Europatria

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Coordinator

Biography

Francisco de Oliveira is Full Professor of the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of Coimbra, Portugal; member of the Center of Classical and Humanistic Studies of the University of Coimbra and Director of the Latin Studies; former Dean of the Faculty of Letters (1996-2002); former President of the Euroclassica and of the Portuguese Association for Classical Studies; former Director of the Institute of Classical Studies and of Teacher Training Programmes including in-service training.

Conferences presented in many countries and publications in Portuguese, French, Spanish, English and German.

Main research subject: theatre in general and especially sociology of theatre and the tragedy of Seneca; political theory in antiquity, actually Cicero and Pliny the Younger; currents of thought in the High Roman Empire; classical education in Portugal.

Summary

The present anthology of texts in Latin, drawn from classical antiquity to the present, containing seventeen chapters dedicated to different countries of the European Union and the candidate countries, intends to fulfil the following aims: 1) to consolidate the European heritage through collective, national and transnational reflection on its past; 2) to present an image of Europe in its unity and diversity, as envisioned by a group of classical language teachers from each of the member countries and from those who are candidates for inclusion; 3) to reflect upon what the European Union has been, what it is and what it will be, using as a basis our cultural inheritance as it is written in the Latin language.
1. Introduction

The Netherlands or the Low Countries formed a motley entity. The territory consisted of, roughly, Belgium, Luxemburg, Northern France, and the Netherlands as they exist today. In the Middle Ages, the area was divided between the dukes of Brabant and Gelre, and the counts of Holland and Flanders, while Utrecht and Liège (Luik) were ruled by the church. In the course of the 14th century, the dukes of Burgundy assembled various domains, thereby laying the foundation of a territorial unity that took shape in the 15th century. In 1477, Mary of Burgundy married Maximilian of Austria; as a result of this marriage, the Netherlands came to be ruled by the Habsburg dynasty.

From 1512 onwards, the Burgundian domain formed one of the sixteen districts of the German Empire. In 1549, Charles V stipulated that the Burgundian district be indivisible and separated the territory from both France and the German Empire. After his death in 1556, the Low Countries were left to his son Philip II and thus became part of the Spanish branch of the Habsburg dynasty. In the meantime, the Reformation had found considerable support among the inhabitants of the Netherlands. Eager to reunite the entire country under the

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1 The authors wish to thank dr. Ingrid Sperber for having corrected their English.
Roman-Catholic banner, Philip proposed, among other things, a drastic redistribution of dioceses. Moreover, he wanted to abolish various town privileges. All this stirred a storm of protest, which eventually led to the so-called Dutch Revolt or Eighty Years' War (1568-1648), which was conducted by the Northern troops under the initial command of William I of Orange.

During this war, the Northern Netherlands unilaterally declared themselves independent in 1581. They created the Republic of the United Netherlands, whereas the South firmly remained under the rule of the Habsburgs. During the government of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella (1598-1621), the South enjoyed some autonomy, but failed to develop into an independent nation. Meanwhile, many Protestants fled from the South to the North. Partly as a result of this migration, both countries gradually drifted apart. Whereas the Southern Netherlands became homogeneously Catholic, Protestantism increasingly prevailed in the Republic. Moreover, the 'brain drain' contributed to the economic development of the North. The role of Antwerp as a metropolis was drastically reduced, to the advantage of Amsterdam.

From the late Middle Ages until the Enlightenment, humanism was the predominant cultural movement in the Low Countries. Humanists first and foremost proclaimed a return to the sources (ad fontes): to the Bible, to texts from Greek and Roman Antiquity, and to the Church Fathers. Humanists did not aim at erudition as an end in itself; the return to the sources which they promoted and practiced had to be applied to one's own spiritual life and daily conduct. Humanism originated in Italy, and reached the Northern Netherlands through various commercial and ecclesiastical contacts. During the 15th and 16th centuries, Deventer, Zwolle, Kampen, and Groningen were the main humanist centres in the North. The success of (biblical) humanism was greatly furthered by another important intellectual current, the so-called Modern Devotion, which attached great importance to the inner experience of religion as the basis of one's life, the advancement of knowledge in the service of faith, and spiritual care and education. In the South, Louvain (Leuven),
a university town since 1425, became the most important humanist centre: from 1518 onwards, Greek, Latin and Hebrew were taught at the famous *Collegium Trilingue*.

Humanism engendered many outstanding representatives in the Low Countries. Here we can only mention a few of its most authoritative and influential spokesmen: *Rudolphus Agricola* (1443/4-1485) from Baflo near Groningen, who founded Northern Humanism; *Desiderius Erasmus* (1466-1536), an Augustinian secular priest and exceptionally prolific writer; *Juan Luis Vives* (1492-1540), a philosopher, pedagogue and social critic who left Spain for Paris and Louvain, and finally settled down in Bruges; the philologist, historiographer and philosopher *Justus Lipsius* who, after having taught at the university of Leiden, established in 1575, returned to the Southern Netherlands, where he became professor of Latin at the university of Louvain; and, last but not least, the lawyer, theologian and many-sided 'man of letters' *Hugo Grotius* (1583-1645).

Two phases can be roughly distinguished in the history of humanism in the Low Countries. As indicated above, humanism was an important cultural and even social movement during the lifetime of Agricola, Erasmus and Vives. Later the movement was institutionalized and became in a certain sense more academic, a shift which is clearly noticeable in the works of Lipsius and Grotius, as well as contemporary humanists such as the philologist and poet *Daniel Heinsius* (1580-1655), and the historian, theologian and philologist *Gerardus Johannes Vossius* (1577-1649). Humanism gradually turned into the so-called 'literae humaniores'. Leiden, where Heinsius, Vossius and Grotius had been trained by Lipsius and *Josephus Justus Scaliger* (1540-1609), became an internationally renowned centre of philology, which produced several important critical editions of classical authors – poets, prose-writers and philosophers alike. The language of communication was Latin, and so was Greek, albeit to a lesser extent. However, the shift from humanism to 'literae humaniores' also had a profound impact on the position of Latin, which gradually evolved from a living to an academic language. But even as a mere school and university language, Latin
continued to play an important role. The progress made in the field of philology and its application to the Bible cleared the way for a freer approach to religion and eventually even for the Enlightenment. (Neo-)
Latin letters had a lasting impact on vernacular literature, if only because many Dutch authors had enjoyed a thorough Latin education at one of the many humanist town schools that were to be found all over the Low Countries.

- Selective bibliography


2. 'Nationalism' and 'Cosmopolitanism'

2.1. History as argument

(1) Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598): Aurei Saeculi Imago (1596)

Having begun his career as a merchant, Ortelius decided to follow the lead of Gerardus Mercator and became a geographer and cartographer. He won lasting fame and is still remembered as the author and composer of the very first modern atlas, the Theatrum Orbis Terrarum (Antwerp, 1570).

In his Spiegel van de Gouden Tijd ('Mirror of the Golden Era'), a didactic picture book, the 'Belgian-German' (Belgo-Germanus) author Ortelius describes the customs and traditions of the ancient Germans, including (in his view) the ancient Belgians. In his work he reveals himself as an early practitioner of historical anthropology.