



Lecture

LINDA COLLEY

Fellow, SCAS.

Shelby M.C. Davis 1958 Professor of History, Princeton University

Written Constitutions as Print

Thursday, 8 March, 6:15 p.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall
SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala

The lecture will be followed by a reception. Prior registration is required.
Please contact rsp@swedishcollegium.se no later than 5 March to sign up.

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ABOUT LINDA COLLEY

Linda Colley holds a BA in History from Bristol University and earned her MA and Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge. She taught at the latter institution until 1981 and then moved to Yale University, where she became a university professor. From 1997 to 2003, she was a research professor at the London School of Economics, moving to her present position in 2003. She is a Fellow of the British Academy and the Royal Society of Literature, a member of the Academia Europaea, and has been made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire for her services to history. She holds five honorary degrees.

Colley's books include *In Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory Party, 1714–1760* (1982); *Namier* (1989); *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (1992); *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600–1850* (2002); *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: A Woman in World History* (2007); and *Acts of Union and Disunion* (2014). The last-mentioned book was based on fifteen lectures she delivered on BBC Radio 4 in advance of the Scottish independence referendum and the EU/BREXIT referendum. Her work has been translated into eleven languages.

Colley has organized major exhibitions at the British Library in London and is a member of the Research Board of the British Museum and the Research Committee of the New York Public Library. She occasionally writes for the *London Review of Books*, the *New York Review of Books* and the *Financial Times*. In addition to her Fellowship at SCAS, she currently also holds a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship.

At SCAS, Colley will be completing a book on war and the making of constitutions since 1750.

ABSTRACT

After 1750, new kinds of written and printed constitutions came increasingly to proliferate. By 1870, at least 1600 had been published, as well as thousands of more informal constitutional projects. By 1900, published constitutions had been produced in every continent on the globe. Attention has normally focussed on the legal and political significance of these developments, and on their import for individual rights. But constitutions were also texts that relied on the growing reach of print, and that expanded in tandem with the geographical spread of the novel and the newspaper. In this lecture, I focus on the written constitution as print. How and why exactly did legislators and politicians seek to use print aggressively both to spread these texts at home and in order to circulate them in other regions of the world? How were “written constitutions” read, understood, translated, and used when print worked to transmit their content across land and maritime boundaries? And who and where were the winners and the losers? Did this trans-continental transmission of constitutional texts by way of print simply redound to the advantage of already powerful and influential states, empires, cultures, and peoples? Or were these intrinsically unstable texts which print could allow to become even more so?