

The Ideal of Education among the European Nobility (17th – Early 19th Century)

International Conference
Moscow, Friday 26 – Saturday 27 September 2014

German Historical Institute Moscow
Nakhimovsky prospekt, 51/21, Moscow

Coorganized by: German Historical Institute Moscow (DHI Moskau), Centre franco-russe en sciences humaines et sociales de Moscou, Centre d'études des mondes russes, caucasien et centre-européen (EHESS, Paris) and International Research Group no. 375 'Russia and Western Europe: Transfers and Cultural Flows', National Research University 'Higher School of Economics' (Moscow), with the support of the Federal University of the Urals (Ekaterinburg)

Organizing committee: Wladimir Berelowitch (EHESS), Vladislav Rjéoutski (DHI Moskau).

Scientific committee: Jean Boutier (EHESS, Marseille), Igor Fedyukin (Higher School of Economics, Moscow), Dominique Julia (CNRS/EHESS, Paris), Alexandr Kamensky (Higher School of Economics, Moscow), Victor Karady (Central European University, Budapest), Olga Kosheleva (Institute of General History, Moscow), Jan Kusber (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität, Mainz), Alexandre Tchoudinov (Institute of General History, Moscow).

From the 17th to the early 19th century, the education of young noblemen in Europe underwent important transformations under the influence of social evolution, the development of ideas and the action of political and religious authorities. These transformations, most of which went beyond the scope of the nobility and concerned all the elites, resulted in the invention of new institutional forms (for example, the proliferation of Catholic and Protestant colleges and military schools and later schools of engineering, the foundation of schools for girls and new universities and the evolution of university systems and so forth) and the systematization of new practices (the spread and subsequent criticism of boarding schools, the rise of individual and home education, the educational *Grand Tour*, the decline of Latin and traditional disciplines and their replacement with new ones, including French). These material forms were accompanied by the evolution of ideas which may also have caused them. This period was indeed very rich in educational projects which increased steadily in number, at the level of states and at that of the elites as well. At the same time (and this is probably not simply a coincidence), the elites, and especially the nobility, to varying degrees, went through a difficult process of self-definition and were challenged. Finally, this period, starting from the middle of the 18th century in particular, was characterized by the intensive spread of educational models throughout Europe. These models were often claimed to be universal, but

were in fact frequently associated with one nation, either by their supporters or by their opponents. This was the case, for example, with German university models, British education or what was later called, in the discourses of its detractors, the 'French model'. The educational requirements formulated by European elites were influenced by the evolution of these institutions, practices and state projects and it is necessary to take them into account if we want to understand correctly the numerous and various discourses on education produced at the time.

The purpose of this conference is to study ideas on the education of nobilities in order to better understand the educational, political, cultural and social ideals which served as their basis or which emerged from them.

The period chosen for this study is delimited by the great religious crises of the 16th century, at one end, and the political crises and wars of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, at the other.

For the reasons explained above, in particular the spread of educational models, it is important to include in our study the whole of Europe, with special attention to Eastern Europe and Russia (the Russian court and nobility, and also German-speaking nobilities from the Baltic provinces and from German states, the Ukrainian and Polish nobilities). The historiography on this question in these areas is less well developed than for Western Europe and is less well known in Western countries, and yet the study of these countries, in which transfers took place much later than in Western Europe, allows fruitful comparisons and gives valuable insights into the evolution of education across the continent as a whole, not just in these countries.

Sources for this analysis are mainly to be found in documents produced by the social milieu which was primarily concerned with this phenomenon, namely the aristocracy and the low nobility, and the educators as well. Various sources can be used in this research, such as philosophical and moral texts, treatises on the nobility, legislative and statutory texts, educational projects, correspondence, memoirs and diaries, literary works, etc.

The list of the questions open to discussion comprises but is not limited to:

- What were the purposes of the education of a nobleman and the educational models used in various European countries, and to what extent did these models circulate in Europe?
- What types of education were valued by nobilities and how did these preferences evolve over the period in question in various European countries?
- What were the interactions (stimulation, transformation, conflicts, total inadequacy) between these objectives and the existing means (institutional, financial, human, practical) used in noble education?
- The spread and the reception of key notions of the education of the nobility such as "honnête homme", "homme de cour", "politesse", "civilité", "citoyen".
- The adaptation of models of noble education to modernity, social evolution, the politics of monarchies and republics.
- Opposition to models of noble education and dissident tendencies within the nobility itself.

The working languages of the conference are English and Russian, with simultaneous translation.

Proposals for papers (of 20 minutes duration) should be sent by **15 May 2014** to Vladislav.Rjeoutski@dhi-moskau.org / wladimir.berelowitch@ehess.fr. They should include the title, the name of the author, her/his organizational affiliation and an abstract of 250-300 words. Notification of acceptance will be sent by the organizing committee by 15 June 2014. Financial support for participation in the conference can be offered to a limited number of participants.