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Academic relations in Europe at the time of Boerhaave: a structural approach

1. Paradigmatic changes

Herman Boerhaave's life (1668-1738) covers an essential part of the period which Paul Hazard in a famous book has qualified as 'the crisis of the European consciousness'. The fear of atheism, of the secularization of science, and indeed of the breakdown of the whole traditional world-picture with its elaborate cosmology involving God, man and nature, was one of its major constituents.¹ The debate was particularly fierce in Holland, where scientific discussions enjoyed a relative liberty, as long as no public teaching or preaching was involved.² But even in Holland atheism was still unthinkable and was heavily punished indeed, be it rather with confinement or banishment than with death.

Ever since the second quarter of the seventeenth century, Cartesianism had been a hot issue in Dutch scientific thought. By permitting a frontal attack on Aristotelianism, the discussions on the mathematical-deductive method had profoundly divided Dutch scholarship. Moreover, by separating physics radically from metaphysics, Descartes did not leave much space for a religious perception of the universe. In his eyes, its intelligibility was better served by natural causes than by preter- or supernatural agencies. Adopting Copernicanism as a key element of his natural philosophy, he inaugurated indeed a secular view of science and society which was to be developed to an extreme point by Spinozism, a rather diffuse movement of thought

that pervaded many of the major intellectual discussions of the second half of the seventeenth century.

In the 1680s, when Boerhaave was a young man and a student at Leiden, the great revision of the intellectual world-view had reached a second stage. In spite of a new openness to religious feelings, as the story of physico-theology was to show in the eighteenth century, supernatural causality had definitely lost its credibility for the explanation of everyday reality. In the Northern Netherlands, the rise of the experimental method and the emergence of what later would be called the Newtonian world-view, were mirrored in three major debates, with large European echoes, on different aspects of the old world-picture and the traditional order of science, both worn-out and indeed nearly obsolete. Since preternatural causality was involved, they divided the Dutch intellectuals profoundly.¹

The debate on the significance of celestial phenomena, brought about by the sighting of the comets of 1680-82, was won by the new science, represented by Pierre Bayle, then a professor of philosophy at Rotterdam. The second debate was about the meaning of prophecy. Anthony van Dale, a Haarlem physician and Mennonite preacher, denounced it as pure superstition: in his eyes, all reputedly divine oracles were made by man. The French philosopher Fontenelle adopted Van Dale's views for his famous Histoire des oracles (1686-87) which popularized the sceptical approach of superstition.² The third and most violent debate concerned magic and demonology. The assailant was this time a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church at Amsterdam, Balthasar Bekker, whose influential work The Enchanted World (1691-93) inspired more than two centuries later Max Weber's famous thesis on the 'disenchantment of the world'.³ Though substantially a Dutch discussion, the concern about its outcome was shared by intellectuals and academics throughout Western Europe. Again, the issue at stake was the physical explanation of phenomena and events formerly ascribed to preternatural magic or diabolic intervention.

Thus in 1693, at Boerhaave's entrance into public life after having taken his medical degree at Harderwyk, Dutch learning had made a decisive turn towards a

new rationality. It was already at the center of a broad network of academic relations. During some decades, Holland had been one of the main focuses of intellectual discussion in Europe, where almost everything could be printed freely, and where foreign students and scholars of nearly all the Protestant nations, including some Catholics, gathered for a virtually free discussion of the foundations of science and scholarship. More than half a century later, though much of its fame had faded away, Diderot still recorded Leiden university in his *Encyclopédie* as ‘la première d’Europe’ – the foremost university of Europe.

Boerhaave’s profound influence on European medicine had been instrumental for the renaissance of Leiden’s international reputation. His own fame and his radiation throughout Europe were however not only due to the merits of his medical, chemical and botanical work, or to the quality of his teaching and the charm of his personality. They were embedded in the dynamics of a twofold pre-existing structure: Holland as an international center of free discussion, free printing and free learning on the one hand; on the other, the informal, but powerful supranational network of the Republic of the Letters, of which the academic relations in Europe formed an important, if not essential part and which involved a student mobility that affected particularly the Calvinist countries.

2. **Poles of attraction**

I shall concentrate this lecture on the nature of these relationships, which were the necessary preconditions for the establishment of durable contacts and lasting streams of intellectual exchange between North and South, and between Central and Western Europe. First I shall sketch the Republic of the Letters as an imagined space with a centre, involving different types of poles of attraction, and a periphery. Second I shall concentrate on the particular features of the academic relations of peripheral Hungary with central Holland. I shall then conclude by asking the question of the Calvinist dilemma in essentially non-Calvinist European *academia*.

During the early modern period, academic relations took different forms. Epistolary connections created scholarly networks, which in the second half of the seventeenth century were consolidated by the new learned periodicals such as the *Journal des savants* (Paris 1665), the *Philosophical transactions of the Royal Society* (London 1665), the *Acta eruditorum* (Leipzig 1682), or the *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* (Amsterdam 1684). Learned societies, academies for the advancement of science, colleges and universities exchanged information or quarrelled over literary or scientific achievements of a more or less vital nature. The most effective form of academic relationship remained however the personal visit, the learned travel or the journey abroad, be it as a *grand tour*, as a Kavalierstour,
or as a *peregrinatio academica*, with their changing accents. Several options or modalities may be distinguished indeed. Poor students’ mobility for the sake of education has not to be mixed up with the lazy curiosity of a luxurious *grand tour*, nor have busy scholarly travels for learning’s sake to be confounded with the formative journey abroad of a European aristocrat and his suite.

At any rate, all forms of learned mobility had their poles of attraction: scholarly institutions such as universities or university nations, illustrious schools, colleges of nobles or of other privileged groups, academies or libraries – not to forget some scholars of world fame who were institutions in themselves and who in the present-day Michelin guides would be marked by three stars as ‘vaut le détour’ – worth a visit for themselves. And so indeed they were. A few names emerge: Erasmus of course, Lipsius, Scaliger, Heinsius, Peiresc, Mersenne, Saumaise, Vossius, Comenius, Huygens, Leibniz, Magliabecchi, Muratori, and of course Boerhaave. The scholarly journey was above all a matter of the scholars themselves. They wanted to visit the big shots of international scholarship, consult and compare manuscripts, books, drawings, sculptures or paintings in the public libraries and private collections, admire the antiquities collected by enlightened amateurs or wealthy patrons. Some notable examples come immediately in mind: the French monks Jean Mabilon or Bernard de Montfaucon collecting texts and manuscripts during their travels in France and Italy, ready to take a miserable by-way if required by the supreme interest of scholarship. Others were personally less involved but mapped the world of learning itself. One of the finest examples of this systematic curiosity was the German baronet Zacharias von Uffenbach. During his travels in the eighteenth-century Netherlands and elsewhere he systematically visited all the public and private libraries and collections in order to dress their annotated catalogue, adding a reasoned opinion about their value, both for true scholarship and for the upcoming intellectual tourism of the leisure class.

If we except the voyages of discovery outside Europe, learned traveling normally followed the acknowledged authorities, stopped at the house of internationally recognized highlights, and remained inside a polygon determined by the most

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famous cities, institutions or personalities. Common knowledge among the scholars, hearsay within the Republic of the Letters, but also university guides, travel accounts and published correspondence contributed to the transmission and preservation of the customary space within which the European community of learning took shape. This was, of course, an imagined territory, just like the Republic of the Letters was—in the terms of Benedict Anderson—an imagined community. It did not have any clearly marked boundaries, but followed the travels of the scholars, the ways of the books, and the relations of the mind. Although it overlapped nations, countries and regions, it remained always highly self-evident for all the scholars involved. Everybody knew that Holland was inside, Hungary outside, even if Hungary could legitimately pretend to true learning and occasionally boast of some scholars of repute.

3. The Republic of the Letters: an imagined space

In fact, the main cities delimiting the customary space of European learning and the unspoken boundaries of the Republic of the Letters formed a quadrangle directed North/South. Ever since the Middle Ages, Italy North of Rome and France South of Paris had been the center of the community of learning, the focus of the literati. Of course, learning existed outside, specially in early Christian Ireland, Arabic Spain or the Byzantine Empire, but Italy and France formed the central space where traditions finally amalgamated into one big scientific universe with an inner coherence, and where the real things happened. During the latter Middle Ages, this territory extended to the North-East, from Basle along the Rhine unto Cologne, and into Saxony and Bohemia.

The main centres of printing and publishing around 1500 give a fair idea of the geographical limits of the learned world: Lyons, Paris and Antwerp in the West, Lübeck, Leipzig, Nuremberg and Augsburg in the East, Venice, Bologna, Florence and Rome in the South. During the seventeenth century, the northern frontier moves upwards and soon includes Amsterdam, Leiden, The Hague, and the triangle London-Oxford-Cambridge. In the eighteenth century, new extensions bring Naples in the South, Scotland in the North, and finally Vienna in the East into the world of learning. Within its boundaries new focuses arise such as Halle and Göttingen; others rediscover their scientific mission, such as Bologna. Outside this learned mainframe, scholarship may exist but does not really matter otherwise than as an individual achievement. People do not go there for intellectual pleasure. In fact, they do not go there at all, unless very urgent matters force them to do so. That was, for example, the case of booming Sweden, of the prosperous French cities on the Atlantic coast, of Enlightenment Spain, and of eighteenth-century
Russia. A great scholar like the Valencian professor Gregori Mayans, for example, was forced to remain in a splendid isolation, notwithstanding his huge correspondence.

Within the quadrangle of learning, every city had its own appeal for the scholarly traveler. Rome could boast of its classical antiquities, its sumptuous palaces with their inexhaustible collections, the papal pump, and the tantalizing attraction of a pontifical library which was almost impossible to get access to. London was visited for its collections, societies and scholars, not to forget its royal curiosities. With its university, its seminaries, gymnasia, colleges of nobles, military schools and other specialized academies, Vienna offered one of the most elaborate systems of educational facilities for the well-to-do, the church, the army, the public administration, the court and the nobility. The main attraction of Leiden was the university with its library, its botanical garden, its professors, and their cabinets of science. Paris had everything, but the visitor’s choice mostly went to the royal library, the salons and the learned societies; he seasoned his visit by some early forms of tourism, including the unavoidable tour through the Royal Palace with its tariffed variety in specialized prostitution. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the growing concern for technical education of the French monarchy made of Paris the European capital of technology and highly qualified craftsmanship, including such specialized skills as surgery and military engineering, for which a century and a half earlier the Dutch Republic had been the European model.

The simple enumeration of such cities makes clear until what point the Republic of the Letters, and indeed the whole edifice of academic relations was a matter of imagination, much more than reality. There were, of course, pleasant cities and eminent scholars living outside these imaginary boundaries, but they did not count. This limited view of reality could generate many forms of intellectual blindness. Let us take just one striking example. In 1669, the Dutch Calvinist minister Johannes Lomoyer published a treatise on European libraries, De bibliothecis liber singularis. It was, in fact, the first synthesis on that matter. Soon a second edition was published, and a French translation, reprinted at least once. Using all sorts of previous publications, Lomoyer drafted a systematic catalogue of all the famous libraries in Europe, with an attempt to evaluate their relative importance. A quick survey of his book is quite revealing. 90 per cent of the 202 famous libraries listed were included in the quadrangle of learning. Italy alone counted 80 reputed libraries, i.e. 40 per cent of the European total, but, except Naples, nothing South of Rome. Germany, France, the Northern and the Southern Netherlands counted each about 10 per cent of the libraries. For the British Isles, nothing is mentioned outside the triangle London-Oxford-Cambridge. In fact, with the exception of some peculiar cases (4 libraries at Vilnius in Lithuania!) all the borderlands of Europe are lacking: Portugal, Ireland, Scotland, Bohemia, and virtually whole Central Europe. The
Iberic Peninsula is represented by the meager number of six libraries scattered over the country. Vienna appears as an isolated capital in a cultural desert. Of course, the Austrian monarchy was at war, and Hungary was up in arms. But instead of mentioning such bad conditions for his assessment, Loméyer breathes the conviction that true learning is only there where his book discovers it under the guidance of his scholarly predecessors, and that outside this traditional space reputedly nothing matters.

4. Centre and periphery

Sociologically speaking, poles of cultural attraction are institutions. Hence they are fundamentally stable and tend to survive fading reputations. Leiden is a good example. Even during the scientific downfall of Leiden university in the second half of the eighteenth century, it continued to draw a quarter of its students from foreign countries. The same applies to the former university of Friesland at Franeker, where, without even counting the Hungarian and Transylvanian students who had particular, religious reasons to travel to the Dutch Republic, foreign students continued to arrive during some decades after Franeker had lost its international reputation. Poles of cultural attraction contribute to the creation of a spatial structure which can be outlined by the movements of travelers towards non-travelers. Generally speaking (and by opposition to what happens at present), during the Ancient Regime the greatest personalities were non-travelers, either due to their function as a librarian or a professor, which involved daily presence or a heavy work-load, or because they were able to satisfy their curiosity on the spot, in the rich libraries and laboratories, or the famous academies, learned societies and social cercles of their town.

Invariably, however, such sedentary celebrities were great letter-writers. The most famous example is, of course, Joseph Justus Scaliger – the very first research professor, persuaded to move to Holland by means of an expensive salary and ample conditions of employment, and of whose sole presence Leiden university rightly expected a considerable influx of foreigners. He compensated his sedentary existence by an immense correspondence all over the learned world. Besides, the quality and elegance of his Latin prose made his letters highly desirable objects for every scholar. But Grotius, Huygens, Leibniz, Bayle, Muratori or Voltaire are excel-

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lent examples too. The learned network which underlies their written correspondence is as a reversed map of the non-sedentary traveler’s movements. Such sedentary scholars may be considered as the fixed points delimitating the centre of the learned universe. They attracted scholars from the periphery who, through their relations with the scholars in the centre, got something like an associate membership. Receiving a letter from Scaliger, for example, was like a passport to the Republic of the Letters, particularly when the letter was printed afterwards in one of the volumes of learned correspondence which were so vital for the scholarly discussions. For scholars outside, either university-bound or not, traveling to the centre or maintaining steady epistolary relations with one or more of its leaders, was therefore of vital importance for their social recognition in their own country as leading men of science and letters.

The proof of the reversed relationship between the space of traveling and such fixed networks is easy to deliver. Sometimes we find them together. This is the case of Jean-François Ségui, a member of the academy of Nîmes in Southern France, in the second half of the eighteenth century, studied by Daniel Roche. In this case we know not only the scholar’s travels, but also his correspondents, and even the names and origins of his visitors. The scholarly journeys which Ségui undertook in the company of the Italian marquess Maffei remain within the customary quadrangle of the Republic of the Letters: Genève (or Lyons), Paris, London, Amsterdam, Germany, and Italy (limited by Rome). His correspondents live mainly within the same quadrangle, with the exception of a couple of Scandinavians, whereas isolated letters come from Palermo, Madrid, Warsaw, Saint-Petersburg, and even Alep in Syria, undoubtedly expatriated merchants. Essentially, the structure of Ségui’s landscape of learning is determined by the triple network of the princely courts, the main libraries and the famous universities with an international outlook. For Ségui, scholars and aristocrats were the two faces of learning, the scholarly and the social, the professor and the patron.

But Ségui, who lived near one of the main routes to the South and was in the possession of a cabinet of curiosities and a botanical garden, was a pole of attraction himself: in ten years, he received about 1400 visitors, some of them coming more than once. This time, the boundaries of the customary quadrangle are crossed: his visitors come from the Western provinces of France, from Russia, Poland, Denmark, Norvegia, Bohemia, Hungary, Malta, and even from the French and British colonies. However, the most important information given by the three sources

together is the orientation of Séguiers network. It is an urban world, turned towards the North of Europe, with a predominance of Britain and Germany. Holland is not really a pole of attraction any more in that second half of the eighteenth century. It still lies in the centre of the Republic of the Letters but is by and by treated as a peripheral space.

5. Universities: foreign students and professors

Yet the Dutch Republic still conserved its privileged position in the European university landscape. With regard to the small number of its inhabitants, the Netherlands had one of the highest densities of academic institutions in the world of that time. Altogether there was approximately one chair to fill for every 5000 male adults. Although early modern professors were normally appointed before their thirty-fifth birthday, and very often much earlier, just after the customary transition rites of graduation and peregrination, the prerequisites of scholarship for such a first nomination, though unofficial, were probably higher than the level expected from beginning assistants in present-day universities. True scholarship was therefore rewarding. Yet lobbying or networking could be more profitable. The social interplay between the political or cultural elites, as patrons of arts, letters and sciences, on the one hand, and the scholars from the Republic of the Letters on the other, favoured social factors when decisions had to be made.

We still do not know very much of the real politics of professorial appointment in the Netherlands, but precisely in the case of Boerhaave’s nomination as a professor of botany at Leiden in February 1709, we do know that his social network prevailed over his scholarship. Yet he was a true and already recognized scholar, not in botany however but in medicine. His competitor, Johann Jakob Scheuchzer from Zurich in Switzerland, was also a practising physician but with a real and established interest in natural history. Clearly he was the one who corresponded best to the profile of the chair. Yet Boerhaave obtained it. As always, the learned world was quick to protest against political involvement in university nominations, but Boerhaave’s powerful friends found no reason to cancel their decision. History has shown that they were right.

11 For what follows, see the contributions to Walter Rüegg (general editor), A History of the University in Europe, vol. II, ed. by Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (Cambridge, 1995), in particular chapter 2 (‘Patterns’), by W. Frijhoff.
There is a hidden dimension in this story. One of the underlying, yet normally unspoken problems of academic relations and professorial appointments in the early modern period, was religion. Even in the Northern Netherlands toleration went not so far as to formally admit university professors of a dissenting confession. In 1670, the Mennonite philosopher Burchard De Volder was not admitted to teach publicly at Leiden until after his baptism in the Reformed Church. In 1732, the appointment of the Lutheran Johann Gottlieb Heineccius was equally rejected at Leiden for confessional reasons.\(^{13}\) It was not before the second half of the eighteenth century that really excellent Lutheran and Mennonite candidates could hope to be given a fair chance. Of many possible foreign candidates at the time of Boerhaave’s nomination, the Swiss Protestant Scheuchzer was one of the very few acceptable, since his confession was considered equivalent to Calvinism.

Yet the Netherlands were exceptionally hospitable to foreign scholars. Of a total of 1017 professors appointed at Dutch universities and illustrious schools before 1814, 326 (that is 32 per cent, or one third) were born in a foreign country.\(^{14}\) The geographical distribution of their origins shows however a clear confessional pattern: 114 professors were Calvinist refugees from the Southern Netherlands, Huguenots from France, Presbyterians from Britain (in fact Scotland), or Protestants from Switzerland. All pertained to confessions which maintained formal relations with the Dutch Reformed Church. 206 professors were born in Protestant, in fact mainly Calvinist, regions or towns of Germany (specially the Palatinate, Hessen, Anhalt, Nassau, Bremen, Lippe, Lower Rhineland, Eastern Frisia), or Poland (in particular Gdansk), some of them being apparently converts from Lutheranism or Catholicism. The proportion of professors coming from non-Calvinist countries is negligible: one professor born in Portugal, two in Italy, two in Lutheran Sweden. They had to content themselves with an appointment at a lower professorial level (the extraordinary chairs), or as a lecturer.

6. Holland and Hungary

The preceding count makes together 325 foreign professors. The remaining one was a Hungarian Protestant: Ladislaus Chernak (László Csernák, 1740-1816), born at Pápa and educated at the Calvinist College of Debrecen. After his peregrinatio through Europe (apparently he went to Vienna, Basle, and Turin), his study in the-


\(^{14}\) I take these data from a yet unpublished prosopographical research on Dutch university professors.
ology and his graduation as a medical doctor at Groningen under Petrus Camper, he took a second degree in philosophy. Together with his publications in experimental philosophy (his first public disputation in 1771 was about Franklin's theory of electricity), and supported by Camper's reputation, this degree was surely responsible for his quick nomination as a professor of philosophy at the illustrious school of Deventer in 1776, where he taught philosophy and natural law until the suppression of the school in 1811, but got his international fame mainly from his mathematical works. His marriage with a girl from Deventer, shortly after his arrival in town, must have been the reason why he declined a nomination at Sárospatak in 1781.

Given the important number of Hungarian students in the early modern Netherlands, and their confessional identity, this unique Hungarian professorship is somehow a mystery. It matches another scarcity, that of practising Hungarian physicians. At Amsterdam, 812 medical doctors have been admitted by the local Collegium Medicum before the end of the eighteenth century. 185 out of those 812 (i.e. 23 per cent) were of foreign origin, but among them we find only one Hungarian. Nevertheless there were Hungarian students enough. At Leiden nearly 650 Hungarians have been counted in the *album studiosorum*, mainly in the course of the seventeenth century, and perhaps not always real students, but officials or servants. At Franeker alone approximately 1225 Hungarians and Transylvanians have matriculated, many of them in the eighteenth century, when *stipendia* for Hungarians and Transylvanians were more largely available.

At Utrecht, where the *album* is very incomplete for this period and other sources like the archives of the Stipendium Bernardinum (founded in 1761) have to be consulted, the numbers should have been equally high, perhaps even higher if the strong attraction of the orthodox theology professed at Utrecht is taken into account. Of course, a certain number of students went to several universities in succession, but the Hungarians appear at any rate as a rather particular group. Unlike students from other countries, they normally studied in small numbers together. They came with a remarkable regularity, without servants, because they were poor, if not very poor. Scholarships and bursaries were vital for their survival. They followed the cash-flow.

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Besides, their graduation rate in the Netherlands was very low. I counted 93 graduations by Hungarian or Transylvanian students at all the Dutch universities taken together before 1815. That means that certainly not more than 10 per cent of the students took a degree, probably much less. A large majority of them must have come for a regular study in theology (which in the Netherlands normally was not closed by a degree but by an ecclesiastical examination), they came not for a complementary formation in some professional matter, as was the rule for most of the foreign students. Theologians were expected to return home, in order to serve their community, at whose expenses they quite frequently had undertaken their journey. Because of their poverty, many of them were anyway forced to do so, even if they would have preferred to stay in the Netherlands. All in all, the return rate must have been exceptionally high in the group of Hungarian students, and the loyalty to the national community equally strong, in a time when a study abroad was for many enterprising young men the ideal occasion to change their national allegiance, and sometimes their confession.

There were however Hungarian students in the professional faculties, as Dr. G.H. van de Graaf will expose in one of the lectures today. Professor Chernak, whom I just mentioned, certainly is a case in point. Just like the large majority of his compatriotes, he started in 1767 with a study in theology at Groningen (‘gratis quia Hungarius’), moved then to medicine, and changed finally for philosophy. Hence, the very first reason why he did not return to his home country must not have been his marriage with a Dutch girl, but his choice for a professional career, away from theology. A theological study certainly was the very condition for obtaining money in view of a journey to the Netherlands, but once arrived, Hungarians who could afford it, might switch over to the professional faculties. This was in particular the case of medicine, which could not be studied in Hungary until the foundation of a (Catholic!) faculty at Nagyszombat (now Trnava) in 1769-70. Chernak was apparently of noble extraction, and the very fact that he could publish his disputations shows that he was not totally impecunious. His financial position may be one of the clues for this peculiar career. By contrast, the specific situation of the Hungarian students becomes still more striking: not only they lived at the periphery of the Republic of the Letters, and outside the confessional mainstream of Europe, but they were also disadvantaged from a material point of view, and finally formed a peripheral group among the foreign students of the Netherlands themselves.

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Such considerations and life stories show the importance of the university network, with its hidden or underlying conditions and structures, for the recruitment of the universities, the scholarly careers and the academic relations. In fact, the network of European universities had received its final shape during the early seventeenth century, at least until the great reorganizations of Enlightened Absolutism (Van Swieten in Austria!) and the revolutionary era. One of the last university creations had been the foundation of a *studium generale* by the Protestant Estates of Upper Hungary at Eperjes (now Presov) in 1665, despite the opposition of king Leopold I. A chair of Lutheran theology was founded. Under the bad political conditions of the moment, however, the lectures were often suspended and occasionally the Protestants were not able to keep the control of the university. During the first decades of the eighteenth century, there had been some major university reorganizations elsewhere in Europe, virtually no real creations.

Thus, the Jesuit university of Cervera in Catalonia had been founded in 1714/17, in substitution for a long series of mostly small and poorly endowed local universities. Still more important was the complete rationalization of the whole higher education system in Piedmont by king Victor Amadeus II in 1720-29, with a clear professional scope in mind: henceforth, the want for academic positions and the actual needs of the professions had to determine the curriculum, and the number of students admitted. The only two real university creations of the century between 1650 and 1750 had been those of Halle (1693/94) and Göttingen (1733). Both were formally Lutheran. In fact they were universal landmarks of new teaching and new scholarship. They functioned indeed as elements of a well-considered cultural policy aiming at a gradual reorganization of the academic landscape in Brandenburg and Hanover.

The bulk of university creations during the early modern period had taken place in the first half of the seventeenth century. By about 1650 the number of new foundations seems to have reached saturation point: approximately one university for every one million inhabitants all over Europe – a rate which was not very different from present-day proportions, although the democratization of the recruitment has radically changed the universities’ size, organizational structure, teaching and research interests, and social outlook. After 1650 the number of foundations was balanced by that of abolitions, whereas transfers to other locations often indicated

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attempts to rationalize the system by bringing the university under closer control of the central authority, or nearer to those elites which were the main consumers of academic education. Such was the case, for example, in Strasbourg 1685 (united to Molsheim 1701), Besançon 1691 (coming from Dole), Nancy 1768 (coming from Pont-à-Mousson), not to forget Budapest 1777-84, with faculties coming from Nagyszombat. The foundation of faculties of law at Dijon and Pau in 1722, at Rennes in 1735, of a university within the new academy of sciences at Saint-Petersburg in 1724, and of some secular faculties at Moscow in 1755, are examples of such an enlightened rationalization of the university system, linked up with the concern to educate young people in close connection with the professions or with practical science.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, the main concern was not professionalization but education for a clear confessional identity. Beginning with the foundation of a Lutheran university at Marburg in 1527, a Protestant university network had grown up over the next 150 years, mainly through the foundation of gymnasia academica, teaching academies and illustrious schools, that is, schools for higher education without the right to grant degrees. This happened first in Switzerland and Germany, then in France (where all the Huguenot academies except Orange were abolished even before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685), and then farther afield: in the British Isles, Scandinavia, the United Provinces and (under Swedish rule) the Baltic countries, not to forget the British colonies in North America, where Harvard College had been founded as early as 1636. But there was a fundamental difference between the Lutheran and Anglican institutions on the one hand, and the Calvinist schools on the other. While the first ones had been very soon recognized by the legitimate authorities as fully-fledged universities, virtually all the Calvinist schools of higher education, with the exception of the Presbyterian institutions in Scotland after their reformation at the end of the sixteenth century, found themselves without a formal privilege granted by the legal ruler.

Indeed, in spite of the implicit recognition of Calvinism in the Holy Empire at the Peace of Westphalia, the Emperor constantly refused to create Calvinist universities and to facilitate the recognition even of such highly reputed existing Calvinist academies as the one at Herborn, with its advanced teaching in philosophy, theology and political science (under Althusius), or the gymnasia at Bremen, Steinfurt, and Zerbst. It was only through its conversion from another confession that Heidelberg (for some decades), Frankfurt an der Oder (in part, since 1613), and Duisburg (founded in 1654 as a Calvinist university, with the help of an imperial privilege

issued in 1566 for a Catholic university never realized...) could obtain or maintain
their Calvinist imprint. Even the Dutch universities lacked an official privilege.
Leiden had been founded in 1575 by the rebellious States, by means of a fictitious
privilege immediately repelled by king Philip II. So had the other Dutch universi-
ties, all created before the official secession of the Dutch Republic from the Ger-
man Empire in 1648. Hence, Dutch degrees were barely useful abroad unless some
subterfuge might be found. Here lies certainly one of the reasons why Dutch stu-
dents continued so long in taking their degrees abroad, even without attending any
lecture, at reputed and unquestionable universities in France (Orleans, Caen, Bour-
ges, Angers, Poitiers) and Italy (Padua, Bologna). During some decades in the early
seventeenth century, the French monarchy recognized Dutch degrees for political
reasons, but only as far as their validity abroad was concerned: they never enjoyed
full validity in France. In the German Empire, many states never recognized the
Dutch diplomas.

Geneva, the Calvinist mother academy founded in 1559, was in the same posi-
tion as Leiden. Although the question never has been thoroughly studied on an
international level, it appears from the available, but scattered evidence that this
conflictual situation has bound the concerned academies tightly together in a Calvi-
nist commonwealth of interests, conducting to a Calvinist university model as
exemplified in Herborn (1584) and Franeker (1585). This model must have served
more or less consciously as a counterpart to the equally supranational Jesuit model
as realized at the Gregoriana in Rome (1556) and hence spread over the Catholic
territories, particularly in the German Empire and on the frontiers of Christianity in
Central Europe. In the following decades, the Calvinist community of interests has
created a real academic network with multiple interrelations between the national
systems: the Calvinist universities in the Netherlands, the university of Basle and
the theological academies of Switzerland (Geneva, Zurich, Bern, Lausanne), the
Huguenot academies in France, the Presbyterian universities in Scotland, and the
Calvinist paedagogia and gymnasia in the Holy Roman Empire.

Pragmatic solutions were found, such as the spontaneous recognition, by the
rebellious provinces of the Netherlands, of the diplomas awarded in Geneva, thus
legitimating Calvin’s Academy as a fully-fledged university, and reversely. The
problems of survival experienced by the Huguenot academies in France and the
repeated persecutions of Calvinist populations abroad periodically revived the
Dutch universities’ sense of responsibility for the Calvinist diaspora. It is certainly
this factor which explains the long survival of the Hungarian diaspora in Dutch
academia. ‘Gratis quia Hungarus’: in its pregnancy, this recurrent expression of the
Dutch matriculation registers bears clearly witness to the transnational religious
solidarity that was the solution of Dutch academia to the Calvinist dilemma. No
money had to spoil the delicate link between confessional identity and national loy-
alty. At least, the academic relations between early modern Hungary and the Dutch Republic have been one of those very scarce occasions where the Dutch universities have proved a certain amount of generosity. But I am afraid that this relationship has left few traces in the historical memory of the Dutch.