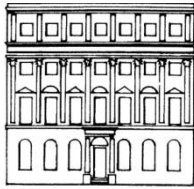


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Die erste Blütezeit der modernen Europa-Historiographie.

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Die erste Blütezeit der modernen Europa-Historiographie, colloquium organized by the Institut für Europäische Geschichte Mainz, the German Historical Institute Rome, and the German Historical Institute London and held at the GHIR, 14–15 May 2010. Conveners: Heinz Duchhardt (Mainz), Michael Matheus (Rome), and Andreas Gestrich (London).

In the 1950s the historiography of Europe flourished where this could perhaps least be expected, in Britain and Italy. During the inter-war period French and Swiss historians had largely stimulated historiographical thinking about Europe, but after the Second World War this activity was relocated to the edges of the Continent, as Heinz Duchhardt pointed out in his introduction to this colloquium. Against this background, doubts must be raised about René Girault's statement that Italian and especially British historiography were generally 'frosty' towards Europe.¹ According to the organizers, Heinz Duchhardt (Mainz), Michael Matheus (Rome), and Andreas Gestrich (London), the aim of the colloquium was to identify reasons for this trend, to investigate the institutional and intellectual settings of European historiography in the 1950s, and to illuminate its biographical dimension.

The colloquium focused on individual historians of Europe and their works, supplemented by a paper on publishing and one on the 1955 Congress of Europe held in Mainz. In Christopher Dawson (1889–1970), Bernhard Dietz (Mainz) presented a central figure in Britain's dialogue with Europe. Dawson points to several features characteristic of attempts to write histories of Europe in the 1950s, and not only in Britain. His interpretation, developed in his work *Understanding Europe* (1952), was rooted in the 1920s, when he was moving in the circles of what Dietz described as a 'radical conservative neo-Toryism with a tinge of cultural pessimism' and seeking right-wing alternatives to liberal parliamentarianism in the whole of Europe. In *The Making of Europe* (1932), Dawson had already conceived of Europe as created by Christianity out of the traditions of antiquity as an anti-Bolshevik, anti-liberal, and genuinely Christian

¹ See René Girault, 'Das Europa der Historiker', in Rainer Hudemann, Hartmut Kaelble, and Klaus Schwabe (eds.), *Europa im Blick der Historiker* (Munich, 1995), 55–90, at 84.

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alternative. The unity of the Church, he argued, had guaranteed the unity of Europe, which had broken down in the Reformation, when the sluices had been opened to modernity. This is where he located the roots of twentieth-century totalitarianisms. It is hardly surprising that this version of a Christian theory of totalitarianism was positively received in a Federal Republic in the throes of enthusiasm for the *Abendland*. According to Dietz, Europe provided the new right in Britain between the wars with both the argument and the space in which to argue. Dawson had supplied the historical basis for this.

In the figure of Carlo Curcio (1898–1971), Luigi Mascilli Migliorini (Naples) presented the Italian counterpart to Dawson. The interpretation of Europe which Curcio developed in *Europa: Storia di un'idea* (1958) was also rooted in the inter-war period, when he had pinned his hopes on a fascist Europe. The bridge between the concept of Europe presented in *Verso la nuova Europa* (1934) and his 1958 book, Migliorini suggested, had been built on Curcio's enthusiastic support for voluntarism. According to Curcio, Europe existed only as an idea and would emerge out of the will to create it. Characteristic of this Italian concept of Europe, Migliorini claimed, was the significance accorded to Latinity and, along with it, the Mediterranean area.

In his comment, however, Thomas Großbölting (Münster) suggested that more weight should be given to the discontinuities in Curcio's notions of Europe. In the 1930s Curcio had seen himself as a political adviser and Europe as part of an optimistic political strategy, but by the 1950s he had become resigned in this respect. Compared with the USA and the USSR, Europe had obviously lost out in world political terms, although the idea of Europe had been gaining in popularity since 1945. Raising very fundamental questions, Großbölting wondered whether a traditional history of ideas approach was adequate to understand the history of European historiography in the twentieth century. Instead, he advocated newer approaches to the history of historiography, such as those developed by Jan Eckel and Thomas Etzemüller,² and Martin Sabrow's notion of 'Zeitgeschichte als Streitgeschichte' (contemporary history as the history of conflict).³

² See Jan Eckel and Thomas Etzemüller (eds.), *Neue Zugänge zur Geschichte der Geschichtswissenschaft* (Göttingen, 2007).

³ See Martin Sabrow (ed.), *Zeitgeschichte als Streitgeschichte: Große Kontroversen seit 1945* (Munich, 2003).

In his earlier commentary, Wolfgang Schmale (Vienna) had already called for alternative perspectives on the European historiography of the twentieth century. Thinking about European history, he said, had not been the exclusive preserve of historians, but had been enriched by contributions from many sides, and he called for the history of historiography to do justice to this. The crucial point of this sort of European historiography, which encompassed intellectuals such as Hannah Arendt, Max Horkheimer, and Theodor Adorno, was when they started to think about the experience of the Second World War in the decades following it. This had sharpened up the ways of looking at Europe. Referring to the title of the colloquium, Schmale suggested that only a critical school of this sort could be called 'modern'. Gestrich, doubtful about the validity of Schmale's concept of modernity, pointed out that the new approaches of Horkheimer and Adorno, as well as those of Dawson and Curcio, could be read as genuine constituents of a European modernity distinguished by self-reflexivity. In this understanding, the crisis of the inter-war period, he suggested, continued through the 1950s, moulded by the Second World War.

Winfried Becker (Passau), whose subject was the *Abendland* movement in the Federal Republic, examined an important personal and intellectual network of the 1950s in which ideas of European historiography also flourished. Becker argued that in this intellectual edifice built on Catholic convictions, the function of history was primarily to create meaning. Consequently, he suggested, the *Abendland* movement's ideas about Europe should be assigned to historical philosophy rather than historiography. Encouraged by the Allies' licensing practice and with political support, their ideas were widely disseminated, especially as the movement had a strong educational aspect.

When the three-volume work *The European Inheritance*, edited by Ernest Barker (1874–1960), George N. Clark (1890–1979), and Paul Vaucher (1887–1966) and published by Oxford University Press appeared on the British book market in 1954, it almost seemed like an anachronism, for as Keith Robbins (Lampeter) explained, it was an official project conceived in 1942–3, in the context of the Second World War. It was intended to be available after the war to convey a 'different' view of Europe. Although historians of other nationalities, mainly from the English-speaking world and France, had been involved, the British stamp on it was unmistakable. According to

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Robbins, the 'other Europe' was oriented by the principles of British liberal parliamentarianism and Protestantism. At the same time, OUP published the *Oxford History of Modern Europe*, which was edited by Alan Bullock and F. W. D. Deakin, a younger generation of historians. Unlike *The European Inheritance*, it was dominated by the history of nation-states and international relations, and marked a paradigm shift.

Marcello Vergas (Florence) provided some insights into the role of publishing for the historiography of Europe in his paper on the publishers Laterza and Einaudi. In contrast to the position of the university presses in Britain, he said, the Italian book market was dominated by publishers with a political profile. As the historiography of Europe in the twenty years after the Second World War had been the domain of liberal and Catholic intellectuals, Vergas explained, the left-wing publisher Laterza had hardly contributed to the subject. Socialist historians had not taken any interest in Europe until 1956 (Hungary), he said, and Communist historians until the 1970s. The leftist liberal publisher Einaudi, too, only exceptionally published on Europe.

In his comment, Gestrich called for more attention to be paid to market mechanisms in the history of European historiography. Thinking about Europe, he said, did not develop in a market-free zone, but in a space shaped by the culture of publishing. He also pointed to the significance of translations for the emergence of a European arena of discourse.

The last pair of historians to be discussed at the colloquium were introduced by Benedikt Stuchtey (London) and Guisepppe Galasso (Naples), whose text was read in his absence by Lutz Klinkhammer (Rome). In Geoffrey Barraclough (1908–84), Stuchtey presented an author who briefly sympathized with Marxism. Wandering restlessly from one university to another, both in Britain and the USA, Barraclough wrote for the popular market and also became a best-selling author in the Federal Republic. From the perspective of universal history he put forward a new image of Europe between East and West by portraying it as an entangled space in the Middle Ages, and believed he could find European unity in a positive diversity. Stuchtey suggested that by calling for a 'problem history', Barraclough was also methodologically challenging the intellectual edifices of European historiography. In his contribution to the discus-

sion, Matheus pointed to the significance of medieval history for a new definition of Europe in the post-1945 world.

The existential experience of civil war, political responsibility, and the questioning of fascist sympathies in the 1940s undermined Federico Chabod's (1901–60) concepts of Europe of the inter-war period. These had primarily been founded on power political ideas of balance, Galasso argued. After 1945 Europe needed a 'different idea'. This flexibility was possible because as early as the 1920s Chabod had presupposed a dynamic concept of Europe. He now emphasized the part played by the European Enlightenment, and conceived of Europe as a community of shared values and culture, as Klinkhammer pointed out. Nonetheless, the category of nation continued to be at the heart of Chabod's interpretation of Europe. Klinkhammer explained the fact that Chabod's concepts of Europe were still optimistic, even after 1945, by pointing to the specific situation of Italy. The profound turning point of 1943 and the experience of civil war allowed intellectuals like Chabod to interpret fascism as a parenthesis while reconstructing a positive national tradition which, in Chabod's case, was combined with a European dimension. In his comment, Gestrich argued that the end of imperialisms also gave Europe's historiographical readjustment with the world after 1945 a huge boost in both Britain and Italy.

At the Mainz Congress of Europe in 1955, on the occasion of which the recently established Institut für Europäische Geschichte first attracted international attention, the two historiographical traditions under scrutiny here were very unequally represented, as Duchhardt showed. The Italian historians had at least one voice in Federico Chabod, who actively participated in discussions during the congress, although most of Italy's important historians were missing. Britain, however, was very weakly represented after Christopher Dawson had to withdraw because of illness. The *Abendland*-oriented argument of his paper, which was read out in his absence, fulfilled the expectations of the Mainz institute's director, Martin Göhring. Even after 1945, the networks of German historiography on Europe continued to look towards the Continent.

The concluding discussion once again stressed the need to incorporate publishing cultures and marketing strategies into historiographical enquiry. Beyond this, Wolfgang Schmale called for the (historico-)political dimension of European historiography to be more

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clearly profiled. In order to avoid writing the historiography of Europe as a success story, Benedikt Stuchtey noted, the focus should be on failed transfers, the lack of dialogue between historians, and national monologues on Europe. In conclusion, Gestrich suggested that a readjustment of the idea of Europe and thus of its historiography had been necessary after 1945 largely because interpretations could no longer be centred on Europe's 'civilizing mission'.

In their introduction, the organizers had made clear their awareness that the Rome colloquium would only be able to take first steps. Indeed, it opened up many new perspectives for future research on this topic. In addition to those already mentioned, three will be outlined here. First, it will be important to pay more attention to networks of historians and arenas of discourse because the questions of whether thinking and writing about Europe took place in a European or rather a national context, and what function taking recourse to Europe had, remained open at the end of the colloquium. Another issue that remained open was whether the European historiography of the first post-war decade was really shaped so strongly by conservative and liberal voices. It would certainly be worth investigating left-wing networks and concepts more closely. Secondly, a greater interest should be taken in the methodological development of the historiography of Europe. European history was written from the margins of the subject. It was open to methodological experimentation and pre-eminently suited to historiographical transfer across borders and national historiographies. Thirdly, historical periodization should be more closely investigated. Did the concepts of the 1950s not represent the last flaring up of a historiographical tradition which had started at the turn of the century and reached its peak in the inter-war period before, broken by the experience of the war, it was finally extinguished in the late 1950s or early 1960s? And was this period of European historiography not fundamentally modern in its search for 'unity', its firm belief in a leading 'idea', and its desire to define a particular space with an expansive drive? Read in this way, it is hardly surprising that the books on Europe written in the 1950s lost any power to convince soon after publication, had a limited impact, and were quickly forgotten.

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