandary has been offered by David Sorkin, who introduced the concept of an ‘Enlightenment spectrum’ and reaffirmed the rehabilitation of religion. Instead of radicalism, he expounds a thesis of the ‘religious Enlightenment’ that champions ‘ideas of reasonableness and natural religion, toleration, and natural law that aimed to inform, and in some cases, also reform established religion’. Sorkin locates the religious Enlightenment ‘to the right of the mainstream’ and adds that both categories significantly overlapped. He claims:

We should replace the notion of a unitary, secular Enlightenment project with the concept of an Enlightenment spectrum. We should resist the impulse to hypostatize the religious Enlightenment as a separate entity and rather see it as one position on that spectrum. [...] We must renounce the temptation, however seductive and politically expedient, to designate any one version, either in any one place and any one time, or in any one cultural or religious tradition, the Enlightenment. [...] The Enlightenment spectrum boasted a constant interaction and intersection between the religious and the secular. [...] The religious–secular dichotomy first became dominant with the French Revolution and in fact destroyed the religious Enlightenment. These statements would seem to imply a further multiplication of Enlightenments. My reading of Sorkin’s interpretation, however, is that the ‘spectrum’ is, rather, an attempt at a compromise, showing one European Enlightenment with different shades in different ‘national contexts’. The ‘spectrum’ implies also a plurality of currents and topics within one European Enlightenment. The greatest asset of this approach is that it returns religion to the game, thereby preventing historians from identifying the Enlightenment simply as a secular ideology. It shows religion as a partner, not as an enemy, of progress towards ‘modern values’.

Enlightenment morality

The present volume endeavours to contribute to this discussion by pointing to the importance of moral philosophy within the ‘Enlighten-
ment spectrum’. Indeed, the Enlightenment may be defined as the enterprise in the eighteenth century that tried to uphold morality by seeking a philosophical basis for morality after Revelation lost its motivational force. In spite of the difference between the radical and the religious (or mainstream) Enlightenments, morality was a common target at which both of them aimed. The difference between the two strands stemmed from the difference between two metaphysical views of the sources of moral knowledge, but the two strands shared a common goal. The Enlightenment, however, should not be understood as a catch-all for all eighteenth-century thinkers. Many intellectual groups and currents were located outside: those who denied the necessity to search for new foundations of morality, those who combated new ideas with old arguments, and the nihilists, who denied morality completely and represented the enemies of the Enlightenment.³⁴ It should also be noted that the Enlightenment was a unique enterprise which has not continued into the present because it was connected with the state of knowledge of man and morality in the eighteenth century.

A claim for the centrality of morality to the Enlightenment resembles the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, who argued that there was an unsuccessful ‘Enlightenment project’ and that the Enlightenment philosophers were responsible for destroying religious faith – the only viable foundation for human morality.³⁵ Although I claim that the Enlightenment focused on morality, however, I do not claim that philosophers are to blame for the religious argument’s loss of force. Even if I disagree with his ultimate conclusions, MacIntyre did correctly shift attention to morality.

MacIntyre’s theory has been refuted,³⁶ but Enlightenment experts have not presented an alternative interpretation of moral philosophy within the European Enlightenment. Israel’s account leaves little room for moral philosophy, despite the fact that one of the eight points of the modernity programme is ‘universalism in ethics anchored in equality and chiefly stressing equity, justice, and charity’.³⁷ Unfortunately, in Israel’s Enlightenment contested, the account of modern morality is reduced to a few pages wherein the greatest attention is devoted to Diderot.³⁸ The other problem is that Israel’s interpretation does not ask about the moral principles put forward by Enlightenment philosophers; all representa-

³⁴. The identification of nihilists as a separate group outside Enlightenment ethics had already been suggested by Lester G. Crocker, Nature and culture; ethical thought in the French Enlightenment (Baltimore, MD, 1963), p.326-430.
³⁸. Israel, Enlightenment contested, p.511-12, 787, 808.
tives of the radical Enlightenment are presented as exponents of morality based on reason, equity and equality.

The Enlightenment’s search for new foundations of morality certainly started with religious scepticism. The threat to human morality posed by religious doubt soon became a central concern, however, even in theological debates. The logic of Enlightenment controversies and arguments shifted morality to the centre of Enlightenment thought. In his interpretation of the German Enlightenment Werner Schneider claims:

Generally speaking we can say that religion changed in the Enlightenment and ceased to be the leading spiritual power. Its place was taken over by morality as the motivating power, or, if you like, as a substitute religion, which means one that had been based on religion initially, but in the end, it was morality based on reason that itself provided the foundations of religion.

Finding viable foundations of morality was an important task even in the works of Spinoza and other thinkers of the early radical Enlightenment, but morality also occupied a central place in the work of the greatest systematic philosopher of the European Enlightenment – Christian Wolff. His system of philosophical disciplines also appeared in the article ‘Philosophie’ in the French Encyclopédie. Wolff’s new system of Weltweisheit was the culmination of his previous essays in logic and metaphysics. After a couple of ethical treatises in his mature years, Wolff returned to the topic in the gigantic Latin tracts of his last philosophical period.

Moreover, it cannot be claimed that the Enlightenment destroyed all faith in God, because the philosophical doubts of Enlightenment moralists also produced new proofs of God. The controversy over the divine foundations of morals ended with Kant’s reversal of the question in the Critique of pure reason of 1781. In a passage on the critique of speculative theology, Kant insisted that the study of morals was the only means of knowing God, not as a notion or as entity, but as an ‘ideal of transcendental theology’. Kant claimed: ‘Now I maintain that all attempts of reason to establish a theology by the aid of speculation alone are fruitless, that the principles of reason as applied to nature do not conduct us to

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40. Werner Schneider, Hoffnung auf Vernunft: Aufklärungsphilosophie in Deutschland (Hamburg, 1990), p.31.
any theological truths, and, consequently, that a rational theology can have no existence unless it is founded upon the laws of morality. 43 This sort of ethics was called ‘moral theology’ to differentiate it from ‘theological morality’. In his subsequent work Kant openly advocated the primacy of morality, which he reiterated in the Critique of practical reason,44 Metaphysics of morals and Religion within the boundaries of reason alone. God was not perceived as a source of moral knowledge, but as a source of hope, as a postulate of practical reason.45

Contemporary historians, often uninterested in philosophical subtleties, usually attribute a central importance to political or economic matters. Ethics, however, was present even there, for the treatment of economic or legal matters presupposed the choice of certain ethical concepts. Economists usually proceeded from some kind of utilitarianism and lawyers from the morality of rule.

Nevertheless, there was not one Enlightenment morality, for the attempt to achieve new and viable foundations for morality led in many directions. The panoply of moral principles is too large to be described here; even a classification is rather problematic. Nonetheless, there is a tempting solution provided by the contemporary German expert on ethics, Otfried Höffe, who claims that there have always been only three moral concepts: morality of virtue that takes its target as individual happiness; morality of utility that aims at collective happiness with utility as its principle; and, finally, deontic morality, which is based on the autonomy of the will with freedom as its target.46 These three precepts may be denoted by the names of their most distinguished representatives – Aristotle, Bentham and Kant – or as eudaimonia, utilitarianism and autonomy.

Höffe’s three moral concepts must be modified and supplemented, however, because philosophy as ‘cultural practice’ has changed over time and its ‘essence’ and the delimitation of its sub-disciplines cannot be taken for granted. Changes also manifested themselves in the way that the individual classics were interpreted. For example, Aristotle ‘the

practical philosopher’, as interpreted by Gadamer\textsuperscript{47} or twentieth-century virtue ethics,\textsuperscript{48} is a different author from the Aristotle used by baroque Jesuits.

In what follows I adopt a middle position between Höffe and the historical account by Jerome B. Schneewind, which is arguably the best treatment of early modern ethics. His interpretation is not based on a matrix of moral principles, but on the development from the morality of obedience to that of self-governance. He does not mention Catholic casuistry, however, and omits utilitarian concepts of the late Enlightenment as they developed in France or Germany.\textsuperscript{49} Nevertheless, there are also older works by the literary historians Lester G. Crocker and Jacques Domenech who interpreted Enlightenment ethics in France.\textsuperscript{50}

In terms of moral aims and principles, we can distinguish three main concepts of Enlightenment ethics as the morality of rule, utilitarianism and the morality of perfection. Morality of rule was a new endeavour started by Grotius and continued by natural-law jurists. It was motivated by the effort to solve political conflicts, not to constitute a moral subject.\textsuperscript{51} To this end, it relied on prescribed rules that were justified by natural law. Natural law had a longer history, reaching back to the Stoics and scholastic theologians. Early modern rule-centred morality was not concerned with the motivation of the moral agent; the only thing that mattered was the outcome and conformity to laws. The source of moral knowledge was a comparative study of various human cultures. According to Schneewind, it was the most widespread moral school of the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{52}

The notion of utilitarianism encompasses an extensive family of moral concepts, some of which were atheistic, while others recognised God as the originator of the natural order. This was the case with the French physiocrats,\textsuperscript{53} whereas Helvétius and d’Holbach denied the religious

\textsuperscript{47} See Aristotle, \textit{Nikomachische Ethik VI}, ed. and translated by Hans Georg Gadamer (Frankfurt am Main, 1998).
\textsuperscript{48} For example MacIntyre, \textit{After virtue}, ch.5; Philippa Foot, \textit{Virtues and vices} (Oxford, 1978).
\textsuperscript{49} J. B. Schneewind, \textit{The Invention of autonomy: a history of modern moral philosophy} (Cambridge, 1998).
\textsuperscript{51} According to Höffe, the ethical theory must meet four minimal requirements, one of which is constituting a moral subject. The Grotian natural law does not meet this requirement. See Höffe, ‘Sind Moral- und Rechtsbegründung kommunikations-(konsens-, diskurs-) theoretisch möglich? – Einige Thesen’, in \textit{Ethik und Politik} (Frankfurt am Main, 1979), p.243-50, (244).
foundations of morality. They believed that the sources of moral knowledge existed in human sensual perception and that the guiding principle was social utility. In the Habsburg Monarchy, a sort of monarchical utilitarianism was practised, particularly in the works of the jurist Beccaria, the cameralists Justi and Sonnenfels and the philosopher Seibt. Although these Catholic conceptions coupled utility and happiness, the source of moral knowledge was undoubtedly Revelation.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, utilitarian concepts that considered happiness as physical bliss gained force. There was a growing tendency to infer moral principles from human physiology. This tendency was observed in the works of many German, Swiss, Austrian and French physicians devoted to vitalism, or in the late works of Austrian and French philosophers. A case in point is that of the idéologues in France, who elaborated on the sensualist premises inherited from Helvétius. British utilitarianism is certainly the best-known version today. Nevertheless, it did not originate in isolation from continental developments. Bentham himself recognised Helvétius as the inventor of utilitarian principles. Bentham’s famous slogan about the ‘greatest happiness’ was borrowed from an English translation of Beccaria. Utilitarianism in this broad sense was certainly the most influential concept of the Enlightenment.

Morality of perfection is a difficult matter, for its greatest representative, Immanuel Kant, set his thinking above all previous moral concepts, claiming that they had all been ‘heteronomous’ and based on ‘material principles’, whereas his ethics was based on autonomy. In the *Groundworks on the metaphysics of morals* and in the *Critique of practical reason*, he expounded a scheme by which he organised all the previous moral concepts according to the principles (Bestimmungsgründe) of education, civic constitution, physical feeling, moral feeling, perfection and

60. I. Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (henceforward GMS), in *Werkausgabe*, vol.7, A/B, p.32-34.
divine will. Although Kant announced his ethics to be relative to Wolff’s concept of perfection and the theological concept of divine will, he refuted even these two as heteronomous. All these heteronomous concepts based ethics on an exterior target which the moral action should attain, be it moral good, happiness, perfection or some other goal. Kant confuted these older theories by proving that the foundations of morality are in the laws that the self-governing moral agents impose upon themselves. This morality springs from our own good will, which Kant defined as a faculty of human reason, having nothing in common with the senses.

In spite of Kant’s self-perception, it is not possible to isolate him from his precursors. I prefer to speak of the morality of perfection, which also includes Kant. This school of ethics can be traced back to the neo-Stoics, Descartes and Leibniz. In the age of Enlightenment, the morality of perfection was especially espoused by philosophers in Germany. It is a matter of controversy as to whether Rousseau should be included; his ethics was based on a rationally conceived ‘moral sentiment’ and inspired by Stoic morality. Moreover, it has been proved that Kant’s idea of autonomous will was inspired by Rousseau. In Scotland, where utilitarianism prevailed, the philosopher Thomas Reid defined an ethical concept of self-governance at the same time as Kant, but his concept is based on intuitionism. Solutions provided by Immanuel Kant were well received by university professors, but had little impact on practical politics or the emerging ‘public sphere’.

It should not be forgotten that the ethical subject construed by Kant’s ethics differed from the public-spirited philosopher promoted by the prevailing utilitarian concepts. All ethical strands used similar common terms to denote the envisaged moral subject – ‘philosophe’, ‘philosopher’, ‘Weltweise’, ‘Aufklärer’. Although these terms do not correspond to delimitations between the different ethical concepts, the autonomous subject, as envisaged by Kant, was a different kind of moral person from the public-spirited intellectual of the utilitarian ethics, even though they were both called ‘philosophers’. Kant grounded his ethics in the autonomy of the will and not in exterior ‘goods’, and his ideal of the philosopher, as explained in the Critique of pure reason, is ‘not a reasonable artist,

64. See Martin Rang, Rousseaus Lehre vom Menschen (Göttingen, 1959), p.335-41.
Figure 1: The scheme of modern approaches to moral philosophy published by Immanuel Kant in his *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788). Author’s personal collection.
but a lawgiver of human reason’.67 In this sense, Kant defined the Enlightenment in his famous essay of 1784, where ‘emergence from self-incurred immaturity’ was meant as the attainment of moral autonomy and not as a rebellion against authorities.68

Behind these ethical concepts, there was also the question of sources of moral knowledge, which were found either in Revelation or in human reason. Apart from that, there were a large number of sensualist and materialist explanations that could not offer a satisfactory answer to this question, since positing the senses as the origin of all knowledge simply failed to explain the human capacity to think. Even though this problem is no longer discussed in contemporary ethics, the question still aroused emotions during the eighteenth century. Attitudes towards these metaphysical questions cut across ethical concepts, however. Adherents to utilitarian concepts could be found among atheists, as well as among staunch Catholics within the Habsburg Monarchy. Does this entail a contradiction? Most often it did not. These metaphysical questions belonged to a completely different class of problems. One could adhere to utilitarianism without being an atheist, but one could hardly be an atheist and expound a true morality of perfection. Apart from that, Christianity in the eighteenth century did not present a single moral principle, but a choice. If one put forward ethics based on the Decalogue, it was a rule-centred morality, backed by the authority of Scripture. Indeed, the traditional notion of natural law was identical to the simple rules imparted by the Bible;69 if one chose the baroque Aristotle, it was a morality of happiness/blessedness. Revelation, reason, and ‘moral feeling’ were, in this sense, sources of moral knowledge and not moral principles.

The question of the sources of human moral knowledge is important for one more reason. It is with reference to this metaphysical question that we may separate the irreligious or ‘radical’ Enlightenment from the ‘mainstream’, as Israel does. Those who ruled out God absolutely belonged to the radical Enlightenment. In what follows, I retain this distinction, but without the evaluative implications concerning merit for inventing modern values. I view ‘modern values’, whatever the term means, as the result of the dialectic struggle between the mainstream


Enlightenment and its enemies, not as the work of one philosophical current. Enlightenment discourse, however, makes it necessary to separate the irreligious Enlightenment of atheists from religious currents, though the divide between them was sometimes not quite clear. According to Sorkin’s concept, we may still see both of them as positions on the ‘Enlightenment spectrum’.

Bohemia: the Enlightenment in a multicultural context

The Habsburg Monarchy was one of many areas where Kant’s ethics of autonomous will had little impact. Despite this, Bohemia and Austria belonged to Enlightenment Europe, for there was a keen interest in finding viable foundations for human morality. Rather than focusing on these critical questions of eighteenth-century thought, however, Czech historiography evolved along national lines, so that ‘man’ and ‘morality’ as objects of historical research were replaced by ‘nation’ and ‘national identity’. This line of thought endures and the national question is still the central concern of historiography in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, as well as of many foreign works on Central Europe. Moreover, the Enlightenment, as Rita Krueger has pointed out, is often conflated with the Czech national revival. In Czech textbooks of history, the Enlightenment is absent. Instead, historians prefer to speak of ‘enlightened absolutism’ and ‘the beginnings of the Czech national revival’. The Enlightenment in Central Europe, therefore, is usually shown as a process directed by the state and the central topics involve nationality, not human morality and religion.

In the early twentieth century, Sudeten-German historians evolved their own version of this nationalistic interpretation, in which the Enlightenment was presented as a major German contribution to Bohemia’s cultural history. This approach produced important works by Eugen Lemberg and Eduard Winter, which still have some influence on Enlightenment scholarship. For example, Lemberg’s idea that the Prague philosopher Seibt was an exponent of German culture has never been substantially challenged. Winter’s Bohemia-centred interpretation of Josephism still has a marked influence on research. Their point of view does not lack foundation in facts because some of the Enlightenment figures actually came from German-speaking north and north-west Bohemia. The work of Sudeten-German historians, however, was based

on anachronisms and manipulation of the facts. For example, Winter presents Josephist Church reform as a response to the masses of Germans demanding a true German Church and a separation from Rome. In this view, Joseph II appears as a precursor to the German national Führer. As a matter of course the Sudeten-German master narrative omitted the Jewish Haskalah; even Sonnenfels was scorned as a representative of Austrian local patriotism, inimical to the ‘German’ Seibt in Prague.72

After 1945, communist Czechoslovakia replaced this view by an amalgamation of old-style Czech nationalism and Marxist–Leninist dogmas, which produced a strange picture of the Enlightenment as a side effect of the economic transition from feudalism to capitalism. Consequently, the representatives of the Czech Enlightenment were identified as patriotic historians and linguists who revived the Czech language. This was an image described by Jiří Černý in the 1950s, as well as Soviet historian Alexander Sergejevich Mylnikov in 1974.73 From the 1960s onwards, there was a growing interest in the history of the natural sciences, which was represented by Josef Haubelt. Here the main object of scholarly interest were again Czech linguists and patriotic historians, but also geologists, botanists and chemists. The sciences were interpreted, from Friedrich Engels’ point of view, as instruments helping mankind to progress from religion towards a ‘scientific world view’.74 The official Marxist–Leninist ideology saw the spheres of philosophy, religion and law as a ‘superstructure’ determined by an economic ‘basis’.75

There is still no account of the Enlightenment in Bohemia that emphasises the quest for morality, rather than the quest for national identity. New approaches and unexpected facts have come to light, however, in the monograph Philosophy between the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment by the Catholic philosopher Stanislav Sousedík.76 Published in Czech in 1997 and in German in 2009, Sousedík’s monograph has established the foundations for a possible interpretation of philosophy, but only as it was practised within universities and Church institutions.

76. Stanislav Sousedík, Filosofie v českých zemích mezi středověkem a osvícenstvím (Prague, 1997).
Bohemia, however, was a multicultural country where the search for the foundations of morality was also pursued beyond the world of university scholars. There were three worlds in which the philosophical query of the Enlightenment was pursued, comprising the world of university learning, the world of the nobility and the Jewish world. We should understand these as communicative frameworks where philosophy was practised and which also differed in ‘scientific culture’, namely the authorities quoted, the style of philosophical accounts and the languages used.

For intellectual endeavours, the most important area was still the world of university and Church learning. In this milieu, Latin survived as the language of scholarly communication and was oriented towards German philosophy and jurisprudence. In the 1770s Latin was gradually replaced by German, whereas French never became the language of the sciences in this communicative framework. It is necessary to couple university and Church scholars because they both referred to similar German authorities and shared the same style of philosophising, which becomes apparent in contrast to the nobility.

The other two worlds – the world of the nobility and that of the Jews – evolved in parallel to the world of university scholars. Contrary to common opinion, the nobles were quite important for intellectual history, not only as sponsors, but also as active writers and philosophers. The nobility was not totally isolated from university learning, for most noblemen received some sort of higher education at academies or universities. The surviving writings of aristocratic writers, philosophers and administrators, however, show that they lived in a different intellectual world. They differed from scholars not only in their economic independence, but also in their use of French and their orientation within the French Enlightenment. Voltaire, Diderot and d’Holbach were adored figures in the world of the Habsburg nobility, but detested enemies in the world of theologians and university professors. Aristocratic writers and philosophers rarely communicated with local scholars; they addressed their works to the international community that mastered French. Count Joseph Nikolaus Windischgrätz is the sole noble writer who created a systematic philosophy; the others devoted them-

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selves rather to the literature of entertainment. There were also some exceptional ‘dark’ writers from the nobility who wrote on mysticism, but their work is as yet unresearched.

The last of the Enlightenment worlds was that of the Jews, in which the Haskalah was confronted with Orthodox Judaism and Messianic movements. While the universities were oriented towards Catholic Germany and the nobility looked towards France, the Jews aligned themselves with Berlin’s Haskalah, and Moses Mendelssohn in particular. In this volume, we will use the contemporary term maskil (scholar), to denote the representatives of the Jewish Enlightenment. The Hebrew notion of Haskalah (Enlightenment) was not derived from the word for ‘light’, but from the Hebrew for ‘reason’.

The interaction between these intellectual cultures was complicated by the fact that they occurred in a state that officially combated irreligion, that is, ‘the radical Enlightenment’. Nevertheless, the coordinated defence of morality based on revealed religion was, apart from patriotism, the only unifying element of these three worlds. It was this defensive mission that gave the Enlightenment in Bohemia its impetus and dynamism. This campaign, which began with the reforms in the 1740s and 1750s, lasted until the end of the century and became even more intensive during the French Revolution. It took quite a long time, however, before the state endorsed an official version of controversialist theology, which was the most important instrument in the fight against the radical Enlightenment. The Jesuits, who governed the faculties of philosophy and theology until 1773, appeared to be incapable of creating a modern version of controversialist theology.

There were, however, attempts to do so, most notably by Simon Jordan (an Augustinian friar), Bohuslav Hertwig (abbot of the Premonstratensian monastery in Strahov), Anton Boll (a Jesuit) and Karl Heinrich Seibt. In spite of this, the official controversialist theology as it was taught at universities and diffused by textbooks still focused on the polemic against the Protestants, whereas the threat posed by religious disbelief and Spinoza was ignored. Until 1778, controversialist theology courses were based on a textbook by the Jesuit Veit Pichler, written in 1711 and reissued many times until Rautenstrauch’s reform.

80. See the literature quoted in Cerman’s article on Windischgrätz in this volume. In the Vormärz Georg Franz, Count Buquoy may be seen as his successor as a new systematic philosopher in the new generation.
81. Both Franz Joseph, Count Thun and Leopold Adalbert, Count Buquoy, whose mystical work exists in manuscripts, have only recently been discovered.
83. The masculine plural of maskil is maskilim.
84. Veit Pichler, Theologia polemica, in duas partes divisa (Venice, Niccolaus Pezzanus, 1749).
In Pichler’s work, the impetus of theological polemic was aimed against the Protestants and the Jews, while rationalist doubt, deists or atheists were not even mentioned.

The first modern official manual of controversialist theology was penned by the Dominican Peter Maria Gazzaniga and published in 1778. The author was a celebrated preacher invited to Vienna from Italy. His sermons were widely acclaimed, as revealed by the pope’s decision to attend Gazzaniga’s divine service during the papal visit to Vienna in 1782. Gazzaniga’s manual gave precepts for authorised arguments against modern disbelievers, as well as elementary information about the works and character of modern sceptics.

Gazzaniga’s work confirms that Austrian controversial theology did not perceive the Enlightenment as a unified movement. This is a difference from the French apologists, as described by Darrin McMahon, who ‘departed from the premise that there was such a thing as a philosophic doctrine, a coherent body of ideas working toward mutual, pernicious ends’. The Austrian defenders of Christianity envisaged a plurality of sects, although their classifications differed. Gazzaniga distinguished two groups – the enemies outside the Church, and the enemies of the Catholic Church within the Christian community. The representatives of the Enlightenment were located in the first group. He calls them atheists, epicureans and naturalists. Some of these categories require further explanation. While ‘epicureans’ deny divine providence, ‘naturalists’ deny Revelation because they only acknowledge natural religion. Strangely enough, Gazzaniga did not speak of deists or freethinkers, although these terms had been commonly used in Habsburg government regulations. He did analyse Spinoza’s system in detail, classifying it as ‘atheismus pantheisticus’.

The common effort to combat enlightened irreligion also affected the nobility. Approximately from the 1770s onwards, the fight against irreligion became a part of educational programmes for young noblemen. The role of religion was also emphasised more strongly in the education of young noblewomen. The campaign against modern irreligion was publicly supported by aristocratic writers. This tendency was manifested by Franz Joseph, Count Kinsky, who directed the Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt. Apart from that, there are manuscript refutations of freethinkers or of Helvétius written by Franz Adam, Count Waldstein; Ernst Guido, Count Harrach; George, Count Browne; and others. The

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89. See Cerman, *Habsburgischer Adel*. 
attitude of noblemen was ambivalent, however, because, in their capacity as state officials, they appeared to be much stricter than they were in private.\textsuperscript{90}

The Christian defence against radicals was analogous to the Jewish defence against Messianic and sceptical assaults on rabbinic orthodoxy. It is extremely difficult, however, to unravel these complicated relations within the Jewish world. At the beginning of the century, the sincerity of the Prague rabbis' fight against Shabbateanism was called into doubt by the personal failing of Rabbi Jonathan Eybenschuetz, a prominent member of the rabbinic board and the director of one of Prague's yeshivas. He stayed in Prague from 1711 to 1741, during which time he led the fight against the Shabbatean heresy. After he became chief rabbi of Altona, Hamburg and Wandsbeck in 1750, however, he was revealed to be an adherent of Shabbateanism. Even though Eybenschuetz denied this claim, the controversy over his relation to the Shabbatean movement divided Ashkenazic Jewry until his death in 1764. Prague Jews, ashamed by the accusation, defended Eybenschuetz, while his enemies were led by Jakob Emden from Altona.\textsuperscript{91} Eybenschuetz, however, was an exception among the chief of Prague.

The succeeding chief rabbis in Prague were already indefatigable defenders of rabbinic orthodoxy, particularly Ezekiel Landau, who held the post from 1754 to 1793, and the \textit{Oberjurist} Eleazar Fleckeles. After Landau's death, the post of chief rabbi in Prague was left vacant and the community was governed by the rabbinic board, of which Fleckeles was a powerful member. Their allies in their fight were the censors \textit{in hebraicis}. This important office was entrusted to a Jesuit. At the time of the Eybenschuetz controversy, the post was held by the Jesuit Franz Haselbauer (from 1712 to 1756), who was inimical to the Jews. Later, the office was exercised by Leopold Tirsch (from 1764 to 1789), who left the Jesuit order deliberately before its abolition. The most active mediating figure was his successor, Karl Fischer, who held the office from 1789 to 1843 and who had worked as Tirsch's adjunct from 1785 to 1789. He was firmly allied with Rabbi Eleazar Fleckeles, who appeared to be a staunch defender of rabbinic orthodoxy.\textsuperscript{92} Fischer was, however, also connected to Professor Karl Heinrich Seibt and the circle of \textit{maskilim}


around Baruch Jeitteles. The greatest threat to the Jewish religion came from the Messianic movements, the Shabbateans and the Frankists. These struggles culminated in the riots during the Messianic year 1800.\textsuperscript{93}

There were not many points of contact between the three worlds. The nobility interacted with the university scholars mainly during their studies; the adult noblemen established contacts with famous philosophers from France or Germany rather than with local scholars. One of the meeting grounds between the nobility and Bohemian scholars were the Masonic lodges and the Bohemian Society of Sciences. There were even fewer possibilities for an exchange of ideas between Jewish scholars and Christian philosophers. An epoch-making change was the opening of the University Library to the public in 1777, which offered a new opportunity for the Jews to enter the world of Christian learning.\textsuperscript{94} The Prague \textit{maskil} Israel Landau celebrated this occasion with an allegorical engraving that shows the library as a future paradise where wolf and lamb, kid and leopard peacefully graze.

Here a critical role again fell to the censor \textit{in hebraicis} Karl Fischer, who also worked as a librarian and mediated the communication between rabbis and philosophers. All in all, there was a patriotic sense of a single Enlightenment to which the Jews also belonged, as is proven by the ambitious lexicon of Bohemian and Moravian scholars, edited by Franz Martin Pelcl and Nikolaus Adaukt Voigt.\textsuperscript{95} This patriotic work, \textit{Abbildungen böhmischer und mährischer Gelehrten} (\textit{Portraits of Bohemian and Moravian scholars}), also included Rabbi Jonathan Eybenschuetz and Rabbi Ezekiel Landau. The contemporary nobility was also present, but only as sponsors to whom each volume was dedicated. Voigt and Pelcl looked to the historical Bohemian nobility instead, particularly to the humanist poet Bohuslaw Hasisteinsky of Lobkowicz and the eccentric Franz Anton, Count of Sporck, whom they lauded for his financial generosity towards artists.

What was the initial impulse for Bohemia’s progress towards the Enlightenment? At the beginning of the eighteenth century, there was no crisis of religious consciousness to be observed in Bohemia.\textsuperscript{96} What

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{94} Iveta Cermanová and Jindřich Marek, \textit{Na rozhraní kríšťanskeho a židovského světa: Příběh hebrejského cenzora a klementinského knihovníka Karla Fischera (1757-1844)} (Prague, 2007), p.65-82, 102-54.
  \item \textsuperscript{95} [Nikolaus Adaukt Voigt, Franz Martin Pelcl and Ignaz von Born], \textit{Abbildungen böhmischer und mährischer Gelehrten und Künstler}, 4 vols (Prague, Johann Karl Hraba, 1773-1782).
  \item \textsuperscript{96} An old idea of Paul Hazard, revived by Israel, who also sees the cause of the Enlightenment in the misery of the Thirty Years War. See Israel, \textit{Enlightenment contested}, p.63-65.
\end{itemize}
Figure 2: An allegory of the newly opened National Library in Prague, which was also open to Jewish scholars, commissioned by Israel Landau in 1793. Courtesy © National Library, Prague, inv. no.53 F.3.
can be observed, however, is a crisis of baroque Catholic learning – a system of knowledge that had been intentionally obscure, operating with a symbolic language and oriented hierarchically towards knowledge of God.97 This hierarchy was based on Aristotle; its mystical nature was potentially inimical to the advancement of the sciences. Consequently, ethics was a neglected philosophical discipline as well. In the 1720s, the nobility and the Habsburgs showed signs of dissatisfaction with this theologically oriented hierarchy of knowledge, manifesting their attitude by deliberately deserting the Catholic universities in favour of the reformed Protestant universities in the Netherlands.98 It was Johann Jakob Vitriarius who attracted the Habsburg nobility to Leiden, where they studied natural law under his guidance. This was a modified version of public law and natural law based on Grotius and refashioned by Philipp Reinhard Vitriarius at the end of the seventeenth century. In the 1730s and 1740s, the Habsburg nobility discovered the newly reformed university of Leipzig, where they also studied law under Johann Jakob Mascov and his colleagues. Among those who attended the courses in Leipzig were Wenzel Anton Kaunitz and many other noblemen who later became chief officials in the reformed monarchy.99

This generation of noblemen educated in Leiden and Leipzig and at the Benedictine university in Salzburg directed the university reforms launched in 1751. These reforms started a confrontation between the state’s utilitarian conception of the Enlightenment and the gradual changes that grew from below within the Church and universities. The departure from Aristotle’s philosophy was noticeable with the Piarists. In Hungary, they engaged with Wolff’s philosophy in the 1740s;100 in Bohemia, they turned to Thomism as the nearest acceptable alternative.101 The Jesuits embraced Wolff’s philosophy in the 1750s, but also adopted Newton’s physics.102 Their version of Wolffian ethics was not based on perfection (Vollkommenheit), but on natural law. After the university reforms Wolff’s philosophy was officially recommended by governmental regulations. Within a decade, arguments based on the ‘geometrical method’ and machine metaphors began to appear in ministerial memoranda. The ministers and court officials, however, never quoted their sources.

In practice, it might be doubted whether the Wolffian system really dominated the Habsburg universities. Although manuals of Wolffian

98. Cerman, Habsburgischer Adel, p.266-83, 320-44.
100. Alexius Cörver, Philosophiae omnium recentissimae (Presburg, n.p., 1741).
philosophy were used in university courses from the 1750s and officially prescribed in 1774, Wolff's system never acquired an absolute monopoly, for it had always been used very selectively.\textsuperscript{103} In courses on philosophy, Newton's physics were preferred to Wolff's. In politics, natural law was the leading discipline, where Wolff's method was used in some questions as an instrument that helped defend old ideas with new arguments. Individual philosophers at Habsburg universities seldom identified themselves as Wolff's followers, although they held him in high esteem. The system of ethics that was applied in the Habsburg Monarchy can best be characterised as a utilitarian \textit{Popularphilosophie}, rather than Wolff's rationalist ethics of self-governance.

What did the principles on which the Habsburg enlightened monarchy based its policies actually encompass? In textbooks, the Enlightenment in the Habsburg Monarchy is often depicted as led by the state. The state, however, did not invent any new or original school of ethics, but simply drew on arguments based on the old-style natural law. In the concept of Karl Anton Martini's natural law we can identify elements of Suarez, Grotius and Pufendorf.\textsuperscript{104} It certainly drew on Vitriarius, which is often ignored. Habsburg enlightened despotism was justified by the principle of the common good, which compelled citizens to be subject to a sort of utilitarian morality. On the other hand, the cameral sciences, as modernised by Johann Heinrich Gottlob Justi, established that the supreme aim of a state was to attain happiness, which was linked in turn to the precept that happiness is the supreme good of every citizen's life.

Although the rule-centred morality of natural law and the principle of happiness seemed to contradict one another, Martini's natural law managed to combine both by way of perfect and imperfect obligations. The perfect obligations stand higher, for they spring from perfect rights that belong to every person. The original perfect right is that of preserving one's life, from which the right of security, the right of self-defence and the right to property were inferred. Consequently, the perfect obligations are things we must do to exercise our perfect rights, whereas the imperfect obligations pertain to things we do not have to do, but which would be praiseworthy, like the obligation to work for the common good, for instance. If the imperfect obligations clash with other people's perfect rights, they cannot be exercised. Thus natural law set limits to the power of the state over the citizens, for the imperfect obligation to work for the common good is limited by the citizens'

\textsuperscript{103} See Ivo Cerman's article on the universities in this volume.

\textsuperscript{104} Michael Hebeis, \textit{Karl Anton Martini (1726-1800): Leben und Werk} (Frankfurt am Main, 1996).
perfect rights. Even if the state required its citizens to contribute to the emperor’s task in achieving the ‘greatest happiness for the greatest number’, as Beccaria required, it would be merely an imperfect obligation.

The further development of moral philosophy in Prague was determined by Karl Heinrich Seibt, a professor at the Charles-Ferdinand University in Prague, whose life and oeuvre are interpreted in this volume. Although it was not our intention, Seibt emerges in this volume as the pivotal figure of the Enlightenment in Bohemia, who integrated all three worlds and promoted modern Enlightenment ethics. Seibt put forward a sort of eudaimonic ethics with God as its origin. The target of human morality was happiness; the means of achieving it was virtue; the instrument showing us what to do was the moral sense. Seibt also taught aesthetics and was well acquainted with the thoughts of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. As a promoter of German Popularphilosophie, he transmitted to Bohemia the ideal of a public-spirited intellectual that also influenced the theologians. Franz Stephan Rautenstrauch and his school transformed it into the concept of an active parish priest who became the elementary representative of the Josephist Church reform. Ferdinand Kindermann, one of Rautenstrauch’s followers, tried to impose this ideal on the rabbis in Prague, although their most important task was not pastoral work, but the study of Halakha.

The intellectual climate in Bohemia changed significantly during the 1770s. The spread of German Popularphilosophie and the appearance of new secular scholars led to the emergence of new media which publicised the moral ideas of the German Enlightenment in Prague. The most important of the new genres was undoubtedly the moralische Wochenschrift (moral periodical), which appeared in Prague in 1770. The first of these – Die Unsichtbare (The Invisible) – proudly announced to Prague in the first issue the ‘beginning of the eighteenth century’. The genre survived well into the 1780s. Besides these, festive speeches on morality written by teachers of literature from Vienna, Olomouc and Prague also appeared. They do not represent the peak of moral philosophy, but testify to efforts to diffuse the ethical ideas of the Enlightenment among broader sections of society. Most of them exhorted the young nobles to become useful

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106. For his ethical concept see Ivo Cerman’s article in this volume, although Seibt is present virtually in all articles.
107. See Winter, Der Josefinismus (1943), p.163.
108. See the article by Louise Hecht in this volume.
109. See the article by Helga Meise in this volume.
members of society, thereby popularising the utilitarian approach to morals.

*Popularphilosophie* also spread throughout the country, for the 1770s saw the beginning of Maria Theresa’s school reform. Even though the reform followed the principles established by the Augustinian abbot Johann Ignaz Fellbiger, the referee for elementary schools in Bohemia was Seibt’s pupil, Ferdinand Kindermann, and the department for *Gymnasia* was presided over by Seibt in person. Kindermann was appointed supervisor of the ‘Normal schools’, which means that he directed the implementation of school reform. The new system of elementary schools provided not only the three Rs and practical training, but also lessons of morality and religion.110

Seibt’s endeavour also provoked counter-attacks. It was not the Catholic Church, however, but competitors from the state apparatus who started the assault. The first attack came from Ignaz von Born, the geologist and exponent of Sonnenfels’ party in Prague.111 Born arrived in Prague in 1771 as an assessor in the Mint and Mining Office. He presented a programme focused on physics and the geological research of Bohemia and viewed Seibt as his competitor. From 1771 onwards, a series of pamphlets appeared in Prague which attacked Seibt as a bel esprit and a superficial thinker. The libels also accused Seibt of plotting with Abbot Rautenstrauch to seize power over the university. A second attack came in 1779, when the president of the Court of Appeals in Prague, Franz Xaver, Count Wieschnik, accused Seibt of spreading immoral and irreligious ideas and initiated a large trial. Ultimately, Seibt weathered the attack; however, the main question remained unresolved.112

This was the question of Revelation’s role in utilitarian political discourse. Officially, the Catholic Habsburg Monarchy did not call Revelation into doubt. In practice, Revelation was replaced by a minimalistic religious precept because the leading role in the edifice of the ‘useful sciences’ was occupied by natural law. The leading Austrian natural lawyer, Karl Anton Martini, did not claim to follow Pufendorf in his rejection of revealed religion, for he acknowledged the role of the Bible as a source of natural law.113 Although he identified natural law with the Decalogue, he did not follow this principle in his account of the doctrine and did not apply biblical arguments. In moral philosophy, it was also argued that the task of the discipline was to discover moral precepts by means of human intellect, because arguments based on Revelation were

112. See Ivo Cerman’s article on Seibt in this volume.
113. See Karl Anton Martini, *Ordo historiae iuris civilis* (Vienna, Johannes von Trattner, 1755).
reserved for the theologians. In fact, Revelation was simply marginalised, though not refuted.

This leads us to the question of the theological foundations of the Josephist school of moral theology, as I shall call the moral theology that sustained the Josephist Church reform. The leading figure, Franz Stephan Rautenstrauch, abbot of the Benedictine Břevnov monastery in Prague, was a connoisseur of Enlightenment philosophy, as his diary proves.114 Due to his early death, however, his reforming mission was accomplished by his follower, Augustin Zippe, who formulated the Josephist doctrine of moral theology.115 The Josephist Church reform led to a shift in emphasis from speculative to moral theology and to the building up of a more effective system of defence against freethinkers and the radical Enlightenment. It also hesitated, however, between natural and revealed religion. As it seems, dogmas and Revelation were not refuted. Nevertheless, a simplified natural theology was preferred with a view to successful communication with the public.

The reign of Emperor Joseph II promulgated toleration policies that led to freedom of worship for Lutherans, Calvinists, the Greek Orthodox and the Jews.116 Yet this religious toleration did not deny previous tendencies towards a more effective defence against the radical Enlightenment. Although enemies of the Christian religion were still combated, the Josephist reforms made the Catholic Church in Central Europe more sustainable. Josephist theologians did not surrender to or ignore the threat of secularised society; they attempted to address the public through modernised pastoral care. Pastoral and moral theologies subsequently gained more weight within the new university curricula because theological education focused on the training of the parish clergy.

It is not clear, however, whether there was a link between this moral theology and Josephist toleration. The Josephist theologians expounded Christian love, which might explain the turn in Church policy. Whether their ideas were Jansenist or not does not help us very much.117

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114. Národní archiv Praha (National Archives, Prague, henceforward NA Prague), Břevnov monastery archives, carton 85.
115. See Jaroslav Lorman’s article in this volume.
Nonetheless, Catholicism preserved its elevated position as the main denomination, conversion from Catholicism being extremely difficult. Toleration was not fully impressed on the hearts of the educated elite, as the discussion at the diet of 1790 showed. Most of the prelates, including the bishop of Litoměřice, Ferdinand Kindermann, demanded a revocation of the Patent of Toleration and a return to repressive policies. It was the lords – the higher nobility – who opposed this move and saved the policy of toleration.  

Josephist toleration policy also pertained to the Jews as well as to Christian denominations. Although the enlightened emperor was held in high esteem by Jews throughout Europe, he granted them only limited freedoms. Unfortunately, he did not abolish the gravest restrictions that degraded the Jews to the position of inferior citizens. The ‘familiar’ system, established in the 1720s to check the growth of the Jewish population, remained in force. Jews were also not permitted to hold state offices. In fact, the Josephist reforms did not grant freedom to the Jews, but endeavoured to impose on them economic roles in accord with monarchic utilitarianism.

The Josephist reforms also provoked a confrontation with Jewish culture. Soon after the Patent of Toleration, Kindermann carried the mission of education to the Jews. A new *Israelitische Hauptschule* was opened in Prague in 1782, where the Jewish youth was to obtain an elementary education after the model of schools for Christian children. Some changes were required, however, by the rabbinical party in Prague. The rabbis, headed by Ezekiel Landau, were opposed to the lessons on religion, for this subject was taught in the traditional Jewish *heder*. As a compromise, the *Hauptschule* only offered lessons on morality, for which a secular Jewish teacher of morality was appointed. Paradoxically, morality acquired a new role as a religiously neutral mixture of simple moral precepts that served as a basis for an unequal dialogue between the Jews and the enlightened Habsburg Monarchy. Indeed, it represented an unwanted proof of the relative neglect of

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revealed religion in the utilitarian political discourse. From then on, the secular Jewish teachers embodied a new wing of the Haskalah, which might be referred to as collaborative. The most important representatives of this trend were the secular scholars Peter Beer and Herz Homberg.

Both Beer and Homberg came to Prague from the country and arrived quite late – Beer in 1811 and Homberg in 1818. The Jewish community and the rabbis were so entrenched in their resistance to the *Israelitische Hauptschule* that they had recourse to these two radicals, playing them off against one another. They were both simply hopeless outsiders, however, disrespected by the Jewish oligarchy in Prague. By the end of the 1780s, an indigenous Prague Haskalah emerged, represented by the Jeitteles family and the circle around them. The Jeitteles were descendants of the physician Jonas Jeitteles (b. 1735), who acquired a secular education at the University of Halle. His sons, Baruch and Jonas, however, devoted themselves to philosophy and religion. Baruch fled to Berlin and made contact with Mendelssohn, whose *Popularphilosophie* determined the shape of the Prague Haskalah. After returning to Prague, Baruch established a private yeshiva and concentrated a circle of pupils around him who recruited pupils from poor scholars coming to Prague from the country. He and his brother contributed to the review *ha-Meassef* (*The Collector*), published by Mendelssohn’s circle in Berlin. They wrote philosophical poems and moral short stories in the guise of Seibt, Gellert and other popular philosophers.

The Prague *maskilim* grew more dissatisfied at developments in Berlin after Mendelssohn’s death and their reciprocal partnership ended in conflict. After the death of Rabbi Ezekiel Landau in 1793, the obituary written for *ha-Meassef* by Baruch Jeitteles incited a major dispute over the goals of the Jewish Enlightenment. Prague decided to combine the search for new foundations of morality with religion, whereas Berlin turned to a more severe radicalism. The other difference concerned language. Whereas the Berlin *maskilim* cultivated Hebrew and addressed

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121. In the beginning, the moral precepts were imparted in primary-school readers written by Kindermann, and then by the Jewish teacher Moses Wiener. See Hecht, ‘Die Prager deutsch-jüdische Schulanstalt’, p.220-21.
123. See Rachel Manekin’s article in this volume.
scholars, the Prague maskilim used the colloquial vernacular language, Juden-Deutsch, as a literary language, and addressed the common people. As the Prague circle grew larger, the Jeitteles were joined by some of the sons and grandsons of Rabbi Landau, who also became adherents of the Haskalah.

In 1802, the Prague group started to publish a sort of Jewish moral periodical, the Jüdischdeutsche Monatschrift, which survived only six months. In this publication, the Prague programme was elucidated more precisely. A number of philosophical essays and poems demonstrated Prague’s fidelity to Mendelssohn’s legacy, which they believed to have been betrayed in Berlin. They still reflected the Popularphilosophie, which had by then already been forsaken in Prussia. An important essay, ‘On the Enlightenment’ (Über die Aufklärung), expounded the Prague conception of the Haskalah as moral knowledge of good and evil. After the abolition of the review, the Prague maskilim expressed their views in foreign periodicals – Sulamith (from 1806), which was published in Leipzig, and Bikure-ha-ittim (from 1820), which was published in Vienna. Morality had occupied a central place for the group that published the Monatschrift, but was later replaced by a concern for history, languages and politics. Apart from these reviews, the young generation of Prague maskilim also published a number of scholarly publications in which they addressed the questions of Jewish religion, history, gender relations and languages. This endeavour was substantially supported by the printer, Israel Landau, who directed, though never owned, a publishing house.

The quest for enlightened morality in Bohemia ended with a profound transformation of Enlightenment thought at the close of the eighteenth century. Some of the new tendencies seemed to deny the rationalist principles expounded by some key figures of the high Enlightenment. Generally, many physicians and physicists had recourse to occult forces, from which they expected an explanation of deep causal processes that used to be within the realm of theology. One of the most popular and strongest occultist strands originated in the Habsburg Monarchy. It was Mesmerism, whose inventor, Franz Anton Mesmer, practised as a phys-

131. On this tendency see Peter Hanns Reill, Vitalizing nature in the Enlightenment (Berkeley, CA, 2005); The Hermetic imagination in the high and late Enlightenment, ed. Monika Neugebauer-Wölk (Berlin, 2009).
ician in Vienna and some other parts of the monarchy. His ideas, however, did not have a very strong impact in Bohemia. Some other well-known occultists chose Bohemia as a safe shelter for the last years of their lives. Giacomo Casanova settled in the chateau of Dux in 1785, where he profited from the generosity of Count Joseph Karl Waldstein. Ignaz von Born, the well-known geologist, also entertained a keen interest in occultism and mysteries. In his chateau in Staré Sedliště near Tachov, he pursued alchemical experiments and showed a genuine fascination for mysteries in the Masonic review he established in Vienna, although his main concern was geology and mineralogy.

The advancement of the natural sciences was ardently supported by Ignaz von Born, who established two scientific institutions. Between 1771 and 1774 the Bohemian Private Learned Society originated from the circle around Born in Prague. The association received public status and half-hearted protection from the state in 1784. At that point it changed its name to the Bohemian Society of Sciences. The new institution conjured up an interest in sciences researched according to a different scholarly programme from that of Seibt. From the very beginning, the society described itself as dealing with ‘physics, mathematics, and patriotic history’, which excluded both philosophy and theology. Members of the learned society also showed their difference from Seibt by a spectacular neglect of art, literature, poems and essays.

The occult sciences received some backing from Masonic lodges which revived their activities in the 1770s. There was the old aristocratic lodge Zu den drei gekrönten Sternen [Three Crowned Stars], already established in 1741 by French officers occupying Prague. In 1771, however, Ignaz von Born participated in the establishment of a new important lodge, Zu den drei gekrönten Säulen [Three Crowned Pillars]. Born’s lodge devoted itself to the sciences, causing many university professors to join it. Once Born left for Vienna in 1776, where he resumed his Masonic activities, the efforts he initiated in Prague began to stagnate. Finally, in 1784, he became Grand Secretary to the newly established Austrian Land lodge, which was an occasion for Born to start publishing a scholarly Masonic review, Journal für Freymaurer. The review existed from 1784 to 1786 and published literary essays as well as mystical articles. Although the role of this medium has not been sufficiently assessed, Andreas

133. See the article by Rita Krueger in this volume.
134. The lodge was unnamed at the beginning; only in the 1760s it started to use the name Zu den drei gekrönten Sternen [Three Crowned Stars].
Önnerfors provides an in-depth analysis of its content in this volume.\footnote{See Andreas Önnerfors' article in this volume.} Some of the articles dealt with manners and morality. It should also be noted that Freemasons in Košice in Upper Hungary (present-day Slovakia) published a review called Orpheus, which contained translations from Rousseau, Lessing and other famous philosophers, as well as poems written by Hungarian Freemasons.\footnote{See Martin Javor, Slobodomurárské hnutie v českých krajinách a v Uhorsku v 18. storoci (Prešov, 2009), p.130-31.}

The alternative tendencies of the late Enlightenment also manifested themselves at Charles-Ferdinand University. Philosophy in Bohemia did not join the victorious campaign of Kant’s philosophy, nor did an indigenous version of transcendental philosophy originate here. The utilitarian bias of public discourse led to a growing interest in physiology and anatomy because utilitarian ethics required an improved knowledge of the human body and its functions. The confused ways of the Enlightenment in Habsburg Bohemia were not unravelled by the autonomy of the will, but by intensified concepts of ‘monarchical utilitarianism’ based on almost material knowledge of the human body. The advance of medical science inspired medical practitioners in Prague and Vienna to attempt to find explanations for causal problems of human psychology and ethics, problems that belonged rather to metaphysics. The answer was found in vitalist theories that accounted for some hidden (that is, occult) force within human muscles that conferred life on the human body. A Bohemian version of these theories was invented by the medical scholar Jiří Prochaska, who also belonged to the Freemasons and taught at universities in Prague and Vienna.\footnote{Daniela Tinková, Člověk-stroj nebo člověk citlivý? K vitalistické fyziologii 18. století a myšlení Jiřího Prochasky’, in Historia – medicina – cultura: Sborník k dějinám medicíny (Prague, 2006), p.107-32.} Karl Heinrich Seibt also showed a keen interest in problems of physiology as he sought to trace the origin of happiness.

A similar problem preoccupied Count Joseph Nikolaus Windischgrätz, the sole systematic philosopher from the world of the nobility, who made a significant contribution to the transformation of the late Enlightenment and might be seen as a culmination of the Enlightenment in Bohemia.\footnote{See Ivo Cerman’s article on Windischgrätz in this volume.} The eccentric aristocrat tried to create a new concept of human anthropology that would explain the origin of human happiness and offer an alternative to French sensualism based on medical knowledge of the human body. Although he based his concept on vitalist premises, Windischgrätz attempted to prove by sensualist methods that
man has free will and is a dualist being who cannot be reduced to a body and senses.

The Enlightenment, as an intellectual enterprise centred on the cognitive moral subject, ended with the transformation of the sciences into a plurality of separate disciplines, which destroyed the focus on the moral subject the Enlightenment had tried to construct. The new systems of knowledge regarded the sciences as instrumentalised disciplines that were no longer construed with a view to the moral betterment of the cognitive subject, but to exploiting or making use of natural resources.\(^\text{140}\)

In the Habsburg Monarchy, this process was accelerated by the widening divide between utilitarian politics and revived Catholic metaphysics, both of which were tendencies promoted by the state in the Vormärz. Liberty of philosophical thought was also drastically limited by the oppressive policies that started during the French Revolution.\(^\text{141}\) The legacy of the Enlightenment, however, did not disappear. The new practices which the Enlightenment had brought to the daily life of the nobility and upper bourgeoisie remained, but the ideas of the Enlightenment were further elaborated in a completely changed intellectual context. The tension between archaic scientific forms and new intellectual content, which was characteristic of the Enlightenment, disappeared, just as morality lost the central place in the structure of knowledge which it had briefly occupied in the eighteenth century.

**An outline of the volume**

The following volume presents articles which investigate in depth the problems sketched in this introduction. In the first part we present the context in which the Central European Enlightenment existed. This explanation is necessary, for the Habsburg Monarchy was a special case. The flow of information was severely restricted by government measures and censorship, and in addition scientific work in this part of Europe was sustained by different institutions and media from those in the centres of the Enlightenment. Rita Krueger illustrates the successive short-lived academies of sciences in the Habsburg lands and focuses on the Bohemian Society of Sciences, the only one of these institutions to be successful and long-lasting, which proclaimed itself to be the only true academy in the Habsburg hereditary lands. Ivo Cerman elucidates the changes which universities underwent in the age of Maria Theresa’s

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\(^{140}\) Before Horkheimer and Adorno expressed a similar accusation of ‘technological civilization’ and the Enlightenment, a similar idea had been expressed by Edmund Husserl who tried to reverse the tide by the invention of phenomenology. I proceed from the interpretation of the Czech philosopher and follower of Husserl, Jan Patočka. See Jan Patočka, *Ketzerische Essays zur Philosophie der Geschichte* (Stuttgart, 1988).

\(^{141}\) See Claire Madl and Michael Wögerbauer’s article in this volume.
reforms; his article demonstrates the institutional framework in which moral philosophy was taught. Yet ideas were also disseminated by way of books and printed matter, a topic discussed in the article by Claire Madl and Michael Wögerbauer. They also present a well-reasoned and richly substantiated explanation of the development of censorship directed at a repressive institution. Helga Meise recalls the existence of moral periodicals (moralische Wochenschriften) in Prague and their importance for the dissemination of moral knowledge. The significance of this literary genre in Protestant Germany has been generally recognised, but its spread in Bohemia has often been ignored in general surveys. Finally the Masonic lodges as a new scientific institution of the Enlightenment are introduced in the article by Andreas Önnerfors. Similarly to the academies of sciences, the Masonic lodges constituted an alternative scientific institution during the late Enlightenment in Bohemia. Önnerfors reconstructs the Masonic interest in morality through analysis of a seminal article on Freemasons and civil society written by Sonnenfels for the Journal für Freymaurer in 1784.

After discussion of the institutions and media, we show three different approaches to moral philosophy in Bohemia, which correspond to Parts 2, 3 and 4. Here we discuss the construction of a secular morality, the modernisation of moral theology in the wake of the Josephist Church reforms, and the quest for enlightened morality in the Jewish milieu. The development of secular morality is reconstructed in Part 2, which offers three articles by Ivo Cerman. In the case of a conservative Catholic country, there was no clear evolution towards a secular concept of morals. There was a visible departure from scholastic philosophy, however, which started with the reception of Wolff's philosophy in the 1750s. The first article in this part sheds some light on the beginnings of Wolffian philosophy in Bohemia and examines the ethical thought of the Jesuit eclectics who are considered to be the first representatives of Wolffian philosophy in Bohemia. The second article draws attention to the intellectual content of lectures on ethics given by the secular professor Karl Heinrich Seibt in Prague. Unlike earlier research which dealt only with the Seibt scandal, this study expounds the ideas contained in his courses, and is based on previously unknown manuscripts of his lectures. There follows an article on the moral anthropology of Count Joseph Nikolaus Windischgrätz, who united French sensualism and German natural law with the aim of defending human agency against Helvétius’s sensualist determinism. Windischgrätz represents the Central European version of the critical phase of the Enlightenment.

Part 3 deals with ethical ideas within Josephist moral theology. While Martin Gaži shows in his innovative study how the Catholic Enlightenment grew ‘from below’ within monastic communities, Jaroslav Lorman
discusses the concepts of Josephist moral theology, which was imposed ‘from above’. Gazˇi explores how Catholic Enlightenment from below was suppressed by the state, which did not accept the image of monasteries as ‘enlightened communities’ and saw them rather as obstacles to Church reform, which aimed at public utility. Lorman discusses the principles of Josephist moral theology exemplified by its leading figure, the priest Augustin Zippe, in an article based on his unpublished doctoral thesis. It exemplifies very well the recent tendency in Czech theology to re-evaluate the significance of the Enlightenment for Catholicism.

Part 4 provides insight into the world of Jewish learning, where the indigenous Haskalah clashed with tendencies initiated ‘from above’ by the state, supported by the utilitarian-oriented reform wing within the Catholic Church. Pavel Sládek offers a new look at the chief rabbi of Prague, Ezekiel Landau, who is shown not as an introverted scholar but as a skilful political figure. Landau was an awe-inspiring intellectual authority who commanded respect even from the Jewish maskilim. Louise Hecht discusses the establishment of German–Jewish schools, which marked the culmination of the acculturation policies adopted by the enlightened state. She expounds the ideas of the state reformers who undertook to improve the moral education of the Jews while not respecting their indigenous culture. Finally Rachel Manekin discusses the context and the content of the famous manual of morals for the Jews known as Bne Zion. The textbook was commissioned by the state for the moral education of the Jews, but it contained simplified moral concepts which markedly show the results of changes within philosophical and theological thought concerning morals.

In conclusion David Sorkin, the author of a recent interpretation of the European Enlightenment, puts Bohemia into a European context. What was Bohemian about this version of the Enlightenment? Where can we locate it on the ‘Enlightenment spectrum’? These questions incite further reflection on the intellectual geography of Enlightenment Europe and the concept of a ‘spectrum’. David Sorkin emphasises the lack of radicalness in the Bohemian Enlightenment and its conservative character. Even though Central Europe was on the periphery, Sorkin appreciates the importance of such peripheral examples for our understanding of the European Enlightenment. He concludes: ‘We should not lose sight of the fact that each additional version of Enlightenment we come to understand more deeply and fully illuminates the general phenomenon. In the end the so-called “centres” can only be comprehended through the so-called “peripheries”; the road to a proper understanding of Paris may in fact run through Prague.’

142. See David Sorkin’s afterword in this volume.