

the infrastructural backbone of Holland's rise, while demonstrating the analytical power of shipwreck archaeology. The book will be of interest not only to maritime archaeologists and historians of the Dutch Golden Age, but also to policymakers concerned with the preservation of fragile archaeological remains. Waldus has produced a richly illustrated and thought-provoking study that deserves a wide readership.

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Lars Behrisch, *Democracy's Double Helix. Participation, Equality, and Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025). 330 pp. ISBN 9781316516317.

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In human DNA, two genetic strands are closely intertwined, forming a uniform pattern without ever merging. Since they run antiparallel, there is tension between them and the possibility that they may separate. Historian Lars Behrisch uses this image to illustrate the two 'original roots' of democracy that he distinguishes and follows in his new book: political participation and equality.

The book deals with the long-term development of representative democracy in Europe and the United States from the late Middle Ages to the American and French Revolutions, with a view toward the present. With the first 'root', political participation, Behrisch addresses a specific field of practices: the involvement of people in institutionalized decision-making processes, that is, in forms of regular consultation and/or constitution which do not depend on the will of a single ruler, with special norms and legitimacy. He describes in considerable depth a whole spectrum of pre-modern state developments: Participation without Monarchs (Swiss Confederacy, Netherlands), King-in-Parliament (England, Poland-Lithuania), Monarchs and Estates (Sweden, Holy Roman Empire, Spain), Negative Participation (France), Monarchs without Participation (Russia).

As different as these early modern political entities were in many respects, they generally had a pluralistic character and a conservative attitude. The right to participate was fought for and defended by hierarchically structured groups. Rebellions were not aimed at expanding popular participation, but at preserving the status quo.

Without the second 'root' – a sense of human, individual equality – the development of representative democracy would have been hard or impossible to imagine.

The author traces the impulses and trends behind the notion and implementation of equality in five chapters arranged roughly in chronological order, and entitled: Reformation and Confessional Pluralism; Trade, Market, Capitalism; Natural Law and Individual Rights; States, Subjects, Citizens; Enlightenment. As can be seen, the explanations cover a wide range of phenomena, from religion and economy to scholarship and statecraft. They all contribute in certain moments to a broadening of perspectives. The convergence of the two 'roots' of equality and participation then leads to representative democracy. However, the breakthrough achieved in the American and French Revolutions was by no means predetermined or inevitable, but depended on many ruptures and coincidental constellations. It could have turned out differently. Behrisch describes and analyzes these revolutions in the third part of his book, at times with a keen eye for detail.

In some sections, devoted to the history and critique of theoretical approaches, the text is aimed at true specialists, but otherwise it is also accessible to a wider audience. The author expresses himself clearly and makes an effort to present his theses in a well-rounded and explicit manner. The fact that he touches on various topics and argues at different levels of abstraction and realities of life makes for a varied, interesting read.

With its important topic, its long time span, and its geographical breadth, the book is an ambitious undertaking. In my view, it is very successful in key areas and represents a true enrichment of the literature. For me, it was a real eye-opening experience. I am now better able to link traditional research topics with one another. It also clearly demonstrates the advantages of historical research over more synchronous and normative disciplines. Behrisch, for example, expressly avoids creating an artificial typology of the various state-building processes (pp. 61-62), and his approach to defining the phenomena refrains as far as possible from preconceived assumptions as, for example, in the case of the notion of revolution (pp. 209-210). It is very likely that the book will encounter critics who take issue with the treatment of one topic or another. I myself, for instance, stumbled over the geographical conditions mentioned by Behrisch in his explanation; in my opinion, further reservations should be introduced here. Yet that

is not the crucial point. The point lies rather in the basic proposition of explaining the historical emergence of representative democracy as the result of the two mentioned components of the 'double helix'. This idea is brilliant, advancing research all the more because it is supported by solid, broad-based evidence.

The author expresses it as follows: 'While readers acquainted with any particular state will not (and should not) be much surprised by the respective chapter, they will nevertheless – or so it is hoped – profit from the overall comparative framework. It permits to contrast states within a coherent analytical framework, from the same vantage point and with the same concepts, and also allows cross-state comparisons of a number of specific features. Last but not least, it will put individual states' histories into perspective – in particular the claims made, in one way or another, for almost every one of them to have been the most precocious forerunner of democracy.' (pp. 68-69)

The book is clearly very topical. It begins with the observation that democracy is in a major crisis and ends with a discussion of some contemporary theoretical diagnoses, but it is cautious about offering its own advice. For the author, it is only clear that in further developing democracy, both components – participation and equality – must be kept in mind in terms of their tension and potential contradictions. Populist challenges to democracy can be countered if both the pluralism afforded by participation and the genuine equal representation of interests, views, and aspirations are taken into account (pp. 301-306).

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Bernhard C. Schär and Mikko Toivanen (eds), *Integrative and Collaborative Imperialism in Modern Europe. At the Margins of Empire, 1800-1950* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2025). 238 pp. ISBN 9781350377332.

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*Integrative and Collaborative Imperialism in Modern Europe* examines the entanglements of supposedly marginal European regions to shed new light on imperial history and the process of European integration. Written by historians, literary scholars, and anthropologists, this rich and often rewarding collection is thus devoted to the "colonialism