

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in European Context (Aranjuez, 28–30 May 25)

Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Aranjuez, May 28–30, 2025

Deadline: Sep 30, 2024

Aleksandra Ziober

Conference: "Exploring Cultural Transfers: The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in European Context (16-17th centuries)", organized by the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid (URJC) and the University of Wrocław (UWr).

Location: Campus of Universidad Rey Juan Carlos in Aranjuez

Symposium chairs

Prof. José Eloy Hortal Muñoz (URJC)

Dr Aleksandra Ziober (UWr)

Dr Miguel Conde Pazos (UAX)

The period from the accession of Sigismund Augustus to the throne in 1530 to the abdication of John II Casimir Vasa in 1668 encompasses the Golden Age of culture, when the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was one of the foremost cultural and intellectual centers in Europe, and the Silver Age, marked by significant achievements despite increasing political and military challenges. The abdication of John II Casimir in 1668 symbolized the end of this culturally vibrant era, heralding the onset of deep internal and external crises.

During this era, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth flourished as a vibrant hub of cultural exchange and intellectual activity, drawing scholars, artists, and diplomats from across Europe. As one of the largest and most diverse polities in Early Modern Europe, the Commonwealth played a significant role in shaping the continent's cultural landscape. The last Jagiellonians on the Polish throne, particularly Sigismund II Augustus, had already laid the groundwork for extensive cultural exchange by promoting Renaissance ideals and strengthening ties with Western Europe. Their legacy of openness to cultural and intellectual influences empowered their successors to engage with other European powers.

The Vasas shared common roots with the Jagiellonians, as Sigismund III Vasa's mother, Anna Jagiellonka, was a member of this trans-European dynasty. A relatively young European dynasty, the Vasas played a significant role in the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the broader European context. They sought to solidify their position in Europe by cultivating strong relationships with both branches of the Habsburgs, as well as with France's Bourbons and other princely houses. These diplomatic endeavors profoundly impacted cultural exchange, contributing to the dissemination and development of European traditions within the Commonwealth.

Of particular interest were the cultural influences exerted by political and cultural powers such as the Spanish monarchy and its different territories (especially the Habsburg Netherlands), the Italian territories (Naples, Sicily, Venezia, the Holy See), the Holy Roman Empire, England, France, and others, on the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, as well as the reciprocal impact of the Commonwealth on these polities.

This conference seeks to explore how different aspects of courtiers and ceremonies, diplomacy, images, objects, and visual culture contributed to the political integration between the Polish-Lithuanian courts and the rest of the continent. Traditionally, court studies have focused on singular cases to argue that the competition between courts was a driving force behind court culture. In contrast, this conference embraces comparative analysis across various cultural geographies, from Poland-Lithuania to the rest of the continent.

This international symposium aims to bring together experts from different fields (history, art history, literature, political thought, etc.), with the objective of developing a comparative analysis between the courts of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with the rest ones in Europe. By examining case studies spanning from 1530 to 1668 and encompassing diverse regions of Europe, this symposium seeks to understand the significance of cultural transfers between them. It also intends to illuminate the multifaceted interactions that characterised this dynamic period, shedding light on the cultural, artistic, and intellectual currents that flowed between the Commonwealth and its European counterparts.

Research themes and questions:

We invite proposals for 20-minute papers, both case studies and synthetic studies, that reflect upon the following research themes and questions, but are not limited to:

- Court structures (royal or princely households and councils, instructions, ordinances) and ceremonial
- Court festivities and rituals
- Courtly religious and spiritual practices
- Transnational movements and migrations of courtiers, artists, scholars, traders, and diplomats
- Diplomatic relations and cultural diplomacy between the Commonwealth and other European Kingdoms
- Artistic exchange and patronage between the Commonwealth and other European Kingdoms

To participate:

Proposals in English, approximately 250 words in length, must include the title and a summary of the paper, accompanied by a short biography (150 words) and the applicant's contact details. Presentations should be given in English, as we plan to produce a follow-up publication.

Proposals can be sent to the following email: culturaltransfers@gmail.com no later than 30th September 2024. Applicants will be notified of acceptance by October 31th, 2024.

The conference is free of charge, and coffee-breaks and meals will be covered by our conference sponsors.

Reference:

CFP: The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in European Context (Aranjuez, 28-30 May 25). In: ArtHist.net,

Sep 17, 2024 (accessed Dec 16, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/42637>>.