

## LECTURES

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### **Historical Identity and Cultural Comparison: Reflections on the European Humanistic Tradition**

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I thank the University of Athens, the Chancellor and all colleagues for the high honor which they have conferred upon me.<sup>1</sup> Already in Republican Rome it was customary that the best representatives of Latin culture came to Athens to—shall we say—earn their laurels. Today it is my turn to repeat that exciting experience, and I can feel only greatly honored. My lecture will try to bear witness to and render explicit the sense of, and pride in, a shared inheritance.

Antiquity and modernity have always been contrasted; or, better, two complementary images of antiquity and modernity have always been contrasted—a hall of mirrors in which each of the two images appears to have been constructed in a relationship of reciprocity. But then there is the question: can what we call antiquity be considered an ontological reality as well as a chronological one? Does there exist, in short, an historical object called classical antiquity that is definable in its substance and in absolute terms? What exists, I believe, is instead a series of different *representations* which various epochs have elaborated, both to contrast themselves with antiquity and also to idolize it, above all to rediscover in it roots and models, to build on it their own historical identity.

Identity, we can say, is produced from the concretion of traditions and ideas which are inherited and deposited in an organic form. In this sense identity is a thing that is received, something that is and is not ours, that possesses us more than we possess it. We could designate this idea of identity as *static*, to contrast it with one that instead I would call *dynamic*. To explain, I would like to turn to a very famous couplet of Goethe, virtually an epigram. It is in *Faust* and has not always been understood in the full force of its implications. In fact, it has often been trivialized, as when Droysen used it in the first pages of his *Historik*:

<sup>1</sup> This address was delivered in Greece on May 20, 2011 at the University of Athens, at the ceremony awarding Professor Conte an honorary degree.

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What you have inherited from your fathers,  
Conquer it to possess it.

Interested in using them for his needs as a theoretician of historiographical method, Droysen extracted from those verses the sense that the inheritance—the received historical tradition—must be subordinated to examination and testing so that it could then be accepted with certainty. The “*clinamen*” that the German historian puts on the couplet of Goethe in fact distorts its meaning, reconnects it instead to the problem of the investigation of historical truth: the heir must verify the inheritance, examine it, weigh it, judge it with critical skepticism, before possessing it. As can be seen, this is an intellectualistic and, in good measure, also a positivistic perspective.

Goethe was not thinking of this. The injunction of Goethe was intended as an agonistic invitation to action. It intended to say that every inheritance is in itself inert, a thing produced by others and belonging to others. For it to belong to you, you must make yourself directly the owner of it; to have it you must commit yourself to a struggle that would give you the same right of possession that you have of a thing produced personally by you. Truth be told, Goethe does not say, “you must commit yourself to a struggle”; he says “conquer it” (*erwirb es*), and this presupposes a costly effort, not an easy one. In a word, an inheritance, to be securely possessed, must enter the life of the heir and receive there a new life. If it does not do so, it stays inactive, returns to its past and does not realize itself in the present, nor become productive.

What animates Goethe is the idea of *appropriation* understood in the full sense. In the history of culture, appropriation is already in itself a creative act, it is itself creation, even if mediated and realized at second hand. Indeed, one must believe that appropriation is nothing other than the inevitable way in which culture shapes itself—growing by contagion, plunder, derivation and laborious imitation. It is customary to believe, in current academic thinking, that culture knows only histories of influence, invasion, superimposition, and people imagine that whoever receives from other cultures essentially undergoes only influences from outside. This is not false, but it is one-sided: recipients are considered passive subjects (“ripe for colonization,” so to speak). The whole initiative emphasizes the “teacher,” and none of it pertains to the “learner.”

There exists, however, another perspective, which in certain cases is more fruitful and better interprets cultural processes: recipients are considered active subjects, capable not only of receiving but also of taking. In this second perspective, when two cultures meet each other, the appropriation is realized as an agonistic act. The taker knows how to acquire full possession of what he takes, he commits himself, strives to become the new proprietor of it. In so doing he constructs his own identity under the force of a desire: he looks for an external image that can act as a model on which to construct his own internal image. Cultural identity is given by way of inheritance but built by adjustment to the model.

Here is an example. The story of Latin culture has often been reconstructed under the influence of a famous thought of Horace: *Graecia capta* had conquered the conquering Romans, imposing on them its own culture. It is obvious that the Horatian judgment ostensibly follows the first of the two critical perspectives which I indicated above, the imposition of the Greek model on Roman culture. But, on close examination, there is in Horace's formulation the subtle humor of one who is playfully exaggerating and affects modesty for the sake of the provocative paradox. Horace in fact knew all too well that the whole history of Roman culture, from the third century at least but perhaps also from earlier, notwithstanding all the harsh aversions of Catonian spirits recalcitrant to Hellenization, was a history not so much of Greek conquest or of Roman subordination as a history of a gradual, dynamic process of appropriation; this process, in the course of time, had led the Romans to assimilate Greek culture to the point of transforming it into new, living breath. A process of appropriation, which had produced a new ownership of the received inheritance (the "conquered" inheritance, Goethe would have said), had thus synthesized a new culture. Well, then, if he had not wished to amuse himself in exaggerating things, if he had not reversed the true direction in which a whole cultural process had been set in motion (making it thus seem that the victors had been conquered by the vanquished), Horace would have had to say just the opposite: that the Roman conquerors had conquered to the extent of taking the whole, absolutely the whole, of Greece.

This was, then, a very early humanism—it was precisely in this way that Rome could construct for itself an active identity capable of assimilating, renewing and transmitting the grand cultural tradition of Greece. On the road of appropriation and of the conquest of the grand inherited models, Rome was paradoxically creative to the point of *originality*, an originality founded, so to speak, on the return to *origins*.

In this way Greek antiquity, through its Roman heirs, ceased being simply a chronological entity (an historical period that in certain aspects almost reached contemporaneity) and became a collection of idealized representations. It became the projection of perceptions, images, concepts, values, and desires, which all together constituted a perfect model of advanced civilization, a model to conquer and transmute into a Roman patrimony.

This Roman humanism, although based on a somewhat arbitrary representation of Greek culture—or rather because of this—already contained the essential traits of all other humanisms to come, which would periodically mark the western tradition. So the Carolingian rebirth, and then that successive one which flowers in the twelfth century, and then again the great fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Renaissance, which starts from Italy and reaches all Europe—these were all moments of a more or less strong "reconquest" of the tradition, a tradition which never ceased being productive even when it was obscured and seemed spent. These were moments, so to speak, of lively discontinuity in a continuous and, in

any case, uninterrupted tradition, more ignited (and also more conscious) outbursts of a latent fire, dulled but never extinguished.

In these moments, the memory of the past went from being an inert and unconscious survival to an act of conscious reconquest of an inheritance, a programmatic choice of an ideal lineage, the promise and desire of a return to origins. Every time, the return took the aspect of a “rebirth.” And every time, it happened that the return to the remote past (represented by Greek and Latin culture) was born from the rejection of the immediate past: paradoxically the recovery of distant memory became an act of militancy by one who sided with *modernity*. From the long and indistinct distance of the past came carved out an image of classical antiquity which was *qualitatively* different with respect to “the old style”—a representation of excellent values that was capable of serving as a model for a new construction.

Identity was concealed in the tradition and had to be searched for there—no longer in the obscure body of an inert tradition received indiscriminately (made of all that had simply passed), but rather in the living body of a tradition that was now becoming “invented,” that was becoming “artificially reconstructed,” projecting backwards the image of an ideal identity. It was not simply history that fed memory; it was instead memory—understood as a consciously selective, ideological act—that constructed history. This is why each time the restoration of the classical age was perceived as “rebirth,” as a phase of renewed rise following upon decline. Enthusiasm was born from the certainty of a future, and the prospect of the return to ancient values was a prospect of *progress*. To restore the models—civil, political, artistic, stylistic, and linguistic that had belonged to the classical world—was the royal road for appropriating models considered perfect, archetypes unsurpassed. To look to Greek and Latin authors was not to run up against tenacious and well-preserved survivors but to catch up with those who had arrived first. The spirit which animated these “rebirths” was, I have already said, a spirit of *modernity* and testified to complete faith in progress: the march towards perfection, which had been blocked to the point of regression, could be vigorously resumed if only the seminal model was rediscovered, the undisputed exemplarity of the ancients.

The ideology of classical perfection and the ideology of modern perfectibility met each other in optimistic élan: no doubt that the grand classical models were—through the “renascent” moderns—still productive, or rather were the most productive.

Different was the movement that animated the new humanism towards the end of the 1700s and through the 1800s: no longer the enthusiastically optimistic movement that fought for a progressive agenda and looked to the past instrumentally in the very act of constructing modernity, but rather a movement streaked with pessimism, which was suspicious of the *obsolescence* that befell the great classical model, which indeed feared the exhaustion of its own propulsive capacities—and for this reason was content to rescue a legacy now at risk. The issue of “classical roots” was still

hanging on as a password, but the concern was simply one of *preservation*, of raising a rampart in defense of those far-off values, reaffirmed now only to protect the historical identity of a culture in danger. This was an ambition evidently more defensive than offensive, if we compare it with the innovative agenda which had characterized the preceding rebirths. Winckelmann, and then Wolf and then Boeckh, and afterwards Wilamowitz and finally Werner Jaeger, these had historical knowledge as their driving force. From them was born the most powerful and systematic science of antiquity, that *Altertumswissenschaft* that has dominated undisputedly (or nearly undisputedly) for a century and a half, a refined "ideocracy" that spoke German and which in German showed to the whole world how to study and learn about the world of the Greeks and the Latins. If historical research and its rules of critical accuracy were the engine of this neohumanism, the true objective (initially undeclared, then avowed more and more openly) was to set up a defense against the uncontrollable and devastating advance of modernity: the *Kultur*—represented above all by the values of Greek and Latin classicism—had to be protected.

In this it is undeniable that the Romantic and then positivist rebirth of the science of Antiquity also contained elements of clear, reactionary origin (elements already well identified by the studies of Momigliano and Canfora). For example Prussian humanism, although so close to the ancient world in its concrete historicity, did not feel great attraction to the values of ancient and modern democracy, but was scoured by shivers of horror in the face of the egalitarian flag raised first by the survivors of the French Revolution and then by the precursors of the Russian Revolution. The fact is that, like every humanism, this one also was profoundly elitist, it saw itself as meant for the *kalokagathoi*, and it risked shutting itself away in a protected but fragile tower.

Nevertheless the very refinement of historical inquiry promoted by this neohumanism ended, almost paradoxically, by submitting its own ideological prejudices to inquiry, and in fact has exorcised them with the infusion of a critical spirit and new accuracy in the philological reconstruction of antiquity. The object of these processes of inquiry—the texts and cultures of classical antiquity—has thus traveled the same evolutionary trajectory followed meanwhile by the culture of criticism that was committed to the great work of preserving and editing texts: the rigor of historical reconstruction found itself gradually restoring a more correct and therefore more autonomous picture of classical culture, more freed from the self-interested ideology of conservative humanism. In the age of European imperialism, the gunboats of the queen and the Kaiser had brought to the Chinese and the Indians a Virgil and a Homer who were bards of war: thus the corresponding representation of ancient culture had been that of people capable only of triumphing over others, and modern colonizers showed themselves ready to advance forms of culture completely homologous to that reality which saw them as conquerors of foreign peoples. The identity of which western society had boasted was

closed and pure, programmed on supremacy rather than on dialogue. It was a strong identity, but an aggressive one.

But historical research, precisely because it became refined, has also taken revenge: memory of inheritance has become critical memory, and inheritance has been able to be purified of ideological influences, turning out richer in the end, more contradictory, more resistant to every spirit of easy, humanistic edification. Inheritance has become history, both in Goethe's sense (i.e. a new, conquered possession) and in Droysen's sense (i.e. a legacy subjected to screening and verification). In this way it has been turned into conscious historical identity.

Strong in its own conscious identity, contemporary western culture now has the capacity to show itself open and to ready itself for contact; it is capable also of revisiting the pivotal authors of its canon, regarding them as the points of dialogic encounter between many civilizations, or even as the products of the encounter between different civilizations. I am not thinking here of imposters like "Black Athenas," but instead of a tradition of studies already strongly established, that on Homer or, better, "on the eastern slope of Helicon," to paraphrase the title of the recent essay of M. L. West. Homer today is no longer only the champion of the Greek spirit, a hero born as a full-grown and perfect adult from the head of Zeus: he is still studied as a product of Greek culture, indeed as the most extraordinary thing it could produce. But he is considered now as the Greek pearl that emerged from an ocean of Aegean and Middle Eastern stories; it is precisely through comparison with this external tradition that some of the most enlightening contributions of very recent Homeric criticism have come. I am thinking above all of the most recent *From Homer to the Magi* by Walter Burkert.

Contemporary research has learned to see ancient culture as a continuous interchange of people, languages and ideas. We cling to the meager remnants of a provincial Latin where the plural "roses" was not *rosae* but *rosas*. Thanks to linguistics, papyrology, and epigraphy, the science of antiquity has become the science of a great culture extended over the whole Mediterranean and Atlantic basin. And Latin has become the language of Celto-Romans of Bath, of Germanic legionaries stationed at Vindolanda, and of Umma, noblewoman of Noricum. For us the knowledge of antiquity is a knowledge of encounters, the exploration of a periphery that animates and renews the life of the center.

Nineteenth-century neohumanism looked for purity, as if it were afraid of being lost if a more varied and polycentric antiquity were uncovered—and to do this it pursued a selective ideal of antiquity. Such neohumanism suffered a split between the scientific preoccupation of knowing and preserving everything and the ideological preoccupation of choosing the "true" antiquity, the pure classical models. Therefore it studied Greco-Roman culture as a culture of one large center, removed from history and its stratifications. The school, even our Italian *liceo*, has artificially engaged in this pursuit of identifying with the classical in the practice of translation

into Latin—naturally normative and naturally inclined to promote knowledge of a unique Greek and a unique Latin.

Our generation has established a more articulate and more diversified relationship with our Greco-Latin inheritance: we are less influenced by humanistic elitism, and we try to appropriate that inheritance with a greater awareness of history. We look at classical antiquity as through reversed binoculars: the classics no longer appear to us as absolute models, and neither are we any longer the vampires of their identity. We distance them, those classics, in order to get hold of them better. That is to say, we place them in comparison—a potential comparison—with the great cultures: we have already done this with Jewish culture, and in doing so we have also gotten hold of a piece of the Middle East.

In the general picture of different peoples and traditions, each one must claim its own identity, but together refuse monopoly. Each one must take a step back and come out of its own skin. One must move back and acquire distance to see better. Believing in the exemplarity of models that are given once and for all and are by definition perfect in their fixity entails losing the sense of historical differences. Only in a detached vision is it possible to renounce absolute exemplarity in order to accept instead a comparative approach.

An historical epoch, in living out its own present time, often builds a bridge backwards because it finds in the past models worthy to compare itself with. One does not always say that powerful models or those of high quality are chosen; in fact, the mechanism proves more evident precisely in cases in which this does not happen.

At the end of the nineteenth century, for example, in the period of European “decadence,” there was a special interest in late Latin authors, the last representatives of a culture bordering on extinction: Avianus, the *Pervigilium Veneris*, the feeble and wan poetry of the *novelli*, the small intimist poems of the emperor Hadrian—these became sought after and current models for that “*fin de siècle*” poetics that would have had Huysmans as its champion and the aestheticism of Des Esseintes as the brandname of its anticlassical taste. This reactionary revolution, which touched all European culture of the period, intended to find—and discovered—in the Latin literature of the late Empire a sense of exhaustion and corruption similar to its own. Indeed it thought it recognized in those distant verses the same introverted and unhealthy softness that gave inspiration to the angst of modern choler. The pale and faded lights of Latin culture at sunset seemed precursors of the moral and political crisis of the bourgeoisie, the decadence of which appeared to be in progress. The identification with those predecessors occurred as if by historical syntony, as if the rereading and rewriting of late-imperial poetry were the best key to interpreting present experience, as if the same historical conditions were now recurring and producing the same literary fruit. What was sought was a *language*—a language in the fullest sense, made from words and ideas,

from sensations and images—and the literary precedent consecrated by tradition could furnish it now ready-made: this is the reason it was possible to believe that history somehow repeated itself.

Culture likes to delude itself into thinking that history moves in cycles, and that ideas in some sense return. If we wish, we can also believe this, making, let us say, a metaphorical use of these returns: it is important, however, to take into account that, even granted that there is a process of recurrence, the cycle of return is completed every time on a different level. That is to say, the idea which returns reappears, not on the same plane on which it was presented the previous time, but on another plane. The image that symbolizes this cyclic trajectory is not the circle, but the *spiral*. Returns are similar every time but also different, because they are modified by the new situations in which they occur. Humanistic rebirths as well, although they exhibit mutual and similar elements, are every time inherently original and different experiences: indeed, it is above all the differences that produce meaning. None of us can imagine (and what purpose would it serve?) what aspect of ancient humanism is destined to reappear on the scene of the next millennium (not even to mention the next century, if we want to be more serious and modest). But one thing is certain: the return, of whatever sort it may be, will be one characterized by a more exact—not ideological—knowledge of history and will be supported by the rigor of a more mature historical-philological method, by a taste for accuracy and by antipathy to every easy schematic. In each upcoming potential rebirth, the signs of a fixed historical identity will, in any case, be apparent—that identity which, while it urges us actively to appropriate an inheritance that now influences our life, must in conjunction impose the awareness of the substantial differences that now separate us from a great part of our tradition.

Our tradition is also the one that created the conditions necessary for the arrival in the world of the tradition of discussion, the most characteristic trait of what we call European culture. Europe, in fact, is not characterized by a “unique faith,” to be proudly set against other monolithic and dogmatic cultures. We should be proud of not possessing a single mind, but rather many ideas, good and bad; of not having only one faith, one unique religion, but rather quite a few beliefs, good and bad. The unity of the West in a single idea, a single faith, and a single religion would be the end of the West, our capitulation, our unconditional subjection to the totalitarian idea.

Europe is its own history. And this history is in large part a history of the philosophical ideas of the West: not the history of a single idea that permits only one tradition, but the history of a tradition that permits the most diverse ideas. It is not the history of a mental prison; it is instead the history—sometimes painful, sometimes gone mad—of the province of the world which has known the most varied and richest flowering of ideas (good and bad), often in conflict among themselves.

In the phase of globalization like the one towards which we are inevitably driven, it is fitting to seek identity—indeed, it is necessary,



otherwise identity is lost. To lose it, however, would mean a *weakening of relationships* with other cultures. We would have nothing to bring to others. But our western humanism must also modulate a different way of re-entering into possession of the classical tradition. An absolutely universal model of the classical is no longer enough for us, where European culture is exempt from comparison with other cultures: we ought to prepare ourselves for a *cena collaticia*, for a Greek *éranos*, that kind of banquet in which each person brings his own portion to furnish the shared dinner. Precisely because we have something to offer, we should not, on the one hand, lose our own roots nor, on the other, cling immovably to them.

In the panorama of globalization and multiculturalism (words which are so misused) there exists a cross-eyed condition that must be avoided. With one eye we look at a world-wide culture that would result, like Esperanto, from the convergence and fusion of various cultures; with the other eye we perceive that cultures politically and economically weaker are shut tightly in on themselves like clams, adopting a so-called fundamentalism (and we know that fundamentalisms are, above all, fear of eradication). Straightening the eyes by looking forward means being aware that historical processes can lead beyond a simple convergence: that is, they can produce a *polyphony*. It follows from this that it is equally erroneous to advance one's own culture as super-classical, for the whole of humanity, as it is to abandon it in search of superficial middle-ground. For the West, maintaining all three of its roots—Athens, Rome, and Jerusalem—means also bringing a greater richness to the encounter/clash with other cultures of the world.

But there must also be awareness that identity is not something given or natural, but it is the work—the transformation—that we do to maintain ourselves. In "*Erwirb es*" ("conquer it"), Goethe in a sense applies to a more general terrain the idea that Locke expressed against the feudal-aristocratic conception of inheritance. He affirmed that only work gives one the right of ownership. Indirectly this idea reappears in his essay on the human intellect, where Locke argues that personal identity is *not* a legacy of nature, something fixed and natural, but rather something continuously worked at and revised. Locke likened "un-worked" identity to those graves where time and weather erase the inscriptions and leave behind only rock. If we do not refresh our thoughts, identity vanishes, washed away. We survive only by transforming ourselves. In sum, identity is not something given but continuously built. Changelessness does not exist in history. If we freely apply this model to human culture, the identity of the West, already composed of many interwoven threads (an identity already multiple and plural), is strengthened only in making itself new. In our future but foreseeable prospect, great cultures, long left isolated or more recently known only by leading specialists, are destined to meet one another in the experiences of hundreds of thousands of people (millions of Muslims in Europe, of Hispanics in the United States, of Indians in South Africa, etc.). This will also have to change our image of antiquity in the sense that the

roots of Greco-Latin humanism must be rethought in comparison with the roots of other civilizations. The comparison now becomes macroscopic, and the competencies of the frontier must be also discovered.

In conclusion, in a similar framework, what function does classical culture perform, and in particular Latin? For us—belonging to a civilization, that of Europe, that was organized by Rome and had in Latin its own language of culture until the last century—the knowledge of our Latin inheritance represents a common code whose potentialities are not yet exhausted. To break it off or to forget it would be like suffocating existing seeds and instead turning to the cultivation of a terrain still arid, still unknown to everyone: the terrain of a cosmopolitanism without roots. Rediscovering identity is not the desire to put oneself on the one-way street of a civilization that has extended itself in several directions, but rather to regain possession of all these possibilities. A great poet does this when, in order to give nourishment to his own inventions, he re-appropriates a literary code elaborated by tradition and treasured in it: Virgil “assimilates” Homer; Shakespeare, the theatre of Seneca.

After all, the study of Latin is nothing but a particular case of constructing a strong identity. For the Chinese the study of Buddhist Indian manuscripts can be an equivalent; and for the Arabs, the Greek Aristotle. It must be emphasized that it is not a question either of traditionalism or of the search for novelty at any cost, since we are already the result of that grafting in our culture—and by “culture” I mean, not a privilege, a “something more” that concerns only the upper classes or at least those who have had the possibility of an elite and sophisticated education. Culture is our whole being in its various moments: language, gestures of the body, the structure of affections and sentiments, a way for us to imagine this life and that other, and even the organization of perceptions (selection of colors and sounds and allotment of tastes).

I would like to give a small example, hoping that a comparison will clarify things. Our culture, derived from the Roman world through the Church, has ordered our ways of feeling according to strong and clear passions, defined through a lexicon composed of opposites—according to vices and virtues. If, however, we examine Chinese culture, in its daily life as well as in its broadest wisdom, from the kitchen to philosophy, we shall find instead that what they look for is that which is bland, hazy, not flashy—that in which one flavor or one thought does not dominate over others. In short, to lose the language (the lexicon that manages cultural articulations and sets their form) would mean to lose in large part the specific qualities of our world of being and thinking. (There is an experience of estrangement that anyone can verify, as can the person speaking to you, if he has spent long periods of work in a foreign country: not only do words drift away from him, but also his ideas change hue.) Vice versa, preserving the language of a culture and also using it in tandem with other languages permit us to reach a full perception of ourselves—of reaffirming ourselves *on the strength of the differences*.

As a classical philologist, I have an invincible dislike for advocates of “living Latin”—I refer to those who like to speak using the language of Cicero and Virgil. They think they are doing the right thing, since they are reacting to the fear that we are losing a precious inheritance. They do not consider, however, how much their dear little passion is in fact false and ridiculous. They make paper butterflies soar, convinced that these creatures of theirs, too, actually have the capacity to pollinate flowers, to propagate a new spring. But their fear is a mistake. The Latin language does not run the risk of extinction. It is alive and well: it is has merely been transformed. It has become Italian, French, Spanish, and English, since English, too, because of the French influence it underwent from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries (before the reaction of the Saxon element), owes a large measure of its vocabulary, and not only cultured vocabulary, to Latin.

All ages are periods of transition, but few of them have a consciousness more alive than ours. There is, widespread, a strong desire for a future, but there is also unease, as if the beginning of the new must masochistically pay up with the sacrifice of our old heritage. The new idea of Europe would need a foundation legend capable of ennobling its own act of birth and of ratifying it in the destiny of history. More than a millennium ago, Charlemagne had reunited an enormous empire, imprinting on it an institutional homogeneity that went from money to school and from liturgy to culture. At the time in which the inhabitants of Europe were not speaking or thinking any more in Latin (indeed, there were already cradles of French, and high-German was already widespread; already Catalan and Castilian were beginning to be differentiated, even though Spain was dominated by the Arabs), Latin became the cement of political-cultural unity—the cultivated, supranational language, almost an institutionalized “invention” capable of communicating political aspirations and an ideal program. The Protestant Reformation would divide the European world after, once again, the Renaissance had re-Latinized it (even Luther modeled the vocabulary and syntax of modern German on the Latin of the Bible). But it is still in Latin that the most symbolic of the heroes of the idea of Europe would write, that Erasmus—Dutch—who had studied at Paris, traveled in England, and lived in Basel.

*Grazie.*