

HISTORY OF UNIVERSITIES SEMINAR | 1 JUNE 2022

AN UNINTENDED EXPORT: RETHINKING THE FOUNDING OF HARVARD COLLEGE

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Amid the religious tensions that precipitated the mid-seventeenth century wars in England, Scotland, and Ireland, a breakaway community of puritans across the Atlantic in New England founded a college. Scholars have generally viewed what became Harvard College as an offshoot of the Cambridge colleges that many of its founders attended. While Harvard bore the marks of the English universities, it was also founded in an era of pronounced political, religious, and educational upheaval in Europe. This paper rethinks Harvard's founding and tracks how the idea of a specific type of college to serve a godly, Reformed community had its antecedents among itinerant communities in the Dutch Republic that were forced to flee the repressive policies of Charles I and William Laud. In doing so, this paper highlights the monarchy's approach to other Reformed institutions in the 1630s—Trinity College, Dublin and the Scottish universities, in particular—in order to re-contextualize Harvard's founding within the crucible of imperial Laudianism.

History of Universities Seminar

Convened by Miles Taylor (Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany), Ku-ming (Kevin) Chang (Academia Sinica, Taiwan), Heike Jöns (Loughborough University, United Kingdom) and Tamson Pietsch (University of Technology Sydney, Australia). Hosted by the Humboldt University of Berlin on Zoom: <https://www.histgeog-uni.net/history-of-universities-seminar/>.