

## **Cambridge New Habsburg Studies Network: redefining and reconnecting studies of Central Europe.**

This term saw the inaugural meeting of the Cambridge New Habsburg Studies Network.

Initiated by a group comprising Dr Janine Maegraith and Susanna Ivanič (History) and Dr Annja Neumann and Professor Joachim Whaley of the Department of German and Dutch, the Cambridge New Habsburg Studies Network aims to promote Habsburg studies in Cambridge by exploring new approaches to the history and cultures of Central and Eastern Europe, including the new methodologies of gender studies and social history. The network offers scholars the opportunity to present their research on any aspect of Central and East Central European history and to discuss current debates within the field. It provides a forum in which Cambridge researchers can exchange ideas both with others in Cambridge and with visiting scholars, especially those from Central and East Central Europe.

The group's principal objectives include highlighting the need for further comparative research in the history of Central and East Central Europe in fields such as the history of material culture and consumption, in religious studies, in legal history, in literary studies, as well as in translation studies. In the field of the history of material culture and consumption, for example, the group sees the opportunity draw together research on the Central and East Central European areas, and thus to redress the conventional bias of such work towards Northwest Europe and Italy.

Before now there has been no University-based platform for the exchange of information and ideas between scholars who work on Habsburg-related themes in History, Art History, Modern Languages and other departments and faculties. The Cambridge New Studies Network will foster the interdisciplinarity which the manifold histories, languages and cultures of the Habsburg lands require. It aims to promote Habsburg studies more widely in Cambridge and to enable existing scholars to establish connections that will enable future collaborative projects.

The first meeting took place in Gonville and Caius College on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2014. It was lively and well attended by researchers from History, History of Art, Economics, POLIS and Modern Languages in Cambridge as well as visitors from Freiburg, London, Munich, Oxford, Prague and Vienna. We were particularly pleased to welcome the doyen of Habsburg Studies in Britain, Robert Evans.

Papers were presented by visiting scholars Veronika Čapská (Charles University in Prague, '*Bohemian Lands as a Space of Translation Flows*'), Ellinor Forster (University of Innsbruck, '*Constructing social spaces in the territories of Tuscany, Salzburg and Wurzburg 1790-1824*') Astrid Köhler (Queen Mary, University of London, '*Sociability in the Imperial Province: Carlsbad in the early Nineteenth Century*'), and Janine Maegraith (Newnham College, independent scholar), '*On fragile grounds? Negotiating and stipulating widows' endowments in sixteenth-century Southern Tirol*'), and from the University of Cambridge, Suzanna Ivanič (Gonville & Caius College, '*Religious materiality and multi-confessionality amongst Prague burghers (1600-1620)*'). The papers highlighted new departures in research into the social, economic and cultural history of the Habsburg lands. There was a lively discussion of questions regarding the use of sociological models in historical methodology and some surprising connections were made across geographical areas and chronological spans.

These themes define the scope of the Cambridge New Habsburg Studies Network. Firstly, our interests reflect a shift in Habsburg studies that includes not only imperial, political and intellectual themes, but also social, economic, gender and cultural aspects. Similarly, we take a very broad view of the term 'Habsburg': a wide geographical remit covering Central and East Central Europe and a chronological span from the Late Middle Ages to 1918. By retaining the label 'Habsburg' we do not mean to limit themes, but rather give a broad structure and cohesion to the diverse interests of those who are currently engaged in research in these areas

At the end of the first workshop it was resolved to organise a regular biannual interdisciplinary workshop for visiting scholars and Cambridge-based researchers. We also aim to build on the contacts we have already with scholars in all relevant disciplines in Europe and the USA.

If you would like to keep up to date with the network's activities and future events, please email Suzanna Ivanič ([sdi20@cam.ac.uk](mailto:sdi20@cam.ac.uk)), Janine Maegraith ([cjm80@cam.ac.uk](mailto:cjm80@cam.ac.uk)), or Joachim Whaley ([jw10005@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jw10005@cam.ac.uk)) to be added to the list of members.