



## Sacred Polities, Natural Law and the Law of Nations in the 16th-17th Centuries

International Conference at Central European University, Budapest  
Central European University – Palacký University Olomouc – Grotiana Foundation

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Modern natural law self-consciously styled itself as protestant. It is evident that the catholic theological tradition contributed in its own ways and along different interfaces to this modern legal underpinning of both state and international relations. Nonetheless, the first modern natural jurists belonged to the protestant orbit, and a lot can be said about why natural law was so important to early-modern protestant states.

But what about the protestant theological tradition? To what extent is that explanatory of the law of nature as developed by Grotius and like-minded thinkers? What is the relevance of sacred polities to the law of nature and of nations of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century? What is the place of the law of nature within a Christian polity? How does the Scriptural turn in Christianity that Protestantism brought about impinge on that relationship? What about the laws that God gave to mankind in history: the laws of Noah, the laws of Moses, Christ's admonitions? And what inspiration was found in the *respublica Hebraeorum*? It is to this set of questions that the conference will address itself.

The sixteenth century had seen a revival of interest in the legal relevance of the Old Testament, in an environment which played a crucial role in the formation of the young Hugo Grotius. Evidently, however, these questions did not stop to play a central role in the development of natural law after Grotius. Cunaeus, Selden, Harrington, as well as theologians all around Europe continued searching for answers to these vexed questions, as did Grotius himself in his later theological and exegetical writings. The establishment of protestant Scholasticism, with the reception of the metaphysics of Francisco Suárez in the seventeenth century, changed the theological conception of the law again, and it is still a topic for research to what extent that had implications for the development of natural law doctrine.

This conference intends to explore the field marked out above in a pan-European context, and welcomes contributions from colleagues working on early-modern (both protestant and catholic) natural law, the Hebrew republic, history of law, theology, Leiden humanism, political theology, religious politics, c. 1550-1650. It will bring together scholars specifically invited for this event, and contributors selected on the basis of the present call for papers. There will be no registration fee, but the latter group of participants will be expected to cover their travel and accommodation. Logistic help with accommodation in Budapest will be provided by the organisers.

Please send your proposal – title of the proposed contribution and an abstract of around 300 words – by **30 April 2016** to one of the organisers:

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