

## What was Political Thought in Sixteenth-Century England?

A Symposium

Sponsored by the Folger Institute Center for the History of British Political Thought  
Friday and Saturday, 1 and 2 April 2011

Foulke Conference Room at the Folger Shakespeare Library's Haskell Center  
301 East Capitol St. SE  
Washington, DC 20003

Although the Folger Institute Center for the History of British Political Thought has continually widened the scope of its inquiries, its larger framework has remained mostly verbal and textual. Center programs have mostly presumed that the subject-matter is rooted in discussion, exchange, and argument that have led to “thought” and justification—that is, to political thinking couched in formal genres and in which the possibility of dialogue and response remains central. This symposium will bring together several dozen scholars to investigate the category of the political in the period and to ask what forms of thinking (and acting, including social *practices*) can be coherently and productively encompassed within the rubric of “political thought.” Perhaps even more important, we are asking how, if at all, sixteenth-century actors would have regarded the term “political thought.” Was there a variety of activities of reasoning and talking that they would have recognized as “political thought”? In what media would they have encountered political thinking, and in what arenas would they have engaged in such activities? This symposium is conceived as a series of conversations among all the participants, rather than a conference in the conventional sense. The session leaders listed on the schedule below have been invited to start conversations on these and related questions. Applications to participate in the symposium are sought from scholars whose current research also engages these issues.

### Revised Schedule

#### Friday, 1 April 2011

9:00-9:25

Coffee and pastries

9:25 Welcome, **Kathleen Lynch**, Executive Director of the Folger Institute

9:30-11:00 am

#### What was the political in the 16<sup>th</sup> century?

Chair: **J.G.A. Pocock**,

Steering Committee of the Center for the History of British Political Thought

**James Simpson**, Donald P. and Katherine B. Loker Professor of English,  
Harvard University

**Eric Nelson**, Professor of Government, Harvard University  
**Ethan Shagan**, Professor of History, University of California, Berkeley

11:00-11:30

Coffee Break

11:30 am-1:00 pm

**Where was political thinking taking place and who was doing political thinking?  
(Part One)**

Chair: **Linda Levy Peck**,  
Steering Committee of the Center for the History of British Political Thought

**Aysha Pollnitz**, Lecturer in History, Rice University  
**Malcolm Smuts**, Professor of History, UMass, Boston  
**Krista Kesselring**, Associate Professor of History, Dalhousie University

1:00-2:30 pm

Lunch provided in Great Hall, Folger Shakespeare Library

2:30-4:00 pm

**Where was political thinking taking place and who was doing political thinking?  
(Part Two)**

Chair: **Gordon Schochet**,  
Steering Committee of the Center for the History of British Political Thought

**Euan K. Cameron**, Henry Luce III Professor of Reformation Church History,  
Union Theological Seminary  
**Bradin Cormack**, Associate Professor of English, University of Chicago

**Saturday, 2 April 2011**

9:00-9:30 am

Coffee and pastries

9:30-11:00 am

**What were the media for political thinking?**

Chair: **Linda Levy Peck**,

Steering Committee of the Center for the History of British Political Thought

**Natalie Mears**, Senior Lecturer, Department of History, Durham University

**Chris R. Kyle**, Associate Professor of History, Syracuse University

11:00-11:30 am

Coffee break

11:30 am-1:00 pm

**What was English about political thought in sixteenth-century England?**

Chair: **J.G.A. Pocock**,

Steering Committee of the Center for the History of British Political Thought

**Roger Mason**, Professor of History, University of St. Andrews

**Brendan Kane**, Assistant Professor of History, University of Connecticut

**Annabel Brett**, Faculty of History, University of Cambridge

1:00-2:30 pm

Lunch on your own

2:30-4:00 pm

**Did the boundaries of political thinking change?**

Chair: **David Armitage**,

Steering Committee of the Center for the History of British Political Thought

**Alan Cromartie**, Professor of Politics and International Relations, University of Reading

**David Womersley**, Thomas Warton Professor of English Literature, Oxford University

4:00-5:15

Closing Reception