

A historiographical consensus asserts that in the early modern period democracy was reputed to be the worst form of government. However, this scholarly trend leaves a few major questions unanswered: why was this so? How was criticism of popular government articulated? In what ways did different authors and genres depict the people and their power? Which political concerns and social prejudices informed this anti-democratic paradigm? What is the legacy of such a mindset? Were there any “democrats” avant la lettre back then? In order to address these points our project explores how democracy was conceived, viewed and criticised in political, theological and philosophical discourse between the start of King James VI and I’s reign (1603) and the Glorious Revolution (1688–9).

We claim that democracy represented a major challenge at a plurality of levels in English public life throughout the ca. eighty years our project takes into account. Democracy per se might not have been a European reality (apart from some Swiss cantons), but it was constantly discussed, interpreted, elaborated in various arenas. It was certainly seen as a pervasive and persistent menace to all order (not just political and ecclesiastical, but also divine, natural and metaphysical). Besides these social and intellectual considerations, our analysis tackles issues of gender, perceptions of national character, historical interpretations of the past (classical and non-classical) associated with discourses about and of democracy and anti-democracy. Above all, we give unprecedented space to religion, so as to cast new light on its role in the long process of the modernisation of politics and its values. The time span selected enables us to chronicle the types of transformations that occurred within the paradigm(s) of democracy and anti-democracy through decisive historical phases which saw major events shape life and thought in England, in the British Isles and in Europe. We hope thus to clarify sundry aspects of what it means to reflect on and theorise about democracy in historical perspective, so as to avoid some of the current anachronistic and often confused accounts of it put forward in contemporary political theory, journalism and public opinion.



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University of Erfurt
Max Weber Centre
for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies

UNIVERSITY OF ERFURT

Conference

Democracy and Anti-Democracy
in Early Modern England 1603–1689

July 18–19, 2017 | Erfurt, Steinplatz 2, room 805

...ing is Caught. ... breath is good for Little Red ... worst in his blood for to make black puddings for ... And Stone on the Ground

PROGRAMME**Tuesday 18 July**

- 13.30 – 13.45 pm** | **Introductory Remarks**
Cesare Cuttica
- 13.45 – 15.15 pm** | **FIRST PANEL:
DEMOCRACY AND POLITICS**
Rachel Hammersley
(Univ. of Newcastle) Presbyterians,
Republicans, and Democracy in
Church and State, c.1570–1660
Martin Dzelzainis
(Univ. of Leicester)
‘The vulgar only scap’d who stood
without’: Republicans and
Democrats
Markku Peltonen
(Univ. of Helsinki)
Democracy in the English
Revolution
- 15.15 – 15.45 pm** | **coffee and tea break**
- 15.45 – 17.15 pm** | **SECOND PANEL:
DEMOCRACY AND RELIGION**
Peter Lake (Vanderbilt Univ.)
Puritans, Anti-Puritans and
“Democracy”
Cesare Cuttica
(Univ. Paris 8/MWK, Erfurt)
The Spectre Haunting State
and Church in Early
Seventeenth-Century
England: Democracy at its Worst
Camilla Boisen (NYU, Abu Dhabi)
Ecclesiology and Colonial Political
Thought: Roger Williams and John
Cotton Debates on the American
Indians
- 17.15 – 17.45 pm** | **coffee and tea break**
- 17.45 – 18.30 pm** | **GENERAL DISCUSSION**
- 20.30 pm** | **Dinner in Town**

Wednesday 19 July

- 9.30 – 9.45 am** | **Opening Remarks**
Markku Peltonen
- 9.45 – 10.45 am** | **THIRD PANEL:
DEMOCRACY AND SOCIETY**
Phil Withington (Univ. of Sheffield)
Democracy and “Society” in Early
Modern England
Rachel Foxley (Univ. of Reading)
Equality and Participation: the
Democratic Tensions of Civil
War Radicalism
- 10.45 – 11.15 am** | **coffee and tea break**
- 11.15 – 12.15 pm** | **(CONT.)**
John West (Univ. of Nottingham)
The People’s Hearts: Literature,
Politics, and Popularity in Later
Seventeenth-Century England
Hannah Dawson
(King’s College, London)
Reason and Democracy in Late
Seventeenth-Century
Political Thought
- 12.15 – 12.45 pm** | **GENERAL DISCUSSION**
- 13 – 14.30 pm** | **LUNCH**
- 14.30 – 16 pm** | **FOURTH PANEL:
DEMOCRACY, LITERATURE
AND GENDER**
Matthew Growhoski
(Vanderbilt Univ.)
‘A Most Dangerous Rudeness’:
Anti-Populism and the Literary
Justification of Absolutism in the
Fictions of John Barclay (1582–1621)
Edward Vallance
(Univ. of Roehampton)
On and Off the Page – Women and
Subscriptional Culture in Early
Modern England

- Gaby Mahlberg
(Independent Scholar, Berlin)
The Parliament of Women and
the Restoration Crisis
- 16 – 16.30 pm** | **tea and coffee break**
- 16.30 – 17 pm** | **OVERVIEW PANEL:
DEMOCRACY AND ANTI-
DEMOCRACY IN THE LONG
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**
Alan Cromartie (Univ. of Reading)
Democracy and the Interests of
the People
- 17 – 17.30 pm** | **GENERAL DISCUSSION**
- 17.30 – 17.45 pm** | **Concluding Remarks**
Cesare Cuttica and Markku
Peltonen

The number of places is limited. Please register via e-mail by writing to diana.blanke@uni-erfurt.de by **30 June 2017**.

ORGANISATION

Cesare Cuttica (Max Weber Centre for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies, University of Erfurt)
Markku Peltonen (University of Helsinki)