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**Europe and the Stars – Images, Narratives and the Embodiment of a European  
Vision**

The idea of Europe as a cultural entity is the result of manifold literary and visual traditions that suggest a civilizing movement from Orient to Occident, from the sunrise to the sunset, from the origin of things to the claim of perfection. An etiological myth about an abducted Asian Princess gave Europe its name, the exile of the Trojan warrior Aeneas that founded Rome gave Europe its political identity, and an Asian prophet called Jesus gave Europe its religion. Consider the European flag: A crown of twelve stars against a sunset-blue sky evokes a rich symbolism that connects Greek and Christian traditions – from Ariadne’s wedding crown (constellation Corona Borealis) to the star crown of the Immaculate.

In this seminar, we will focus on canonical – and often ambiguous – narratives and pieces of art that still shape our awareness of Europe in cultural and political terms. We will discuss how strong these visual and literary traditions are, which artifacts and symbols embody them, and to what extent they have changed their meaning since the birth of the European project.

Literature:

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- Wilson, Kevin / von der Dussen, Jan (1995 [1993]): *The History of the idea of Europe*. London/New York: The Open University/Routledge.

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