

Continuities of Historical Crises and Discourses of Europe From the “Neo-Latin Past” to the 21st Century*

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Europe and the EU have been facing many crises and challenges in recent years. From Brexit and rising nationalism to economic problems and unanimous refugee policies, most of them remain unsolved. Instead of moving forward with the European integration project, Europe seems to regress in many instances. Considering this turmoil, it seems all the more important to historicize the affirmative discourse of Europe and to expand the knowledge of the European unification process with novel insights into its history. Only if a broad understanding of its roots and developments prevails, the conflicts of the present can be better evaluated and addressed. Particularly one set of so far neglected sources from Europe’s past serves as guiding light in that respect: the early modern Europe literature written in the Latin language. Between 1400 and 1800, Latin enjoyed a similar status in promoting scientific discoveries, negotiating political affairs and generally communicating on an international level as modern-day English. By offering a brief glance at some historically influential Latin texts from the early modern discourse of Europe, this article will show that the early modern European crises strikingly resemble Europe’s current crises despite the difference in political, social, and economic circumstances. The discourse of Europe has from the beginning been a stable discourse, characterized by the same recurring questions for centuries. When used as reference point for the crises of the 21st century, the prospects for the European integration look better than presumed.

Keywords: European crises, discourse of Europe, European history, Europe in Neo-Latin literature, historicization of Europe, Europe’s past and present

Introduction

Along with the term “Europe”, the eponymous continent has been known for more than 2,000 years. The earliest mentions of Europe go back to Greek historiographers and geographers of the fifth century BC, who used the term to demarcate the peoples living West of Asia Minor from the barbarian Asians. However, neither during the Greek nor the Roman antiquity, notions of Europe as a conceptual entity existed (Schlumberger, 1994, pp. 7, 12).¹ The same applies to the Middle Ages. Europe as a cohesive political or cultural unit beyond an approximate geographical understanding was an inconceivable concept. Even though Charlemagne is often referred to as the “father of Europe” (Detering, 2017, p. 57),² his vision of “Europe” rather intended to revive

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¹ Some literature seems to imply that, but without substantiating the assumption: e.g. Malitz, 2003; Jouanna, 2009.

² This catchphrase is derived from an anonymous eulogy from the 9th century.

the Roman Empire than to build a supranational federation encompassing the entire continent (Asbach, 2011, pp. 69-70). And even though the history of the crusades often conveys the picture of Europe as a self-contained Christian unity driven by the same goals, the crusaders were nothing but a loosely assembled group of individuals fighting for their own or their lords' interests (Burke, 1980, pp. 22-23).

The situation changed at the transition from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period (c. 1400). All at once, the view started to expand and "Europe" became visible to the public eye in all corners of the continent and across all social classes. As a result, the term "Europe"—both in the vernacular languages and in Latin, the *lingua franca* of the time—experienced such an increased use that the previously inexistent adjective "European" had to be coined for the first time in history (Oschema, 2013, pp. 440-443). The words "Europe" and "European" in turn were impregnated with ideas and discourses, which were fed by the realities of contemporary life (military strife, peacemaking, confessional conflicts, economic interests, scientific achievements, geographical discoveries, colonization, etc.). With the help of the newly invented printing press, these ideas and discourses were quickly spread among the literate European reading public. Getting in contact with them necessitated a subconscious reorientation among Europeans as to their relationship to each other and as to their position in a global context. Ultimately, a certain sense of belonging emerged together with a novel understanding of the space called Europe, which found expression in confident representations of collective European identity. Although in sum many different concepts of European identity circulated during the Early Modern Period and although Europe as an imagined community never turned into an actual reality before the 20th century, the notion of a collective European identity provided both stability and referentiality to people in a time of constant change and upheaval (Anderson, 2006; Wintle, 2009). From a modern point of view, there is nothing surprising about this observation. In the context of the Early Modern Period, however, it indicates an unprecedented uniqueness, since before the 19th century continents did not conceive of themselves as collective unities—apart from Europe (Pagden, 2002, p. 33).

Literary representations of Europe before 1800 have hardly been investigated (Detering, 2017, pp. 23, 35), despite the important role literature played regarding the discourse of Europe and despite the impressive quantity of texts dealing with continental policies. Particularly the Latin literature of the Early Modern Period (usually labelled as Neo-Latin literature) needs to be mentioned in that context. From 1400 to approximately 1800, Latin served as the international language of communication and enjoyed a status similar to that of English today. Scientists, scholars, lawyers, doctors, teachers, officials, noblemen, authors, and poets would use Latin for their private and official communication, while most institutions, like the church, schools, and universities, even constituted an exclusive Latin-speaking cosmos (Ford, Bloemendal, & Fantazzi, 2014; Knight & Tilg, 2015; Korenjak, 2016).

Even though the Neo-Latin language and literature are still underexplored in relation to their former significance, experts are by now fairly well able to assess the influence of Neo-Latin texts on the historical continent-building. In various publications, Isabella Walser-Bürgler has highlighted the sheer quantity of Neo-Latin texts defining and conceptualizing Europe from the 15th to the 19th centuries: From political treatises, legal agreements, and journalistic texts to private letters, university orations, scientific texts, and the *belles lettres*, the present and future state of the continent and its inhabitants was discussed in several 10,000 Neo-Latin texts (Walser, 2017; Walser-Bürgler, 2018a, 2018b). Put another way, the Neo-Latin discourse of Europe was the main engine of Europe's historical self-actualization. While the vernacular discourse of Europe often emphasized national interests, the Neo-Latin discourse could house continental considerations in an

unparalleled manner.³ As a supranational language which belonged to every nation and no nation at the same time, it did not only imply balance and shared identity, but also was naturally predestined to talk about supranational matters (Walser-Bürgler, 2018a, p. 82). Hence, a polymath, like Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), could still emphatically call Latin the “*lingua Europaea universalis et durabilis ad posteritatem*” (“the universal and eternal language of Europe”) in 1711 (Schmied-Kowarzik, 1916, p. XXII).

Why is all this relevant for today’s understanding of Europe and the mechanisms of the EU?—Given that Europe has recently been facing various crises, the historicization of Europe and the European integration process becomes all the more important. Political scientists, pollsters, and policy advisers often turn to predictions of a wide range of pessimistic scenarios regarding the future of Europe and the EU. Yet to recognize the roots of the European unification and the paths the continent took over many centuries can help explain the way opinions and ideologies work today. Most of what is considered modern European policies is indeed not that modern and did not grow out of the 20th century post-war compensation, as is often insinuated by political scientists. It is much older and finds original expression in the Neo-Latin texts of the Early Modern Period. The question therefore rightfully arises whether there is anything that modern Europe can learn in its current state of crisis from early modern Europe and the Europe discourse displayed in Neo-Latin texts. Even if there might not be a simple answer to this question, there are at least a few aspects worth considering.

The article postulates three points: first, that certain issues and challenges have been existing for centuries concerning the European integration process; second, that the discourse of Europe is in a way a relatively stable discourse despite the apparent political, social, and economic changes of the last two centuries; and third, that the way that these crises have been dealt with in the past can at least give us some direction in the midst of contemporary turmoil. After all, the crises of the Early Modern Period, which do not ring unfamiliar to a modern European’s ear, have proven to rather fuel than inhibit the European integration process. They notably emerged in conjunction with the formation of Europe as a supranational entity. Similarly thus, the current crises seem to be nothing but symptoms or by-products of the ever-evolving identity and policy discourse of Europe and the European Union. As problematic as they might be, they serve as indicators of a Europe aware of itself and in constant confrontation with itself to secure the European project. And just as the early modern past has shown, the end of this development must not necessarily be marked by the demise but on the contrary by the affirmation and strengthening of the European integration. For all the time during which the Europe discourse was strong and the idea of a European community was kept alive, the European nations collectively tried to come together or at least to improve their transnational policies. The continent only started to disintegrate in the 19th and 20th centuries, after the discourse of continental integration had quietly subsided in the face of an unrivalled national discourse.

European Challenges and Crises

Present-day Europe is faced with many challenges and crises: nationalism and Euroscepticism, viz. the strife for national sovereignty as a reaction to the EU’s centralization ambitions; Brexit as a related problem; stagnant negotiations with Turkey in terms of a potential EU accession; the relationship of the three principal

³ Paradoxically, the history of Europe has so far mainly relied on vernacular source material. Neo-Latin texts have been consistently overlooked despite the fact that they far exceed the entirety of material from the various European vernacular languages. It is likely that the more Neo-Latin material is uncovered and investigated as Neo-Latin studies as a discipline grow, the more changes the known history of Europe will have to undergo.

powers (Germany, France, still Great Britain) among each other and with the rest of the EU nations, viz. conflicts of center and peripheries; the EU's Eastern policies; the Crimea-Ukraine-Russia-crisis; the Eurozone crisis; the refugee crisis; xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, and terrorism as its concomitants; the rise of the radical right and populist parties; the altered transatlantic relationship; Europe's role as a global player; climate change (crises overviews: Runciman, 2013; Kjaer & Olsen, 2016a; Castells et al., 2018; and monothematic crises studies: Lapavistas et al., 2012; Icoz, 2016; Krotz & Maher, 2016; Postelnicescu, 2016; Youngs, 2017).

However, crises in general and the particular crises mentioned are not a phenomenon of our modern Europe, as Poul F. Kjaer and Niklas Olsen (2016b, p. xi) stated in the introduction of their collected volume on theories of crises in Europe. Crises tied to Europe as a political body as well as narratives and analyses of crises have been existing since the beginning of the Europe discourse and the first emergence of a European sense of community in the Early Modern Period. In some ways, one could even say that Europe's early modern crises constituted a prelude to today's crises. The only difference between the past and present crises pertains to the political, social, and economic conditions on the one hand and the economic factor on the other to which nowadays most policies are subordinated. Other than that, practically the same crises can be encountered in the Early Modern Period (during these decisive centuries of conceptual continent formation) as today (the era of concrete unification measures). The European integration thus has been rather characterized by recurrent themes than time-dependent predicaments. The European context might have changed, but not so much its problems.

Hereinafter two main areas of crises will be presented, which display the most prominent overlaps of early modern European crises with present ones. The focus will be on the Neo-Latin discourse and its referential value for the modern Europe discourse, instead of offering detailed analyses of the past and present crises (which can be retrieved from many respective studies). The comparison should go to highlight the stability of the discourse linked to the European integration in the sense that crises actually constitute a sign of a "healthy" integration development. In concrete terms, the comparison will comprise the following questions:

- Do nations, like Great Britain, Russia, or Turkey, belong to Europe?
- Is Europe in danger of losing its Christian identity?
- Does Europe suffer from its division into a center and peripheries?
- What is the meaning of "Europe" as a peace project?
- How to deal with Euroscepticism and nationalism?
- Is Europe united in diversity or rather separated through diversity?
- Is Europe characterized by a specifically European set of values that sets the continent apart from the rest of the world?
- What are potential symbols of Europe and how do they reflect the collective unification process?

Political, Religious, and Geographical Issues

Against the background of seminal issues, like Brexit, the EU's Russian policies, or the accession negotiations provisionally put on ice between the EU and Turkey, the affiliation of fringe nations, like Great Britain, Russia, and Turkey, with Europe has recently entered the European supranational thinking (Adamshin, 2012; Icoz, 2016; Simms, 2016). Yet the question of whether the three respective nations belong to Europe or not has already been of crucial interest in the Early Modern Period. Like today, an accordance was never reached. The humanist John Barclay (1582-1621), for example, takes a holistic approach in his portrait of the

European nations entitled *Icon animorum* (“The mirror of minds”, 1614; Walser-Bürgler, 2017). As a Scotsman, self-appointed cosmopolitan and adviser to the English King James I, he undisputedly ranks Britain among Europe and confidently sets off describing its greatness (Barclay, 2013, pp. 106-107). Russia is likewise integrated despite the nation’s submissive customs, its tyrannical form of government and a strict religious organization coupled with a culture unfamiliar to the rest of Europe (Barclay, 2013, pp. 186-191). The German political theorist Cyriacus Lentulus (1620-1678) on the other hand only includes Britain in his geopolitical overview of Europe (*Europa*, 1650) because of its ancient Roman legacy, but otherwise remains mostly indifferent about it (Lentulus, 1650, p. 20). In the case of Russia, Lentulus even expresses strong doubts as to whether he should rate it among Europe or Asia. In the end, he offers an implicit answer by pulling every aspect about it to pieces (the fields are barren, the Russians are cruel, the tsar is a tyrant, etc.) (Lentulus, 1650, pp. 148-150).

The most controversial question of belonging pertained to Turkey. The catalogues of nations from the 16th and 17th centuries would usually list the Ottoman Empire West of the Bosphorus as European for geographical and historico-political reasons (Detering, 2017, p. 65). Especially since Greece had been occupied by the Ottomans but Europeans still felt the need to have it represented as the continents’ cradle, Turkey inevitably had to be considered a part of Europe. This was a remarkable concession on the part of the Europeans, because in contrast to Britain or Russia, the Ottoman power has been a serious threat for Europe for centuries, which is why “the Turk” represented the unsurpassed concept of an enemy. Concrete examples of Turkey’s inclusion apart from national catalogues come from Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1405-1464), the later pope Pius II, and again from John Barclay. In both cases, the inclusion must be seen as attempts to “Europeanize” the Turks for mitigating political ends. For Barclay (2013, p. 205) indeed mentioned that the Turks “think us [Europeans] and call us dogs”, yet he does not fail to address their “humanity”, at the time an exclusive European attribute. Piccolomini in his fictional letter to sultan Mehmed II, *Epistola ad Mahometem* (“Letter to Mehmed”, 1461), even offers the rule over the continent to the sultan under the sole condition that he accepts Christianity as its central religion (Piccolomini, 1990, p. 22). Another famous humanist, gives an influential counter-example: The Spaniard Juan Luis Vives (1493-1540) argues in his dialogic treatise *De Europae dissidiis et bello turcico* (“On conflicts in Europe and the war against the Turks”, 1526) that the Turks could never be called a part of Europe, since they have nothing in common with the Europeans regarding their culture, their customs, their religion, and their society (indeed a modern-sounding argument) (Vives, 1785/1964, pp. 468-469).

Linked to this issue are two further “crises” of Europe—both then and now: the question of Europe’s Christian identity on the one hand and the dichotomy between center and peripheries. As to the former, religion has never been a value-free aspect of the Europe discourse. Even today, the EU, though considered a secular project in the first place, is characterized by subliminal religious arguments. An exemplary case marks the long and heated discussion about whether to include or abandon references to Europe’s religious inheritance in the preamble to the Lisbon Treaty (Mudrov, 2016). Similarly controversial is the case of the European Flag. Despite official refusals, its most popular interpretations associate its symbolism with the signatures of Christianity. Arsène Heitz, one of the flag’s designers, admitted in an interview for the *Lourdes Magazine* in 2004 that he had taken inspiration for the design from the Book of Revelation (12.1).⁴

The connection between Europe and Christianity goes back to early Christian doctrines, genealogically

⁴ The European Commission and religious values. *The Economist*, 28 October 2004.

deriving the origins of the European people from Noah's son Japheth, who was commissioned to rule the part of the world later called "Europe" (Detering, 2017, p. 13). When in 1453 Constantinople fell, the continuous advance of the Ottomans towards the West turned the European nations into a madhouse, collectively fearing the loss of their Christian roots (Malcolm, 2019). This in turn gave rise to a Christian-based anti-Muslim discourse of Europe lasting until today, especially in the context of terrorism and migration. Quite like in the slogans of present-day populists or in the writings of disputed figures like the German Thilo Sarrazin when reacting to terrorism, the refugee crisis, or Turkey's EU accession negotiations,⁵ many early modern thinkers and politicians expressed their concerns over "the Muslim overrun of Europe". Piccolomini, for instance, who apparently was at variance with himself, has tried to incite the European princes at various councils to collectively crusade against the Turks decades before his *Epistola ad Mahometem*. Most famously he has done so in the oration he gave on 15 October 1454 at the Diet of Frankfurt, known today under the title *Constantinopolitana clades* ("The fall of Constantinople"). Appealingly he uses the term "Christianity" synonymously with "Europe" and justifies his call for a continental war against the Ottomans with the argument that now "Christians have been slaughtered by Muslims in Europe, that is in our homeland" (Piccolomini, 2013, pp. 495-496). Also, Vives in the abovementioned *De Europae dissidiis* warns of the Muslim advance into Europe, as it could trigger the loss of global power and continental identity for Europe. Waging war against the Turks in a joint European venture for him clearly seems to have been the most glorious task of the century (Vives, 1785/1964, pp. 112, 478). Vives' countryman, Andrés Laguna (1510-1559), took a similar stance in his oration *Europa heautentimorumene* ("Europe, the self-tormentor"), which he delivered at the University of Cologne in January 1543 in front of an audience split by the Protestant and Catholic confession (Laguna, 2010). The oration was meant to reunite Christianity by focusing on the "common enemy" (the Ottomans) and its destruction.

The dichotomy between the center and the peripheries of Europe is only partly linked to the continent's religious issues. For even though it is true that nations like Russia and particularly Turkey have been dismissed as being European due to their religious orientation differing from the rest of Europe, the problem is way more complex than to simply reduce it to religious matters. If one looks at the formation of the EU—from the first timid steps towards the European Economic Community to the eastward enlargement and the Treaty of Lisbon—a difference in political, social, and economic weighting can hardly be denied. Maybe this division has even grown historically, because we already find it in the early modern Europe discourse. The closest bonds existed among the Western European nations on the one side and the Eastern European nations on the other. Between these two circles of power, however, there was only sparse exchange, while the North of Europe practically lived in political seclusion (Müller, 1991, p. 62).

In sum, therefore, more Neo-Latin sources focus on the display of the Western part of Europe. Holistic pictures like that of John Barclay are rarer; the peripheral nations of Scandinavia, East-Central Europe, and the Balkan region are more often omitted than included in continental overviews. The center is most frequently constituted by France, Germany, and Italy as the major powers of Christianity. In his aforementioned geopolitical vision of Europe, addressed to the German Emperor Ferdinand III, Cyriacus Lentulus for instance

⁵ In 2012, for example, the Austrian Liberal Party (FPÖ) ran an election campaign in the Tyrol under the slogan "Heimatliebe statt Marokkanerdiebe" ("Love of one's native country instead of Moroccan crooks"), emphasizing the dangers of the Arab culture for the Austrian "homeland". Thilo Sarrazin's populist books like *Germany Abolishes Itself* (2010) or *Hostile Takeover: How Islam Impedes Progress and Threatens Society* (2018) have become international bestsellers.

pays disproportionately high attention to the German Empire. Not only does he dedicate more space to its delineation compared to the rest of the nations, but also he locates its description right in the middle of the text. The other 17 nations outlined are arranged around Germany. As Isabella Walser-Bürgler (2019) put it, “this central position [...] signals its [Germany’s] significance as the heart of Europe” (p. 339). Germany as the center of Europe also plays an important role in a short poem about Europe entitled *Lusus in Europae nationes* (“Facetious thoughts about the European nations”, c. 1600) by the Belgian lexicographer Cornelis Kiliaan (1528-1607). The kind of Europe Kiliaan describes exclusively consists of the Western—partly also the Scandinavian—area (Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, Britain, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden) (Kiliaan, 1614). Yet these were the nations he associated with the continent, they were the Europe he was familiar with from his own political reality: These were the nations involved in the Eighty Years’ War (1568-1648), the gory strife for Dutch independence he had known for all his life. The rest of Europe simply was beyond his awareness due to his immediate and unchanging focus on the Dutch affairs (Walser-Bürgler, 2019, p. 326).

The context of war and peace in Europe brings us to another past and present issue of the Europe discourse: the European integration as a peace project. As the former German chancellor Helmut Schmidt stated after the failed first referendum on the Lisbon Treaty in Ireland in 2008: “Europeans [...] are not united by flags and anthems, but by fear of another war” (Drechsel & Leggewie, 2010, p. 8). This conclusion has not just held true since the end of World War II but basically since the disintegration of the feudal system at the end of the Middle Ages. The amalgamation of the single European nations to one continental entity in order to create a comprehensive peace on the continent was part of many considerations in the Early Modern Period. Peace literature as a genre of its own started to flourish after Erasmus’ (1466-1536) groundbreaking pacifistic treatise *Querela pacis* (“The lament of Peace”, 1517). It was written on the occasion of a planned peace summit to be held in France, to which all political leaders of Europe had been invited (unfortunately, the summit never took place in the end). The text features the personification of peace (Latin: *pax*), who laments in a long monologue about the diremption of Europe resulting from the number of the continent’s recent military conflicts (Erasmus, 1977).

But irrespective of the genre of peace literature, the Neo-Latin source material abounds in reflections on the possibilities of a European peace. The solutions offered include many concepts ranging from ideas of a centralized European universal monarchy ruled by one of the major dynasties to a loose federation of equal nations. But while none of these peace visions came true, one peace project of European scope was at least in parts implemented: the peace treaties of Münster and Osnabrück (also known as *Instrumenta pacis Westphalicae*), which put an end to the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648). Written in the Latin language to signal equality among the political parties involved, it constituted a milestone in international relations at the time. For not only did it change the political landscape of Europe and the way policies were negotiated on an international level, which would eventually lead to the formation of the *Jus publicum Europaeum* in the 18th century (Lesaffer, 2007). It also attempted to push forward a European peace by reconciling the main contractors Germany, Sweden, and France, by incorporating all their European allies and international mediators (the Holy See, Venice, and Denmark), as well as by integrating the continental peripheries in the East (like Russia) (Wilson, 2009).⁶

⁶ The text of both *Instrumenta* is available online in the Latin original and in German translation on the homepage of the “Digitale Westfälische Urkunden-Datenbank” (“Digital Database of Westphalian Documents”): https://www.lwl.org/westfaelische-geschichte/portal/Internet/urkunden_datenbank/haupt.php?urlNeu=Ja (access: 19 December 2019).

Early modern international peace projects, like the Westphalian peace negotiations, often stood in the service of the Europe discourse by meaning to prevent any form of aggressive nationalism. Legally binding agreements on compensations for the political and economic losses a nation suffered through wars or the putting on equal terms of the parties involved should relieve the transnational tensions. Many Europeans were critically aware of the negative sides of nationalism in the form of national strife for predominance or pointless hostilities against foreign nations. Similar to today's political reality, proponents of a united Europe regarded the unhealthy focus on one's own nation as the key reason for conflict. In trying to promote the European integration to guarantee a long-term peace, it was not unusual for many political theorists to go as far as to literally demonize nationalist attitudes.

In his appeal for continental cohesion in the face of the Ottoman threat Juan Luis Vives, for example, paints an intentionally deterrent picture of the hate Italians are filled with at the sight of transalpine people, the Frenchmen feel when hearing an English word, or the Spaniards experience when dealing with French policies (Vives, 1785/1964, pp. 454-455). Looking towards a supranational European peace agreement, Cornelis Kiliaan advertises continental self-preservation instead of the nationalist drive for expansion in his abovementioned *Lusus* by insistently describing all European nations as alike (Walser-Bürgler, 2019, p. 331): Germans, Britons, Spaniards, Frenchmen, etc. come out as equally strong, clever, combative, and virtuous (Kiliaan, 1614, vv. 20, 63, 120, 164). The point of this likening description is to convince the European readership that waging war against each other would not make sense, as the outcome could only be a draw. Nationalist sentiments thus are presented as senseless, whereas the idea of a European citizenship is proposed as an attractive alternative. The anonymous polemic pamphlet entitled *Oratio de praesenti Europae statu* ("Oration on the present state of Europe", 1640), finally, pointedly denounces the reckless political interests of all European nations in all corners of the continent. In an overawing manner, it even lists concrete examples of nationalist policies gone wrong, which have put the entire continent at risk.

European Culture, Values, and Symbols

As many observations show, the motto of the European Union—"United in diversity"—is at conflict with the realities of European life. Ideologically and theoretically cultural, ethnic, and political diversity is promoted in a positive light. De facto, European diversity seems to separate more than it unites (Calder, 2011). The rise of nationalism and an increased sensitivity towards problems tied to the idea of an inclusive European identity have decisively shaped this imbalance between theory and reality. But then again, the issue is not new. For centuries, Europeans have discussed about matters of diversity and how to make them work within one single continental unity. In his *Icon animorum*, for example, John Barclay integrates the description of the single European nations into a comprehensive European framework. Like no other Neo-Latin text known so far, he constructs Europe by emphasizing its pieces and their uniqueness. According to his idea, Europe is composed of a plurality of places, ethnic groups, cultures, and customs (Walser, 2017, p. 541). Barclay makes his claim for the unifying grace of a politically, culturally, religiously, and ethnically diverse Europe even explicit in an illustrative analogy: He recalls the feeling that once overwhelmed him when contemplating the surrounding area from the top of a hill in Greenwich (Barclay, 2013, pp. 76-79). Not knowing which of the elements he saw—the red roofs of the houses, the white cattle, the green fields, the blue rivers, the colorful boats—were the most beautiful or in which order he could rank the sights, he came to the following conclusion: "[...] there was nothing in the world so exactly beautiful, but at last would glut and weary the beholder, unless after that

manner (as this place was) it were beautified with contrarities and change of endowments [...]” (Barclay, 2013, p. 79). It is in this very sense that Barclay fathoms Europe. The continent’s value and significance solely relies on the diversity of the nations, people, and customs it houses (Walser, 2017, p. 543).

While Cyriacus Lentulus’ Europa operates on a similar argumentative level, a different approach is manifest in Cornelis Kiliaan’s *Lusus*. Lentulus emphasizes the dissociating aspects of the various nations making up the entirety of Europe. In the true fashion of a geopolitical consultant, he is mostly concerned with highlighting the nations’ idiosyncracies, splitting up the continent into several nationally unique unities (e.g., the geography of Switzerland is typified by mountainous regions, that of Poland by forests and swamps; Scandinavia is strong on commerce due to its many ports on the coast; in Britain religion rules the daily and cultural life) (Lentulus, 1650). These pieces of information are indeed useful for Emperor Ferdinand III, who served as Lentulus’ dedicatee and whom Lentulus wanted to see installed as the ruler of Europe, viz. the universal monarch of a composite continental monarchy (Walser-Bürgler, 2019, pp. 340-343). Lentulus envisions Europe as a conglomerate of different nations with different characteristics and ethnic groups that can only be glued together for the purpose of continental peace by the superior force of imperial power. Kiliaan on the other hand completely dissolves any notions of European diversity in his homogeneous vision of Europe as one synthetic entity. For it is not only in terms of their above-mentioned military and intellectual virtues that the European nations described by Kiliaan appear to be alike. It is also their taste of art, their common past, their customs, and their religiousness that render them indistinguishable. In Kiliaan’s opinion, diversification is a dangerous separating factor, potentially triggering wars and fostering nationalist tendencies. Hence, it is only present in Kiliaan’s political overview of Europe through the synonyms he applies to the identical characterization of the respective nations (Kiliaan, 1614, vv. 17, 42, 137, 163). In sum, he turns Europe into “a space without any major differences, consisting only of one set of common values and virtues” (Walser-Bürgler, 2019, p. 331).

Linked to this question of diversity and unity in the early modern Europe discourse was the question of European values. For if it was not clear whether Europe constituted a versatile or rather uniform entity, the existence of a set of specifically European values was not per se unambiguous. The problem is even more critical today as Europe can no longer claim values characteristic of the entire Western society, like peace, human rights, democracy, and rule of law or cultural tolerance, as exclusively European (Todorov & Anzalone, 2005). Furthermore, influential nations and global players, like the USA or China, have outpaced Europe for decades now in terms of imposing values (e.g., in the scientific, technological or lifestyle sector) on the rest of the world (Gareis, 2012). But the issue in general was already discussed in the Early Modern Period when Europe all of a sudden was confronted with new worlds and civilizations discovered. The realization triggered by new methods in cartography and land survey that Europe, the supposedly superior continent, was the smallest in size, was additionally shattering for most sixteenth-century Europeans. Therefore, certain strategies in promoting European values were developed that did not only justify Europe’s claim as the global power, but that also fostered the sense of “Europeanness” among the European nations. After all, “values are normally regarded as constituent parts of identity formation” (Mudrov, 2016, p. 1).

In many Neo-Latin texts, we thus unsurprisingly encounter a Eurocentrism based on Europe’s cultural and civilizational achievements. Despite being the smallest continent, Europe was presented as the cradle and fount of progress. The mention of the size of the continent in that context was meant to render its pioneering role even more impressive. Particularly indicative of this trend were early modern cosmographies. This genre

flourishing in the age of world discovery and imperialism played a key part in the construction of European identity (Wintle, 2009, p. 24), since the definition of territory was inevitably linked to notions of territorial values. The Bohemian natural philosopher Kaspar Knittel (1644-1702), for instance, does not hide the fact that Europe was the smallest of the known continents in his *Cosmographia elementaris* (“Elemental cosmography”, 1674). However, he does not only rank Europe as the most important among the continents, but Europe also receives the most detailed description—pursuant to its cultural status in the world (Knittel, 1674, pp. 32-41).

In the eyes of the European public, it was European conquerors, missionaries, settlers, travelers, and scientists that had brought civilization, literature, religion, science, and legal and political regulations to the rest of the world. A common theme in this context is the mention of Europe’s ancient heritage. Europe was considered the peak of civilization due to the outstanding achievements of the Greek and Roman cultures, which have been absorbed and adopted both directly and indirectly by all the European nations. In accordance with this world view, John Barclay traces the affirmatory diversity of Europe to the Greek and Roman past, on the basis of which the individual European nations could start their self-realization. The European nations had learned everything there is to know about art, literature, religion, culture, and politics from the Greeks and the Romans (Barclay, 2013, pp. 86-89).⁷ The implication is clear: Since the other continents lacked this historical link, they could never reach the civilizational status the European nations collectively attained. Naturally thus, Europe came to teach the world. In a similar fashion, the German lawyer Leopold August Warnkönig (1794-1866) praised Roman law as the forerunner and unsurpassed donor of the European law regulations in as late as 1828 out of a sense of European superiority in his *Oratio de iurisprudentia gentium Europaeorum* (“Oration on the jurisprudence of the European nations”) (Warnkönig, 1828).⁸

The propagation of European superiority in the Early Modern Period did not only come from within Europe. The early modern discourse of Europe negotiated outside Europe was congruent with the insider perspective. The reason for that is apparent: Europeans would indoctrinate non-Europeans with European values to civilize them. Eurocentrism thus even marked a global theme in pre-modern times.⁹ An interesting case in that respect makes the travel dialogue *De missione legatorum Iaponensium* (“The deployment of Japanese envoys”, 1590). In 1581, the Jesuit missionaries in Japan sent a few young Japanese students to Europe with the order to get to know Europe better and to improve the reputation of Japan among the Europeans. After their return to Macao, one of their Jesuit teachers (presumably the Portuguese Duarte de Sande [1547-1599] or the Italian Alessandro Valignano [1539-1606]) published the reports of the Japanese students in 34 dialogues. The dialogues present and discuss topics like the European geography, religion, political systems (republics and monarchies), economic interests, customs, education, war and peace, culture, history, art, and literature. The investigation of European values is at the heart of this discussion. The last dialogue summarizes the main point (De Sande/Valignano, 2012, pp. 438-449): Europe might be small compared to other continents like America or even nations, like China. Still, not the Chinese or the Americans are the most powerful people in the world, but the nations and princes of Europe. Power and significance are thus not contingent on the size of a geographical dominion. Notwithstanding the Japanese roots, one ought to admit that Europe has to be the single outstanding part of the world,

⁷ On the special significance of the Christian religion as a European value, see the previous chapter.

⁸ Today, Roman law is still esteemed as the blueprint of law regulation in Western society.

⁹ This is a crucial difference to the contemporary Europe discourse. Yet the point that Europeans feed the discourse with notions of values specifically tied to Europe remains the same.

the part on which God with most generous hand has conferred the most and the best good things. Accordingly it stands out among all other regions for its climate, for the abilities, the industry, and the nobility of its nations, for its organization of life and of government, and for the multiplicity of its arts. (De Sande/Valignano, 2012, p. 446)

Values surrounding the topics of culture and civilization as transmitted through Europe's exclusive ancient past built strong identification patterns in the context of the early modern Europe discourse. Still today, Europeans acknowledge issues, like religious ideas, Western philosophy, forms of government like democracy or the canon of literary genres as Europe's legacy owed to the Greek and Roman culture. However, since "Europe" has always been an imagined community until this very day—i.e., a concept rather than a concrete reality (the EU is just one manifestation of this concept)—the European community is also in need of common identification figures and stories embracing the continent in its entirety. This constitutes a problem in various respects: First, images of Europe are not static expressions, but they change constantly against the background of certain events, discourses, and their interpretations (Drechsel & Leggewie, 2010, p. 11). Second, Europe suffers from what scholars have come to call a "myth deficit" (Schmale, 1997). Third, Europe is characterized by a "defect of visual representation" in general (Drechsel & Leggewie, 2010, p. 7). A comprehensive political figure, like the President of the United States or European national leaders, does not exist for Europe as a whole—even though the EU has benefitted tremendously in the last years from the personality and political approach of Jean-Claude Juncker (Peterson, 2017). Symbols the European integration relies on today principally pertain to: the ancient myth of Europe and the bull (mostly used in caricatures and to express Europe's discord); Erasmus (both in the form of the educational program and a cultural memory of Europeanism); the iconic parliamentary buildings in Strasbourg and Brussels; the European flag; the anthem of Europe; and the Euro (Passerini, 2003).

The lack of symbols and myths to not only represent but also strengthen the European integration already preoccupied the early modern contemporaries. As Walser-Bürgler showed recently, the ancient myth of Europe and the bull—told by writers, like Moschus, Ovid, or Catullus—did not play any role at all for the Neo-Latin discourse of Europe despite the obvious link to the ancient literary heritage (Walser-Bürgler, 2018a). As potential reasons for that Walser-Bürgler determines five crucial factors: First, in antiquity the myth of Europe and the bull was never put into a continental context, since—as outlined in the introduction of this article—Europe was never conceptualized as an entity in political, cultural, or other terms. Second, the myth contained various ambiguities, which was not considered an ideal foundation for a continent-spanning identity narrative. Third, the mythical Europa was an Asian maiden brought to Europe (more specifically: only to Crete) against her will. Fourth, Crete was a politically and culturally torn place in the Early Modern Period, alternately belonging to the Mediterranean and the Ottoman cultural area without any clear connection to the entire continent. Finally, the myth lacked the typical heroic elements and historical greatness the rivalling national founding myths were endowed with, most apparently the brave and strong protagonist fighting destiny (Europa acts like a weak innocent girl who eventually surrenders to her kidnapper).

The solution the early modern proponents of the European integration found regarding the lack of an appropriate founding myth was to create substitutional "myths". Those substitutional myths re-imagined Europe by employing references to contemporary notions and events. Two representations rose to particular prominence: the allegorical representation of Europe as a queen on the one hand and as a flying dragon on the other. Both apply metaphors of the political body known today as the driving force behind the conceptualization of Europe as a political and legal entity (Koschorke, Frank, de Mazza, & Lüdemann, 2007).

The representation of Europe as a queen was a popular symbol also in visual arts,¹⁰ but it gained a special momentum in Neo-Latin literature. Following the two trends of representing the personified continent either in triumphant or lamenting mode, early modern authors used their literary personifications of Europe to express their ideas of the present and future state of Europe.

The German pedagogue Johann Lauterbach (1531-1593), for example, wrote a pastoral poem (*Europa Eidyllion* [“Europe, an idyll”]) on the occasion of Ferdinand I’s coronation as Holy Roman Emperor in 1558. Published immediately afterwards, it features the triumphant goddess Europa in a rustic scenery as she praises her upcoming marriage with Ferdinand, which will bring her peace. Her rejoicing finally culminates in the confident proclamation that as a queen she would thrive eternally on the side of the emperor (Lauterbach, 1558, vv. 60-65).¹¹ In other words, Europe is conceived as a universal monarchy ruled by Ferdinand of Habsburg; the entire body of the continent is assigned to him. Lamenting representations of Europe seemed to have been even more frequent than the triumphant. They serve as particularly immediate evidence of Europe’s struggle with the continental integration as they usually present the personified continent in a state of unease, disease, or desperation, appealing to the respective princes and nations of Europe to unite and make her whole again. Influential texts are the abovementioned oration *Europa heautentimorumene* by the Spanish doctor Andrés Laguna or the anonymous *Querimonia Europae* (“Europe’s lament”, 1625).¹² Laguna, for example, depicts Europa as a feverish, degenerated hag—literally calling her a “living corpse” at one point (Laguna, 2001, pp. 136-138)—who bemoans her fate: namely that her ‘children’ (i.e., the princes of Europe) have torn her apart and put her in her present state of anguish.

The representation of Europe as a flying dragon exclusively appears in early modern Latin cosmographies. Texts like the already mentioned *Cosmographia elementaris* of Kaspar Knittel, *Introductionis in universam geographiam [...] libri VI* (“Six books of introduction into the entire geography”, 1624) by the founder of historical geography, the German Philipp Clüver (1580-1622), or *Cosmographiae selectiora* (“Rather exquisite cosmographical knowledge”, 1646) by the Swiss philosopher Jan Caecilius Frey promoted the image of Europe as a flying dragon (Clüver, 1624; Frey, 1646).¹³ This representation is meant to symbolize the power and the cultural and civilizational superiority of Europe in relation to the other continents. The symbol of the dragon as the world conqueror in this specific cosmographical respect worked like a continental coat of arms. For not only were dragons characteristic animals of heraldic emblems signifying strength, foresight, and immortality. Coats of arms and flags usually also constituted signs of affiliation to a particular community (Volborth, 1981).

Concluding Remarks

Based on these comparative observations between the two strongest periods of European integration—the early modern centuries on the one hand and the 20th and 21st centuries on the other—it appears that Europe’s (and thus inevitably the EU’s) current crises are not only recurrent themes in the history of the European integration but also indications of its ongoing formation and self-realization. Contrary to opinions predicting

¹⁰ Her head is represented by Spain, the left arm either by Denmark or Britain, the right arm by Italy, the chest by France or the German Empire and the Habsburg realms, while her long gown covers the regions of East Central Europe and her feet touch the Ottoman Empire and Russia.

¹¹ The text is discussed, edited, and translated into English by Walser-Bürgler (2018b).

¹² Anon. (1625). *Querimonia Europae* [...]. London: Stransby.

¹³ Its head is represented by Spain, its wings by Italy and Britain, its main body by all of Western and Eastern Europe, its tail by the Scandinavian Peninsula.

the disintegration of the EU and the end of the modern European unification process, examples of the original (i.e., both early modern and Neo-Latin) traces of the historical formation of Europe revealed the discursive force of crises in the context of continent-building. Put another way, crises and the way Europeans reflect on them can positively influence the continental integration process. They function as prolific by-products of Europe figuring out itself.

The Neo-Latin examples given to illustrate this claim make for a representative descriptive comparison. For when Europe started to become defined and conceptualized as a political, religious, and cultural entity in the Early Modern Period for the first time, it was most extensively done in the supranational *lingua franca* of the time, Latin. Moreover, the comparison included the discussion and analysis of contemporary crises that were strikingly similar to our present-day crises. The reason for this resemblance might simply be that a continental project like the European one will always be characterized by the same issues and patterns, regardless of the age or the political and social circumstances. Given that the early modern crises—even though they led to new problems and in some cases even military conflicts—accompanied the process of strengthening the European idea, they can in certain respects serve as telling reference points for our present-day Europe discourse. Europe only fell apart in the course of the 19th century after the discourse of Europe had broken off in favor of an exclusive radical nationalist approach (which would eventually result in the catastrophes of the two world wars). As long as Europe thus still envisions its togetherness and still contemplates its “Europeanness”, the European project might be less at risk than is often assumed.

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