

Representing Crisis in Early Modern Literatures

Tallinn, 21–22 September 2023

Abstracts

The Image of Crisis in the Danish Royal Law, 1665

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Denmark experienced one of its biggest national crises during the Danish-Swedish war 1657-1660 that almost saw the inclusion of the Danish-Norwegian state into the Swedish Baltic empire. Nevertheless, Denmark-Norway, though hard pressed, remained an independent state, and the Danish king Frederic III subsequently used his popularity gained during the war to organize a coup d'état against the Danish nobility, thus changing the constitution from an elective to a hereditary monarchy. In an Open Letter (written in Danish) the estates went so far as to give absolute powers to the king. Moreover, in 1665 the Danish absolute monarchy was given a written constitution, being the only written constitution for an absolute monarchy in Europe. The constitution, entitled The Royal Law with a direct reference to the *lex regia* tradition in Roman law, was formulated by the king's young talented secretary, the philologist Peder Schumacher (later nobled Griffenfeld) in two handwritten versions, first in a Latin draft that was afterwards reworked into a Danish official version.

Both versions of the constitution as well as the Open Letter refer to the extreme danger to which the Danish State was exposed and the role of the Danish king during the war as background for introducing absolutism in Denmark-Norway, but the argumentation, inspired by natural law, as well as the image of the enemy and the image of the Danish king have been thoroughly modified in the official Danish version of the constitution.

The talk will be centered around a comparative analysis of the images of the Danish-Swedish conflict drawn in the Open Letter and in the two versions of the Royal Law, especially the depiction of the Danish king and the Swedish danger, and will reflect upon the role of these images in the argumentation for introducing absolutism in Denmark-Norway.

Wolfgang Lazius on the Fall of the Hungarian Kingdom or Using Sallustius as a Model for Describing a Crisis

Péter Kasza (University of Szeged / Ludwig Boltzman Institute for Neo-Latin Studies / Széchényi National Library)

The Hungarian Kingdom, the once flourishing middle-power of Central-Europe by the mid-16th century became a land of terror and war. After the death of the young king, Louis II two rivals were struggling for the throne of the kingdom and their fight split up the country into two parts. When the Ottomans, in 1541, conquered Buda, the capital of Hungary and within a few years the central territories of the kingdom, too, Hungary divided already into three parts became the scene of clash of two superpowers of early modern Europe: the Habsburgs and the Ottoman Empire. The collapse of the country was tragical event though, it has also positive cultural consequences. The task which was given to the historians, to reveal the reasons of the disaster led to the rise of history-writing.

One of the first author who described the steps of the collapse of Hungary was the Viennese humanist and court historian, Wolfgang Lazius (1514–1565). Lazius finished his work entitled *Rerum Pannonicarum Libri quattuor* (Four Books on Hungarian History) around 1548 but the composition remained in manuscript. Lazius served the Habsburg ruler, Ferdinand I, therefore, his task to explain the reasons behind the constant Ottoman successes was especially sensitive.

The question is, what is the theoretical framework available to an early modern historian who wants to portray the crisis of a state? This paper intends to demonstrate that Lazius trying to describe the crisis of Hungary chose for himself as a model the way of Sallustian history writing. In my paper I will prove that Lazius incorporated whole paragraphs from Sallustius into his own text and what is more, he applied the Sallustian way of thinking in order to demonstrate the stages of decline.

Reflections of the 'Thirty Years' War in the Czech Literature: Case study of the first Czech translation of the Marulić's *Institutiones* as the answer to the actual crisis

Martina Kramaric (University of Zagreb)

In the 17th-century Czech literature, two Czech translations of Marulić's *Institutiones* (Marcus Marulus, *De institutione bene vivendi per exempla sanctorum*) exist. The first one is only a partial translation, made by the Czech well-known writer Šimon Lomnický z Budče. His translation consists of only a few chapters from the 5th book and it was published in 1621 under the title *Cesta*

do nebe. His translation corresponds with the actual social and political events in the Czech Republic in those times, the Second Defenestration of Prague 1618, which led to the Thirty Years' War and its first Battle of White Mountain 1620, in which Protestants and Catholics were confronted. Under these circumstances, Šimon Lomnický z Budče translates Marulić's *Institutiones* and dedicates his translation to one of the people that were defenestrated, to Vilém Slavata, and picks the chapters from the *Institutiones*, which speak about martyrdom and patience. Šimon Lomnický is a highly engaged Catholic writer and he translates Marulić's work in order to give comfort and strength through the examples from the *Institutiones* to the Czech Catholics. The second translation called *Historiae aneb Kniha o ustanovení a řízení pobožného života* was made by an anonymous author at the same time as the first one from 1620 to 1622. It was not printed and published, but we suppose that the whole of Marulić's work was translated. Although the translation was made at the same time as the first Czech partial translation, it does not correspond with the political events, and in its foreword, only the general human and Christian messages were mentioned. In this presentation, we will pay special attention to the first partial translation and the way that it corresponds to the actual crises in its foreword and in comparison to the second translation.

Narrating Crisis, Generating the Renaissance: Callimachus experiens' *De rege Vladislao* and the Renaissance in Jagiellonian Poland

Michael T. Lo Piano (Yale University)

Contemporary and recent historiography has long looked to the idea of Crisis as a necessary precondition to the generation of dynamic cultural flowering often conceived of as 'renaissance.' The typology comes to mind especially in such seminal works of Medieval and Early Modern European historiography as Hans Baron's *Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*, H. Trevor-Roper's *General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century*, and Thomas Bisson's *Crisis of the Twelfth Century*, who all point to distinct human environmental and socio-political crises as catalysts in the ignition of the Italian Renaissance, the Seventeenth-century Enlightenment, and the Twelfth Century Renaissance. This paper does not seek to evaluate the validity of these hypotheses, so much as question the historical deployment of the crisis-Renaissance historiographical typology. Indeed, the role of Crisis in the generation of cultural vision is one that dates back to Early Modern and Medieval Historiography, to humanist historiography in particular. This paper contends that at least one humanist historiographer, Filippo Buonaccorsi *alias* Callimachus Experiens, a Tuscan humanist exile in Poland, actively deployed the crisis narrative in emulation of Tacitus in his most well-received historiographical work, *De rege Vladislao seu de clade Varnensi*, a history about the fallen Jagiellonian

King Władysław Warneńczyk. It further contends that Buonaccorsi's history constituted an ongoing, conscious attempt to generate a program of Renaissance humanistic transformation at the core of the Jagiellonian court and the governing apparatus of the Polish Crown Lands.

Images of Crisis in Selected Poems by Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski (1595–1640)

Maria Łukaszewicz-Chantry (University of Wrocław)

Almost all the poetic output of Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski (1595–1640) is a response to a crisis, whether external – political or religious – or arising from his personal experience. It spans between strong commitment, a call for action (e.g. a fight with the Turks) and an attempt to keep away, to achieve independence from the whims of Fortune.

In my presentation, I intend to focus on the imagery Sarbiewski uses to describe crisis in selected works of his collection entitled 'Lyrica'. One of the examples is his use of the motif of flight over the earth. From a celestial perspective, maintaining distance, the *poeta-vates* observes and describes the tragedy happening on the stage of the *theatrum mundi*. The view is so poignant that he prefers not to come back to earth.

Another example of imagery is the use of aquatic metaphors. The poet, for example, develops a vision of the Flood, which is a consequence of a moral crisis and at the same time a radical attempt (not necessarily successful) to solve it. Drawing inspiration from both the Bible and the works of classical authors (for instance, he likes to use the figure of the *adynaton*), Sarbiewski creates his own reinterpretation and actualisation of the deluge as an image of the crisis affecting civilisation and of the cataclysm destroying nature.

Living through Crisis: A new take on the lives of Johannes and Olaus Magnus

Astrid Nilsson (Lund University)

The Swedish brothers Magnus (Johannes, 1488–1544, and Olaus, 1490–1557) are best known as the authors of two enormous works on Swedish/Scandinavian history. They did however also spend a great deal of their lives in the shadow of the advent of Lutheranism to Sweden. For the brothers, devout Catholics, this was a crisis of apocalyptic magnitude, on a political, religious, and personal level. This paper aims to investigate how the brothers represented this crisis in their works and writings.

Johannes arrived in Sweden in 1523 and shortly after saw himself elected archbishop, but only three years later, he left Sweden and never returned. The brothers spent the rest of their lives abroad, in Poland and in Italy. The entire time they kept fighting the Lutheran crisis in Sweden with every devisable means. They did great rhetorical feats in their attempts to convince the Pope and the cardinals to help them reinstate Catholicism in the northern countries – but also tried to make the Swedish king, Gustavus Vasa, listen to them and mend his Lutheran ways. These two persuasion campaigns required different strategies, and both involved framing the advent of Lutheranism as a crisis.

Finally, an illustrative example. In 1526, when Johannes left Sweden for good, he had been sent to Poland by King Gustavus Vasa to negotiate a marriage to a Polish princess. He probably left Sweden calmly and with every intention of returning. In Johannes' work of history, however, he claims to have saved himself by fleeing Sweden in great haste. In other words, he depicts a perfectly normal departure on a diplomatic mission as flight from a potentially life-threatening crisis.

Divine Punishment and Daniel's Dream: The language of history in Germany and Hungary in the 16th century

Gabor Petnehazi (University of Public Service, Budapest)

In the field of early modern historiography, and generally in the history of Reformation the Wittenbergian Concept of History is the given name of the historical thinking which in the early period of Protestantism became predominant in the areas influenced by Luther and Melancthon. The main components of the concept were the belief in the imminent Apocalypse; the idea of four Empires; the organic, six-thousand-year history of the world and its corresponding periods; and the firm belief that the Turkish conquest of Southeastern Europe was God's just punishment for the innumerable sins of Christianity. The distinctive role played by the prophet Daniel in this pattern is due to the fact that his Old Testament book contains two visions of dreams - one of Nebuchadnezzar in chapter two, the other his own in chapter seven - which by the time of Protestantism had been fixed in the Christian tradition as an allegorical pattern of world history. In fact, it was a shared symbol and language which needed almost no rediscovery, and despite Renaissance and Reformation, remained the dominant voice of Christian thought without losing its medieval power throughout the 16th century on both the Catholic and Protestant sides. The idea of divine punishment, however, was reinforced by other sources as well in the first half of 16th century. In my lecture I will attempt to demonstrate through the works of some German and Hungarian historians and religious thinkers of the period (Johannes Sleidanus, Samuel Budina,

Ferenc Forgách and others) that this theory and its use was in fact a typically Erasmian rediscovery of certain forgotten, mostly Platonic ideas, which in Christian humanism could be harmoniously combined with the prophetic messages amplified by the Turkish threat and the Reformation.

De fame. A Latin Dissertation on the Great Famines in Finland in 1695–1697

Raija Sarasti (University of Helsinki)

The seventeenth century was the coldest episode of a period extending from the fourteenth century up to the mid-nineteenth century, sometimes called the Little Ice Age, during which time wide-spread cooler temperatures and unstable weather conditions caused crop failures and famines in many parts of northern and central Europe. In Finland, the most critical period involved the years 1695–1697: the fatal consequences of short, cool and wet summers led to a severe famine and expanding crisis. Almost a third of the country's population is estimated to have perished during those years.

In 1698, Johan Bjur (d. 1709), future army chaplain, defended a historical political dissertation at the Royal Academy of Turku entitled *De annonae saevitia ac fame ejusque praesagiis, causis, effectis atque remediis* (On crop failure and famine and its portents, causes, effects and remedy), presided over by Professor of Philosophy and History Johannes Munster (d. 1714). This paper examines how the experience of the recent crisis is analysed as subject matter, which – according to the writer's statement in the preface – had previously not been treated in an academic dissertation (*materia non antea in hunc modum tractata*). Special attention will be paid to rhetorical invention and the integration of religious, scientific and political aspects. The expressions used to describe the crisis will also be discussed in some of the eight congratulatory writings attached to the dissertation that touch upon the topic, including, e.g., a poem by poet and Professor of Poetry Torsten Rudeen (1661–1729).

Italian Baroque Tragedies: A mirror of the crisis proposes a solution for that

Mirella Saulini (Italian High School, Rome)

In Italy, the seventeenth-century crisis was mostly due to the political situation. Differently from European countries, Italy was divided in several states. Though they were different each other, their governments were authoritarian and sometimes tyrannical.

Many dramatists writing in Italian or in Latin set their tragedies in a court and criticized it, so Italian Baroque Tragedies whether sacred or secular they were work as a mirror of the political crisis of Italy.

This paper focuses on three tragedies as examples of that: *La Reina di Scotia* (1587-1591) a tragedy written by Federico Della Valle, and two Jesuit tragedies *Flavia Tragoedia* (1600) and *Svevia Tragoedia* (1629), respectively written by Bernardino Stefonio and Alessandro Donati. The protagonists of them die and can be considered as victims of the Reason of State. All of the three dramatists do not agree with the Reason of State.

The goal of this paper is to demonstrate that Stefonio and Donati not only do not agree with Reason of State but implicitly rend a historical judgement on the crisis – for example, both of them use an excerpt from Seneca: “Regna non capiunt duos” to mean that a strong empire needs one emperor only. In fact, according to Donati the crisis began in 1250 when Frederick II died and the Holy Roman Empire was divided.

On the other hand, the protagonists of *Flavia* say what virtues an emperor needs. In other terms Stefonio formulates a proposal for a politically and morally perfect ruler. It is the same one that in 1595 the Jesuit Pedro Ribadeneira proposed in *Tratado de la Religión y virtudes que deve tener el Príncipe christiano*, translated in Latin and better known as *Speculum Principis Christiani*.

***Denotat attoniti quid tremor iste soli?* Earthquakes as Representations of Early Modern Crisis in Bohemian Literary Texts (c. 1570–1620)**

Marcela Slavíková (Institute of Philosophy, Czech Academy of Sciences)

Earthquakes belonged among the most important representations of early modern crisis and as such were described and discussed across literary genres of the time. These depictions of disastrous earthquakes can also be found in the literary texts originating from the Bohemian lands, although the region was never particularly seismically active. First, I will examine the variety of Bohemian literary texts that treat earthquakes and discuss their genres and languages. Then, I will focus on whether these descriptions display any common features which were used across the genres to constitute the image of crisis and at the same time to explain its causes and purposes. Next, I will consider the development of the discourse about the earthquakes in the fifty years before the Thirty Years' War (ca. 1570–1620), which is the period that offers the amplest evidence, and I will assess the earthquakes within the context of the other representations of early modern crisis, since the preliminary research suggests that the various representations are closely interconnected.

Finally, I will explore the parallels between the Bohemian descriptions of earthquakes and those of abroad, with special attention to the comparison with the Baltic region, which appears to yield some interesting results.

Decline of the *machina mundi* and its Discursive Parallels: How the coming end of the world and political crisis were reflected in Bohemian literature around 1580?

Lucie Storchová (Institute of Philosophy, Czech Academy of Sciences)

Latin poems dealing with the coming Judgement Day, particularly with its historical, astronomical and moral context, were extremely popular among professors of the University of Wittenberg. For students they often were a part of their writing exercises. The aim of this paper is to show how this special poetic genre was transformed, when it spread from Wittenberg to Prague from the 1550s, and how it developed within the next three decades. I begin by introducing a network of former Leucorea students and their work in co-creating university humanism in the Bohemian lands. My research addresses several key questions: How did the Prague professors and students adapt this knowledge to new cultural and denominational environments? How did their approaches to disseminating knowledge depend on intended readership and the persons to whom they dedicated their works? Which topics of Wittenberg eschatology did they develop and which did they put aside? How meanings and social roles of both moderate and radical eschatological discourses changed during this transmission? Last but not least, I will consider whether the Wittenberg–Prague connection was purely a one-way cultural exchange.

The Tablet of Cebes, The Pythagorean Y and Hercules at The Crossroads as Allegories of the Way of Human Life

Marta Vaculínová (Centre for Classical Studies, Czech Academy of Sciences)

Over the centuries, the rules of good morality have often been communicated through allegories. Their aim was to show the right path in life and to distinguish it from the path to ruin and destruction and to prevent crises. The most frequent allegories in the early modern period included the so-called Tablet of Cebes, Pythagorean Y and Hercules at the crossroads. Their popularity in Europe is reflected in moral philosophical and emblematic literature, as well as in book culture and the visual arts. However, the Tablet of Cebes (*Tabula Cebetis*) rarely appears in the literature of Bohemian lands and is documented first in the mid-17th century in the works of Johannes Amos Comenius. Before that, perhaps the intellectual influence of the University of Wittenberg on our

humanists played a role in the lack of interest in this allegory. In the imagination of the Wittenberg reformers, the Tablet of Cebes may have alluded to the denial of man's free will, which is completely subject to God. While editions of the *Tabula* are found in Catholic libraries, especially in the libraries of Jesuit colleges, since it was part of the school reading for the teaching of Greek from 1599, the lack of provenance of non-Catholics rather confirms the thesis of their disinterest in the *Tabula*. However, by a peculiar mistake of the editor, probably Beneš Optát, the term *Tabula Cebetis* was used in our countries for the multiplication table, more commonly called *Tabula* or *Mensa Pythagorae*. The place of the *Tabula* as an allegory of the journey of life in the Czech Lands was taken by the Pythagorean Y throughout the long sixteenth century, and to the greatest extent by the moralizing story of Hercules at the crossroads, which is found in Latin poetry, prose, pedagogical writings, and has even been translated into Czech.

Exiled Livonian Noblemen and their Literary Strategies to Reflect the Crisis

Kristi Viiding (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre of the Estonian Academy of Sciences)

The Livonian war (1558–1583) entailed the loss of political independence for the previously independent Livonian Confederation (Terra Mariana), the distribution of the devastated territory between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Sweden and Denmark, the colonists taking over the estates and professional positions of the local nobility, and the re-Catholicization in the territory under the Polish-Lithuanian rule. In order to describe the difficult situation and choices of the Livonians during and after this war, starting from the 1560s both Latin and vernacular literature introduced an allegorical personification of an almost dead or humbled Livonia. The personification of *Livonia paene mortua* included, among other things, the forced departure of the children of Livonia – local inhabitants – into exile (*sedibus patriis exuti, peregrini, exules*). Christoph von Sturtz who went into exile from Riga to Rostock even called this abandonment of the children the nature of the Livonian province (*genius istius provinciae*). Sturtz was – probably due to his academic legal education and his position as a professor at the University of Rostock from 1586 to 1602 – one of those Livonians who, from the first generation of exiles, expressed their exile experience in literature. As a result of the preservation of family ties and friendships in Livonia, Sturtz managed to take a trip to Livonia in 1599 after 24 years in exile. In his academic speech-travelogue “*Oratio De Vitae Decore Per Prudentiam Et Patientiam Comparando et conservando*” held and published in 1600 in Rostock, he not only described what he had seen on his journey through Poland and Prussia, but also discussed the situation of Livonia and considered the possibilities and conditions of returning to his homeland. In my presentation I will observe Sturtz’s

oration and other literary reflections of exile written by this generation of Livonians, which reveal that premodern exile was mostly not a crisis of those who left their homeland, but rather a political, moral and economic crisis of the homeland itself.

Sickness and Death of the Body Politic in the Old Polish Literature

Jakub Wolak (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences)

I intend to present the fate of an ancient idea as reappropriated in the Early Modern Polish-Lithuania, that is the idea of the natural character of the political community, formulated above all in Aristotle's *Politics*. One of its most vivid literary expressions found in the writings of the citizens of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is the metaphor of *Rzeczpospolita* or the Kingdom as a natural body, prone to sickness and death.

I will begin with Stanisław Orzechowski, perhaps the most popular orator of the mid-16th Century who exerted huge influence on the political discourse of the Noble's Republic. I will analyse his prophecies of the death of the Kingdom of Poland as an expression of fear caused by the disruption of the organicist political order grounded in the medieval politico-theological tradition.

I will then turn to an influential Neo-Latin political allegory, *Facies perturbatae et afflictatae Reipublicae*, written in the 1564 by Jan Dymitr Solikowski, but published as *Stanisłai Orechovii Apocalipsis*. The allegory, telling the story of sickness and healing of *Respublica*, was accompanied by Solikowski's drawings. I will analyse the allegory and the iconography in order to uncover the reasons of the sickness of the Republic and the nature of the remedies.

I will conclude by reading an Old Polish poem by Stanisław Samuel Szemiot, a late 17th Century provincial poet, who seems very likely to have known *Facies Reipublicae* – and who enriched the Solicovian metaphor with clear allusions to humorism. However, Szemiot does not describe the process of healing, but the death of the embodied Republic. I believe that Szemiot's poem could be successfully interpreted as a deliberate closing of the aforementioned tradition and an expression of despair caused by the abandonment of the idea of natural political community and the very impossibility of its implementation in the world dominated by modern states.

Proof of Nobility as a Personal and Generational Identity Crisis: An *apologia* against defamation by Professor Andreas Virginius of Academia Dorpatensis

Aira Võsa (Under and Tuglas Literature Centre of the Estonian Academy of Sciences)

In 1631, Gustavus II Adolphus, the King of Sweden, invited *dr. theol.* Andreas Virginius (1596–1664), a native of Pomerania, to become the first professor of theology at the soon-to-be-opened Academia Dorpatensis. Virginius' work as a scholar proved to be very fruitful and successful: dozens of *dissertationes* and *disputationes* were defended under his supervision, and he was elected the rector of the university several times. However, his identity and early career were overshadowed by a rumour that he had unjustly invested himself with a title of nobility, i.e., that he had committed a crime of forgery (*crimen falsi*). To refute this accusation, Virginius published a German-language work in Tartu in 1636, *Nothwendige Vertheidigung*, of which only a 18th century transcription has survived. In the text, Virginius, driven by a personal crisis, presented a series of proofs and arguments in defence of his honour and dignity. The proposed presentation will examine Virginius' style of argument and rhetoric in relation to the slander directed against him. It will also follow the continuation of Virginius' story in the last decades of the 17th century when his relatives in Livonia were also struggling to prove their noble status.