

Popular Sovereignty in Historical Perspective

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Edited by Richard Bourke
and Quentin Skinner



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This collaborative volume offers the first historical reconstruction of the concept of popular sovereignty from antiquity to the twentieth century. First formulated between the late sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries, the various early modern conceptions of the doctrine were heavily indebted to Roman reflection on forms of government and Athenian ideas of popular power. This study, edited by Richard Bourke and Quentin Skinner, traces successive transformations of the doctrine, rather than narrating a linear development. It examines critical moments in the career of popular sovereignty, spanning antiquity, medieval Europe, the early modern wars of religion, the revolutions of the eighteenth century and their aftermath, decolonisation and mass democracy. Featuring original work by an international team of scholars, the book offers a reconsideration of one of the formative principles of contemporary politics by exploring its descent from classical city-states to the advent of the modern state.

作者介绍:

目录: Introduction Richard Bourke;

1. Athenian democracy and popular tyranny Kinch Hoekstra;

2. Popular sovereignty as control of officeholders: Aristotle on Greek democracy
Melissa Lane;

3. Popular sovereignty in the late Roman republic: Cicero and the will of the people
Valentina Arena;

4. Popolo and law: late medieval sovereignty in Marsilius and the jurists Serena
Ferente;

5. Democratic sovereignty and democratic government: the sleeping sovereign Richard
Tuck;

6. Parliamentary sovereignty, popular sovereignty, and Henry Parker's adjudicative
standpoint Alan Cromartie;

7. Popular sovereignty and representation in the English Civil War Lorenzo Sabbadini;

8. Prerogative, popular sovereignty, and the American founding Eric Nelson;

9. Popular sovereignty and political representation: Edmund Burke in the context of
eighteenth-century thought Richard Bourke;

10. From popular sovereignty to civil society in post-revolutionary France Bryan
Garsten;

11. Popular sovereignty as state theory in the nineteenth century Duncan Kelly;

12. Popular sovereignty and anticolonialism Karuna Mantena;

13. Popular sovereignty in an age of mass democracy: politics, parliament, and parties
in Weber, Kelsen, Schmitt and beyond Timothy Stanton;

Bibliography;

Index

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标签

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