Editorial

This special issue is one of the key outputs of a two-year research project, *The Origins of Modern Encyclopaedism: Launching Evolutionary Metaphorology* (*TOME*), which was funded through an ERC CZ grant from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic and coordinated by the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences (IP CAS) in Prague. The project aimed to explore how the evolution of metaphors contributed to the rise of modern encyclopaedism, a philosophical and intellectual programme of universal, open, and equitable science and education. Drawing on a close, distant, and hybrid reading[1] of early modern philosophical, theological, scientific, and alchemical texts, TOME tested the possibility of harnessing together fine-grained philological attention and computational scale. In so doing, it offered a pilot model for research that moves fluidly between textual detail and systemic pattern.

Between September 2023 and August 2025 an international multidisciplinary IP CAS team[2] led by Petr Pavlas carried out the TOME project. The work was organized into three groups, distinct in focus yet closely connected in practice. The Digital-Philological Group, led by Georgiana Hedesan (University of Oxford), curated, cleaned, annotated, and managed the EMLAP corpus (*Early Modern Latin Alchemical Prints*),[3] a collection of 100 alchemical and Paracelsian printed books from 1500–1650. The Computational-His-

1 For hybrid reading see Hedesan, G., Fire, *Vulcanus*, *Archeus*, and Alchemy: A Hybrid Close-Distant Reading of Paracelsus's Thought on Active Agents. *Ambix*, 71, 2024, No. 3, pp. 271–300, here pp. 274–276. Available online at www: https://doi.org/10.1080/00026980.2024.2367396 [cit. 29. 5. 2025].

2 Available online at www: https://tome.flu.cas.cz/people/ [cit. 30. 5. 2025].

3 Hedesan, G. – Huber, A. – Kodetová, J. – Kříž, O. – Kubíčková, J. – Kaše, V. – Pavlas, P., EMLAP [Data set]. *Zenodo*, 2025. Available online at www: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14765293 [cit. 29. 5. 2025]. For a graphical user interface see https://emlap.flu.cas.cz [cit. 29. 8. 2025].

torical Group, led by Vojtěch Kaše (CCS-Lab),[4] developed vector representations of word meanings[5] across early modern scholarly text corpora such as EMLAP and NOSCEMUS,[6] with the aim of designing an automatic metaphor detector. The Intellectual-Historical Group, led by Lucie Storchová (IP CAS), prepared a wide range of exploratory, analytical, and synthetic studies, six of which are presented in this special issue.

Alessandro Nannini opens the issue with a synoptic study presenting the fascinating prehistory of the modern idea of culture (pp. 16–34). He traces its semantic foundation in the agricultural metaphors of field, ground, and seed, following their transformations from Cicero, Seneca, and Philo of Alexandria, through the Augustinian and Thomistic traditions to Renaissance humanism and the Reformation (Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, Timpler, Keckermann, Alsted, and Comenius). Against the backdrop of Hadot's and Foucault's reflections on philosophy as a spiritual exercise, Nannini shows how the metaphor of cultivation marked philosophy as a regimen of self-formation rather than a system of propositions. For the further development of the early modern period, Bacon's motif of the "georgics of the soul" proves to be crucial. Adopted in the German lands by Placcius, Wesenfeld, and Pufendorf, it culminates in Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, who makes the "georgics of the mind" a precondition of the encyclopaedia, understood as a territory of disciplines to be cultivated. Thus, in Baumgarten, the metaphor no longer refers solely to the care of the individual soul but also to the scholarship itself. In this way, Baumgarten "helps set the stage for the social dimension of culture" (p. 32). Nannini concludes by suggesting that the agricultural imagery of cultivation, with its emphasis on tilling the soil, eradicating weeds, and planting seeds of virtue, gradually gave way to the artistic imagery of *Bildung*, which came to dominate 18th century pedagogy and aesthetics.

4 For CCS-Lab. Available online at www: https://ccs.zcu.cz/ and https://ccs-lab.zcu.cz/ [cit. 31. 7. 2025].

5 Kaše, V. – Tvrz, J. – Švadlenková, J. – Hedesan, G. – Pavlas, P., WEEMS: Word Embeddings for Early Modern Science. *Zenodo*, 2025. Available online at www: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14626411 [cit. 29. 8. 2025]. For the visualisation application see Kaše, V. – Tvrz, J. – Švadlenková, J. – Hedesan, G. – Pavlas, P., iWEEMS: Interactive Word Embeddings for Early Modern Science. *Zenodo*, 2025. Available online at www: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15591589 [cit. 19. 6. 2025]. For a graphical user interface see https://ccs-lab.zcu.cz/ [cit. 29. 8. 2025].

6 Akopyan, O. – Barton, W. – Baumgartner, F. – Berrens, D. – Kirchler, U. – Korenjak, M. – Luggin, J. – Tautschnig, I. – Zathammer, S., Noscemus Wiki [Data set]. *Zenodo*, 2023. Available online at www: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7855321 [cit. 19. 5. 2025]; Zathammer, S., Noscemus Digital Sourcebook [Data set]. *Zenodo*, 2025. Available online at www: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15040255 [cit. 19. 5. 2025]. For graphical user interfaces see https://wiki.uibk.ac.at/noscemus and https://www.uibk.ac.at/projects/noscemus/ [cit. 31. 8. 2025].

Petr Pavlas (pp. 35–55) examines the emergence of the modern idea of the encyclopaedia from the metaphors of circle, cycle, sphere, and book. He begins his study with an extensive methodological introduction; his approach to the historiography of metaphors and ideas is inspired by the theory of nonconceptuality (*Unbegrifflichkeit*) proposed by the German philosopher Hans Blumenberg (1920–1996). In addition to cognitive metaphors, Pavlas considers "absolute metaphors" to be key both to intellectual history and the history of philosophy, which – following his teachers and leading Czech interpreters of Blumenberg's *Metaphorologie*, Břetislav Horyna and Daniel Špelda – he understands as expressions whose metaphoricity is not yet or no longer recognized: "The difference between cognitive and absolute metaphors lies not in their verbal (linguistic) form, but in the actual mental (ideational) content. The same expression can function as either a cognitive or an absolute metaphor, depending on the perceiving subject and circumstances such as time, place, etc." (p. 42). Building on this framework, Pavlas demonstrates how the conceptual-metaphorical blending of circle and book marked a turning point, giving rise to the modern cultural idea of encyclopaedia.

Lenka Řezníková investigates (pp. 56–84) the metaphor of harmony in the early modern organization of knowledge. Her article stands in creative tension with Pavlas', both methodologically and in its conclusions. Drawing on the influential framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), complemented by Fauconnier and Turner's theory of conceptual blending, Řezníková's analysis reveals that the early modern metaphor of harmony cannot be reduced to a single source – be it musical, mechanical, or cosmological – precisely because these domains themselves overlapped and intermingled in the intellectual landscape of the time. While the transfer of meaning from one domain to another has been recognized since Aristotle as the very foundation of metaphor, modern metaphor historiography cannot ignore the fact that these domains are historically fluid, often overlapping, and should be situated within the cultural experience of their time. Řezníková's careful examination of the concept of harmony in Comenius' encyclopaedic and pansophic writings culminates in a conclusion that both complements the findings and picks up the threads of Pavlas' study. Indeed, Řezníková starts where Pavlas ends: "By adopting the concept of harmony, he [Comenius] was trying to surpass the concept of an encyclopaedia, which no longer fully suited the syncretic experience of his Pansophic period. […] the medium of textuality may have been a significant obstacle to realizing the pansophic ideal […]. While the metaphor of harmony was successful in articulating Comenius' ideas of how to organize knowledge, Pansophy failed to embody them in any material manifestation" (p. 80).

While the first three studies in this issue focus on figures who occupy a more or less prominent place in the wider history of European thought, the fourth turns to a phenomenon of particular significance to Central Europe: Protestant humanism. **Lucie Storchová**'s study shifts attention away from elite knowledge towards the broader social and educational contexts of early modern learning (pp. 85–111). She examines how metaphors of the heart and other corporeal images were employed in shorter occasional and student texts at the Protestant University of Wittenberg and elsewhere during the 16th century. Using the poetry of Nicolaus Selnecker (1530–1592) and Tomáš Mitis (1562–1621) as examples, Storchová demonstrates that students and graduates of Leucorea not only adopted but also adapted Wittenberg knowledge, particularly the Galenic natural philosophy and providential natural theology associated with it. The study concludes by highlighting shifts in epistemology within the Wittenberg discourse and imagination regarding the heart and political bodies during the 17th century. Particular attention is given to the understudied work *Civitas corporis humani* (1621) by the renowned Rosicrucian alchemist and physician Michael Maier (1568–1622). Maier's *Civitas* is an example of early modern fringe science that departs from Lutheran-Melanchthonian orthodoxy. In Maier's natural theology, "the post-lapsarian state of nature and human knowledge began to lose significance" (p. 109).

The extensive and elaborate contribution by **Martin Žemla** (pp. 112–139) explores the multi-layered history of metaphors of sensory perception, with a particular focus on taste and tasting. Combining advanced corpus searches across digital libraries and databases of machine-readable texts with his deep knowledge of Neoplatonism and Western mystical and esoteric thinking, Žemla traces both cognitive patterns and semantic transformations in the metaphors of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. The article begins with a brief overview of how these metaphors were used by ancient biblical, Platonic, and Neoplatonic authorities through medieval thinkers such as Dionysius the Areopagite, Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugh and Richard of St. Victor, Meister Eckhart, Marguerite Porete, John of Rupescissa, John Tauler, and up to Cusanus. The core of the study, however, lies in the analysis and interpretation of early modern authors (Ficino, Luther, Calvin, Paracelsus, Croll, V. Weigel, Khunrath, Andreae, Comenius, Bacon, Fludd, Mersenne, Descartes, Hobbes, and Locke). Žemla concludes with the hypothesis that although proponents of the new philosophy and science of the 17th century *in verbis* rejected the ornamentation and figurativeness of language, they in fact privileged visual metaphors over sonic, olfactory, gustatory, and haptic ones: "The early modern raid against 'misleading' and overly emotional and 'disturbing' metaphors, however, was directed against everything but the

fundamental visual metaphors, which were used rather uncritically. 'Hearing', 'smell' and 'taste' as privileged experiential ways to the truth remained episodic and marginal, reserved for poetry and personal religiosity where they can open the door to another 'reality' – which mainstream science, driven by visual metaphors, does not consider real at all" (p. 139).

The concluding study by **Márton Szentpéteri** (pp. 140–154) expands the scope of this special issue on cognitive metaphors and encyclopaedic knowledge by introducing the perspectives of early modern architecture and design. His theoretical framework broadens the concept of the cognitive metaphor beyond language and discourse, showing how architecture itself can acquire metaphorical functions. Opposing the linguistic turn and logocentric conception of metaphor, he considers the unique Bethlenszentmiklós/Sânmiclăus palace to be not only "the best and most beautiful example of Late Renaissance country house architecture in Transylvania" (p. 141) but also a kind of metaphor. This palace was built by Chancellor Miklós Bethlen between 1668 and 1683, based on his own architectural plans. Szentpéteri demonstrates the importance of the archetypal "Temple of Solomon", as it was internalised by the young Bethlen through the "encyclopaedic" theory of universal architecture of his teacher Nicolaus Goldmann (1611–1665), who followed in the footsteps of the Jesuit Juan Bautista Villalpando (1552–1608). This youthful conception contrasts sharply with Bethlen's later self-fashioning, as he styles himself in his autobiography as the *Kohelet/Ecclesiastes* – the elderly and disgraced King Solomon, for whom all worldly architecture and human construction are merely *vanitas vanitatum*. Szentpéteri illustrates how Bethlen's verbally discursive and architecturally embodied metaphors permeate and illuminate one another.

Taken together, the studies gathered herein demonstrate how a historical analysis of metaphors can provide new insights into the intellectual history of early modern encyclopaedism, revealing the deep entanglement of language, knowledge, and culture. The outcome is a richer understanding of early modern encyclopaedism, a fabric woven from metaphors that sought to make the world intelligible, and whose legacy continues to inform our reflections on knowledge today. From the solidity of corporeal metaphors, such as the heart, to the architectural and cosmic figures that framed universal schemes of learning, these contributions show how metaphor actively structured early modern ways of knowing and imagining knowledge itself.

Benevole lector, we wish you a pleasant and inspiring experience.

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Editors