

# **THE DISSIDENT RENAISSANCE: REWRITING THE HISTORY OF EARLY MODERN PHILOSOPHY AS POLITICAL PRACTICE**

International workshop  
**3-4 March 2020**

Campus Unteres Schloss, Room U-A120

University of Siegen, in collaboration with  
The Cambridge Centre for the Study of Platonism

## **DESCRIPTION**

This workshop addresses philosophical historiography, along with historiographical practices more generally, as a device of intellectual dissidence. In particular, it focuses on the construction of philosophical genealogies of early modern Europe which, pursuing an ethical and political agenda, challenged dominant historiographical narratives and assumptions. We aim to discuss a series of case studies in the history of Renaissance scholarship from the late 17th until the 20th century. We will explore how in times of cultural and political crisis, the scholarly rediscovery of otherwise marginalized thinkers or intellectual traditions often served the development or the legitimization of an ideal of social, religious or moral reform.

The most influential philosophical accounts of the rise of modernity as the age of reason (especially those of J. Brucker, W.G. Tennemann, G.W.F. Hegel in Germany, and of V. Cousin in France) did not attribute any theoretical autonomy to the notion of Renaissance. This approach led to what Charles Schmitt in the 20th century labelled the 'disappearance of the Renaissance' from histories of philosophy. The workshop aims to qualify this verdict by examining neglected historiographical paths and exploring the motives for their critical stance towards the dominant narratives. The purpose is not just to understand why the Renaissance was 'lost', as Schmitt put it, but also to explore why and how it resurfaced in a set of relatively minor or peripheral reception histories.



# PROGRAMME

## Tuesday, 3 March

### Introduction

14:30 Welcome

14:40 Mario Meliadò (Siegen)

*'Es schien mir Aufgabe eines guten Bürgers':  
Renaissance-Historiographie und politische Praxis.  
Zur Einführung*

**First session** Chair: Douglas Hedley (Cambridge)

15:00 Andreas Pietsch (Münster)

*Renegotiating the Spiritualistic Margins in Early Modern  
Protestant Theology (Arnold, Baumgarten, Semler)*

15:45 Cecilia Muratori (London)

*'A Tale of Many, but None of Mine': Dionysius Andreas  
Freher's Alternative Portrait of Jacob Boehme*

16:30 Coffee break

16:45 Zornitsa Radeva (Freiburg)

*The 'Renaissance' in Retreat: Johann Christoph Coler,  
Christoph August Heumann, and the Image of  
Humanist Culture in the German Early Enlightenment*

**Evening lecture**

18:00 Anne Eusterschulte (Berlin)

*Häretische Diskurse. Renaissancekonzepte einer  
'lebendigen' Materie und die Atheismusdebatten*

## Wednesday, 4 March

**Second session** Chair: Silvia Manzo (Buenos Aires)

9:15 Michael Multhammer (Siegen)

*Lessing als Leser Giordano Brunos? – eine Spurensuche*

10:00 Douglas Hedley (Cambridge)

*Cambridge Platonists and Idealism*

10:45 Coffee break

11:00 Robert Black (Leeds)

*Machiavelli, the Perennial Dissident*

12:00-13:15 Lunch

**Third session** Chair: Michael Bongardt (Siegen)

13:30 Dominique Couzinet (Paris)

*Far Away from Dissidence: the French Case*

14:15 Iryna Mykhailova (Göttingen)

*Writing or Rewriting the History of the Renaissance?  
German Exile Historians and Postwar American Ideology*

15:00 Coffee break

15:15 Iva Manova (Sofia)

*The Renaissance in Soviet Interpretation: From  
'Progressive Revolution' to 'Type of Culture' (1960s-1970s)*

## Organisation and scientific coordination

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