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978-1-107-03307-8 - Freedom and the Construction of Europe: Volume II: Free Persons and Free States

Edited by Quentin Skinner and Martin Van Gelderen

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## Freedom and the Construction of Europe

### VOLUME II

#### *Free Persons and Free States*

Freedom, today perceived simply as a human right, was a continually contested idea in the early modern period. In *Freedom and the Construction of Europe* an international group of scholars explores the richness, diversity and complexity of thinking about freedom in the shaping of modernity. Volume I examines debates about religious and constitutional liberties, as well as discussing tensions between free will and divine omnipotence across a continent of proliferating religious denominations. Volume II considers free persons and free states, examining differing views about freedom of thought and action and their relations to conceptions of citizenship. Debates about freedom have been fundamental to the construction of modern Europe, but represent a part of our intellectual heritage that is rarely examined in depth. These volumes provide materials for thinking in fresh ways not merely about the concept of freedom, but about how it has come to be understood in our own time.

QUENTIN SKINNER is Barber Beaumont Professor of the Humanities at Queen Mary, University of London. His publications include *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (2 vols., 1978), *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (1996), *Liberty before Liberalism* (1998), *Visions of Politics* (3 vols., 2002) and *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (2008).

MARTIN VAN GELDEREN was Professor of European Intellectual History at the European University Institute from 2003 until 2012 and has just become director of the Lichtenberg Kolleg, the Göttingen Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences. He is currently completing a monograph *Rembrandt, Grotius and Manasseh: Visuality and Religious Toleration*.

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# Freedom and the Construction of Europe

VOLUME II

*Free Persons and Free States*

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*Edited by* QUENTIN SKINNER

*and* MARTIN VAN GELDEREN



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## *Acknowledgements*

While we were editing our earlier volumes on *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage* (van Gelderen and Skinner 2002) we came to see that there was a need for a work of comparable scope devoted to the theory and practice of religious and political liberty in early modern Europe. With this idea in mind, we held a meeting in 2004 with Annabel Brett, Richard Fisher and Iain Hampsher-Monk at which we agreed on the topics that such a study would need to encompass and drew up a preliminary table of contents. Following the model of our earlier volumes on Republicanism, we also agreed that the best way to bring together the latest research on the subject would be to hold a series of conferences out of which a book might eventually emerge.

We recognised that such a project would require large-scale funding, but this problem was solved when Quentin Skinner was awarded a Balzan Prize in 2006. After some discussion, the Balzan Foundation generously agreed to the following scheme: that we should assemble an international group of younger scholars, preferably at the post-doctoral stage of their careers; that they should be invited to attend a series of conferences at which their work would be presented and discussed; and that their conference papers should subsequently be revised and extended with a view to turning them into a book.

The project was advertised in the summer of 2007. After sifting a large number of applications we appointed twenty-eight members of a core group, all of whom delivered papers at a series of four conferences held at the European University Institute between July 2008 and September 2009. We also invited a number of senior scholars to speak at one or other of these meetings, and we are especially grateful to those who not only joined us but agreed to turn their papers into publishable texts.

## x Acknowledgements

We owe an overwhelming debt to the Balzan Foundation for welcoming our proposal and providing us with such munificent support. Above all we should like to thank Salvatore Veca, Chairman of the Balzan General Prize Committee, for his unfailing interest and warm encouragement. A special word of thanks is additionally owed to Suzanne Werder, Secretary to the Prize Committee, for her invaluable guidance about administrative matters at every stage.

We are also deeply grateful to the European University Institute. By providing Martin van Gelderen with a ‘seed-money’ grant, the Institute originally set our project in motion, enabling us to hold our preliminary meeting and sketch the contours of our work. Subsequently the Institute placed us yet more deeply in its debt by permitting us to make use of the spectacular facilities at the Villa Schifanoia in San Domenico di Fiesole for our conferences. We want to express our particular thanks to the then President, Yves Mény, who generously supplied us with additional funding and showed such a friendly interest in our work.

The division of editorial labour between us has been as follows. Martin van Gelderen took responsibility for organising the series of conferences. He wishes to express his appreciation to Sergio Amadei and Nikki Koniordis for much indispensable practical help. Quentin Skinner edited the conference papers and negotiated with Cambridge University Press. After the reports of the Press’s referees were received, Quentin Skinner re-edited the revised chapters to produce the final version of our text. He wishes to acknowledge the extensive help he received from Tommaso Giordani, who ensured that the chapters were submitted in uniform style, and who created, edited and checked the bibliographies.

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QUENTIN SKINNER  
MARTIN VAN GELDEREN

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## *Notes on contributors*

CATHERINE BALLÉRIAUX is a Ph.D. student in history at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Her thesis, ‘Reformation Strategies: Conversion, Civility, and Utopia in Missionary Writings about the New World, c. 1610–1690’, compares French, English and Spanish missions to the native peoples of America.

ANNABEL BRETT is Reader in History at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. She is the author of *Liberty, Right and Nature: Individual Rights in Later Scholastic Thought* (1997) and *Changes of State: Nature and the Limits of the City in Early Modern Natural Law* (2011).

THEODORE CHRISTOV is Assistant Professor of History at the George Washington University in Washington, DC. He previously taught political theory at Northwestern University. He has published articles on Hobbes and international thought, on Vattel and the liberal state, and on the history of the early modern idea of Europe.

JOHN COFFEY is Professor of Early Modern History at the University of Leicester. His books include *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558–1689* (2000) and *Exodus and Liberation: Deliverance Politics from John Calvin to Martin Luther King* (forthcoming 2013). He co-edited *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (2008).

MICHAEL COOK is the Class of 1943 University Professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University. Before going to Princeton in 1986 he taught for twenty years at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. His books include *The Koran: A Very Short Introduction* (2000); *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (2000); *A Brief History of the Human Race* (2003); and *Studies in the Origins of Early Islamic Culture and Tradition* (2004).

ROSANNA COX is Lecturer in Early Modern Literature at the University of Kent. Her publications include articles on ideas of liberty in Milton’s *Samson*

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*Agonistes*, on republican diplomacy and on early modern marriage. She is currently completing a monograph on Milton and citizenship.

HANNAH DAWSON is Senior Lecturer in the History of Ideas at the University of Edinburgh. She is the author of *Locke, Language and Early Modern Philosophy* (2007), and is currently editing Locke's *Disputations on the Law of Nature* for the Clarendon Edition of the Works of John Locke.

SERENA FERENTE is Lecturer at King's College London. She works on the social and political history of late-medieval and Renaissance Italy. Her latest projects focus on the passions in the political languages of late-medieval Europe, and on the role of gender in debates about sovereignty.

FONNA FORMAN is Associate Professor of Political Science and Co-Director of the Center on Global Justice at the University of California, San Diego. She is the author of *Adam Smith and the Circles of Sympathy* (2010), and has work forthcoming on contemporary global justice theory and on ideas of exile and escape in eighteenth-century cosmopolitan thought. She edits the *Adam Smith Review*.

FELICITY GREEN is a Chancellor's Fellow in History at the University of Edinburgh. Previously she was the holder of a Junior Research Fellowship in History at Trinity College, Cambridge. She is the author of *Montaigne and the Life of Freedom* (2012).

TOMASZ GROMELSKI is a Research Fellow at Wolfson College, Oxford. He was formerly at the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna and at the European University Institute. Research interests and publications focus on political thought and political culture in early modern Poland-Lithuania, and on the social history of Tudor England.

POLLY HA is Lecturer in Early Modern British History at the University of East Anglia. She is the author of *English Presbyterianism, 1590–1640* (2011) and co-editor, with Patrick Collinson, of *The Reception of Continental Reformation in Britain* (2011). She is currently working on a critical edition of sources relating to pre-revolutionary Puritanism.

LENA HALLDENIUS is Professor of Human Rights at Lund University. She is a Life Member of Clare Hall, Cambridge, and former Torgny Segerstedt Pro Futura Fellow at Uppsala University. Her writings include a monograph on liberalism and articles on the concept of freedom and the political thought of Locke, Hobbes and Wollstonecraft.

IAIN HAMPSHER-MONK is Professor of Political Theory at the University of Exeter. He is the author of *A History of Modern Political Thought* (1992), and co-editor of *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives* (1998) and *The History of Political Thought in National Context* (2001). He jointly edits the journal *History of Political Thought*.

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JASKA KAINULAINEN currently holds a post-doctoral research position in the Department of History at the University of Helsinki. His research focuses on Paolo Sarpi, on whom he has published articles in *Beiträge zur Romanistik* and in *European Review of History*.

THOMAS KAUFMANN is Professor of Church History in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Göttingen and Vice-president of the Academy of Sciences. His publications include *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung* (1997), *Dreißigjähriger Krieg und Westfälischer Friede* (1998), *Türckenbüchlein* (2008), *Geschichte der Reformation* (2nd edn, 2010) and *Luthers Judenschriften* (2011).

LOVRO KUNČEVIĆ is a researcher at the Institute for Historical Sciences of HAZU in Dubrovnik. He has published on political thought and identity discourses of early modern Dubrovnik, and is currently completing, with Gábor Kármán, a book on the European tributary states of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

DANIEL LEE is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto. He was previously a member of the Society of Fellows at Columbia University. His research has appeared in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, *History of Political Thought*, *Review of Politics* and *Politica Antica*, and he has contributed a chapter to the forthcoming volume *Hobbes and the Law*.

AVI LIFSCHITZ is Lecturer in European History at University College London. Currently he is a Fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. He is the author of *Language and Enlightenment: The Berlin Debates of the Eighteenth Century* (2012), and co-editor of *Epicurus in the Enlightenment* (2009).

THOMAS MAISSEN has been full Professor of Modern History at the University of Heidelberg since 2004. He is the author of *Die Geburt der Republic: Staatsverständnis und Repräsentation in der frühneuzeitlichen Eidgenossenschaft* (2006); *The Republican Alternative: The Netherlands and Switzerland Compared* (2008, with A. Holenstein and M. Prak) and *Die Geschichte der Schweiz* (2010).

REIDAR MALIKS is a Postdoctoral Fellow in Philosophy at the University of Oslo, having previously taught at Columbia, Harvard and Oxford. His book *Kant's Politics in Context* is forthcoming.

SARAH MORTIMER is University Lecturer and Official Student and Tutor in History at Christ Church, Oxford. Her first book, *Reason and Religion in the English Revolution* (2010), won the Forkosch Prize and she has recently co-edited, with John Robertson, a volume of essays on *The Intellectual Consequences of Religious Heterodoxy* (2012).

ERIC NELSON is Professor of Government at Harvard University. He is the author of *The Greek Tradition in Republican Thought* (2004) and *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought* (2010). He has also edited Hobbes's translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* for the Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes (2008).

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- MARTINA REUTER is docent of Philosophy at the University of Helsinki and Lecturer in Gender Studies at the University of Jyväskylä. With Sara Heinämaa she has edited *Psychology and Philosophy: Inquiries into the Soul from Late Scholasticism to Contemporary Thought* (2009).
- ALEXANDER SCHMIDT is a junior Professor of Intellectual History at the Friedrich Schiller University, Jena. He is the author of *Vaterlandsliebe und Religionskonflikt: Politische Diskurse im Alten Reich 1555–1648* (2007). His articles have appeared in *The Historical Journal*, *History of Political Thought*, *Modern Intellectual History*, *Francia* and elsewhere.
- FREYA SIERHUIS is a Research Fellow in the Department of English Literature at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, where she is working on a monograph on Fulke Greville. She has published on Calvinism and Arminianism, revenge tragedy and the biblical drama of Joost van den Vondel.
- QUENTIN SKINNER is Barber Beaumont Professor of the Humanities at Queen Mary, University of London. His publications include *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (2 vols., 1978), *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (1996), *Liberty before Liberalism* (1998), *Visions of Politics* (3 vols., 2002) and *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (2008).
- PETER STACEY is Assistant Professor of History at UCLA and the author of *Roman Monarchy and the Renaissance Prince* (2007). He is currently writing a book about Machiavelli's theory of the state.
- TIMOTHY STANTON is Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of York. He has been Beinecke Fellow at Yale University (2008) and Balzan-Skinner Fellow at the University of Cambridge (2011). He is currently completing a critical edition of John Locke's unpublished 'Defence of Nonconformity' (1681–2).
- ANTTI TAHVANAINEN received his Ph.D. from the University of Helsinki, and is the author of *Rhetoric and Public Speech in English Republicanism, 1642–1681* (2012). He has published articles on John Milton and James Harrington.
- MARTIN VAN GELDEREN was Professor of European Intellectual History at the European University Institute from 2003 until 2012 and has just become director of the Lichtenberg Kolleg, the Göttingen Institute for Advanced Studies in the humanities and social sciences. He is currently completing a monograph *Rembrandt, Grotius and Manasseh: Visuality and Religious Toleration*.
- MÁRTON ZÁSZKALICZKY is a Ph.D. candidate in the History Department of the Central European University, Budapest. His dissertation is entitled 'Protestant Political Theology and Corporate Constitutionalism in 16th–17th century Hungary'. With Balázs Trencsényi he co-edited the volume *Whose Love of Which Country? Composite States, National Histories and Patriotic Discourses in Early Modern East Central Europe* (2010).