

Civic duty in early modern Europe

The notion of civic duty belongs to the category of concepts that remain much under-researched and are often sidelined in favour of other subjects of scholarly investigation perceived as traditionally better established, more viable in terms of research output, or simply more enthusiastically welcomed by funding bodies and faculty boards. The reluctance to place civic duty at the heart of scholarly considerations is the more surprising as its conspicuousness in the history of political thought and its centrality in political culture, both in the past and the present, are readily acknowledged not only by scholars but also by the general public.

It has been argued, for example, that the concept of civic duty itself and its accompanying ideology can be seen as the epitome or pinnacle of the ruling classes' social and political ideology and as a pivotal element of their world-view. It has also been pointed out that the ideal of an active life in the service of one's country, the monarch and the people has often worked as an extremely important factor encouraging urban and provincial elites to become involved in government, administration, the execution of justice and political life. Communal and national integration, as well as the management and mobilization of a country's resources, would frequently have been extremely difficult to achieve without it.

The main aim of the workshop is, therefore, to contribute to filling the gap in research on the concept of civic duty (and related ideas and doctrines) and to help to restore this important and time-honoured notion to its rightful place. We propose to treat the topic very broadly and to consider any themes which either form a constituent part of 'civic duty', as it is commonly and historically envisaged, or are somehow linked to it. In other words we would like to create a forum to discuss the idea and the practice of serving the country, the people, the monarch and the local and national community in all conceivable capacities - as state officers, provincial and urban administrators, in the military, as scholars, merchants or merely regular citizens "doing their part". At the level of concepts and ideologies we would be interested in papers covering patriotism, republicanism, the notion of common good, the concepts of *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* and citizenship.

The chronological scope of the conference/workshop is the period between 1400 and 1800. In terms of geographical limitations we believe that the greater the variety the more interesting the results and this should allow for more wide-ranging conclusions than has been the case thus far. Accordingly, we have invited scholars from all over Europe whose collective expertise extends to most regions of the continent.

European University Institute Florence

Department of History and Civilization & Max Weber Programme



Conference

Organized by

Martin van Gelderen (HEC), Tomasz W. Gromelski (MWP/HEC)

Civic Duty in Early Modern Europe

Florence, 5-6 July, 2010
Sala A, Villa La Fonte

Monday, July 5, 2010

11:00-11:15:

Tomasz W. Gromelski (EUI/MWP)

Introduction

11:15-12:45:

Martin van Gelderen (EUI/HEC)

'The Virtuous Merchant: New Questions, Old Republican Answers'

12:45-14:30: Lunch

14:30-15:00:

Marton Zaszkaliczky (CEU)

'Patria Nostra vs Pater Noster - Loyalties and Duties in the Urban Reformations of 16th Century Hungary (The Saxon Lutheran Brassov and the Hungarian Calvinist Debrecen)'

15:00-15:30: Coffee/tea break

15:30-17:00:

Antti Tahvanainen (Helsinki)

'Duties of a Republican Orator'

Evening Dinner

Tuesday, July 6, 2010

10:00-11:30:

Christian Preusse (Oxford)

'Patriotism as a Notion of Political Order in the Holy Roman Empire - Recent Historiographical Developments and Comparative Perspectives'

11:30-11:45: Coffee break

11:45-13:00:

Tomasz W. Gromelski (EUI/MWP)

'The Concept of Civic Duty in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, c1500-c1600'

13:00-14:30: Lunch

Participants

- Tomasz W. Gromelski (EUI/MWP)
- Christian Preusse (Oxford)
- Antti Tahvanainen (Helsinki)
- Martin van Gelderen (EUI)
- Marton Zaszkaliczky (CEU)