



COLLOQUIUM ARTS MEET SCIENCES
European Academy of Sciences and Arts Salzburg,
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Monika Czernin: The expulsion of the Jews from Prague (1744-1748)

The lecture examines the expulsion of Prague's Jews by Maria Theresa. My film, which premiered on ORF (Austrian Broadcasting) shortly after the Hamas attack in October 2023, aimed to demonstrate the continuity of anti-Jewish sentiment in Christian Western civilization through this striking example.

An important aspect that I have previously overlooked, but which will play a significant role in the book I am currently writing, is the international law perspective. Legal historian Stephan Wendehorst, among few others, has drawn attention to this. Following Wendehorst's argument, I contend that Maria Theresa's order was not only economically disastrous but also represented a clear break of established legal norms, specifically 18th-century international law. Using contemporary legal documents (e.g., privileges granted to Prague's Jews) and diplomatic correspondence during the protest campaign in favor of Prague's Jews, it is shown how the Habsburg monarch disregarded existing protective rights and international agreements.

It remains to be discussed whether the rapid revocation of the edict in 1748 by Maria Theresa occurred due to negative economic consequences, or whether it was due to a European legal consciousness that attempted to constrain absolutist arbitrariness through international legal norms.

Author/Director Monika Czernin

Born in Klagenfurt in 1965, she studied Political Science, Philosophy, and Journalism in Vienna and worked for Austrian Broadcasting (radio, television) while still a student. The internationally renowned filmmaker (including "Maria Theresa - Majesty and Mother", "Atatürk - Father of Modern Turkey") and author (including "User's Guide to Vienna", "I Lived Too Briefly: The Story of Countess Nora Kinsky") focuses on central figures and turning points in European history. Her book "Anna Sacher and Her Hotel" was on the Spiegel bestseller list for weeks. In 2021, "The Emperor Travels Incognito: Joseph II and the Europe of Enlightenment" was published, which again appeared on the Austrian bestseller list. Additionally, it was included in the Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazine's list of 100 books one should read in a lifetime in February 2022. In 2023, the book was awarded the Friedrich Schiedel Literature Prize. Since 2023, Monika Czernin has been a member of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts.