

THE THEORY OF REPRESENTATION AND THE CONCEPT OF IDEAL MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT IN ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

La teoría de la representación y el concepto del parlamentario ideal en la Inglaterra de Isabel I

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RESUMEN: En el artículo se examinan las teorías de la representación en la Inglaterra de Isabel I, las cuales determinaron la noción del parlamentario ejemplar. La idea de la encarnación metafórica de toda la nación en el Parlamento fue central para el modelo inglés teórico de representación e influyó en la percepción del parlamentario como un actor independiente, un representante legal, investido con *plena potestas* y guiado por su propia opinión y experiencia. La autora explora la conexión entre las nociones del Parlamento como Consejo y Tribunal Supremos y la interpretación de las funciones y objetivos del miembro del Parlamento, así como la influencia de las ideas religiosas, de la cultura del Renacimiento y del republicanismo clásico en el ideal del hombre parlamentario.

Palabras clave: representación; asambleas representativas; Parlamento; Inglaterra; Isabel I Tudor.

ABSTRACT: The article examines the theoretical views on representation in Elizabethan England, which determined the notion of an exemplary member of parliament (MP). Central to the English theoretical model of representation was the idea of metaphorical embodiment of the whole nation in parliament, which influenced the perception of MP as an independent actor, an attorney, invested with *plena potestas*, and guided by his own

independent judgment and experience. The author explores the connection between the notions of parliament as the Great Council and the High Court and the interpretation of MPs' functions and goals, the influence of religious ideas, Renaissance culture and classical republicanism on the ideal of parliament man.

Key words: Representation; Representative bodies; Parliament; England; Elizabeth I.

Tudor theory of representation rested upon the idea of metaphorical embodiment of the whole commonwealth of England in parliament¹. While describing this institution, political and legal writers of the XVI-XVII centuries used expressions which made it clear, that for them this institution was not just an assembly of individuals sent to Westminster by their constituencies to represent them in a modern sense, Parliament literary constituted the nation itself. In some mystical way it contained the whole multitude of subjects of the English Crown. Authoritative political writer Thomas Smith formulated this idea in his «*De republica Anglorum*» in the following way:

the parliament of Englande... representeth and hath power of the whole realme both the head and the bodie. For everie Englishman is entended to bee there present, either in person or by procuracy and attornies, of what preheminance, state, dignitie, or qualities soever he be, from the Prince (be he King or Queen) to the lowest person of Englande².

The famous legal antiquary William Lambard used almost the same expressions in his treatise on the courts of justice and parliament:

1. Paul Friedland was the first who drew attention to the fundamental difference between the medieval conception of metaphorical embodiment and the modern system of «liberal delegation» to representative bodies. FRIEDLAND, P.: *Political Actors: Representative Bodies and Theatricality in the Age of the French Revolution*. Ithaca. New York, 2002. See, also: BELL, D. A.: «The Unrepresentable French?», in *Realities of Representation*. New York, Basingstoke, 2007, pp. 75-92. It seems that the specialists in Early Modern French history took greater interest in theoretical problems of representation than their colleagues working in the field of English history. Although there exists the work of G. R. Elton with a promising title (ELTON, G. R.: «*The Body of the Whole Realm*»; *Parliament and Representation in Medieval and Tudor England*. Charlottesville, 1969), it focuses rather on social and political realities of elections in England than on ideas and perceptions connected with representation.

2. SMITH, Th.: *De Republica Anglorum: A Discourse on the Commonwealth of England*. Shannon, 1972, pp. 48-49.

every man, from the highest to the lowest, is there either in person, or by procura-
tion; therefore of right reason, every man is said to be bound by that which doth
passe from such an Assembly³.

In the most paradoxical way the same principle was formulated in the work
of John Hooker, antiquary and MP for Exeter. His words implied that a smaller
thing could embrace a bigger one.

The Parliament is the highest, cheefest, and greatest Court that is or can be within the
Realme for it consisteth of the whole Realme, which is devided into three estates...⁴.

His namesake, religious polemist John Hooker, writing on the English politi-
cal system and parliament, stated:

it is even the body of the whole realm; it consisteth of the king and of all that within
the land are subject unto him; for they all are there present, either in person or by
such as they voluntarily have derived their very personal right unto⁵.

The metaphor of parliament as an embodiment of the whole realm became a
cliche in the discourse of the parliamentary speeches and debates. Thus, in 1581
Lord Treasurer William Burghley, working on a draft for the speech of Christo-
pher Hatton, suggested him to express commons' gratitude to the Queen, who
«*summoned her whole realme* by calling her estates to gether to this parliament»⁶.
In 1598 speaker Christopher Yelverton also mentioned, that according to the
Queen's commandment «*the whole estate of [her] kingdome* (represented here by
Parliament) assembled»⁷. This commonplace took its accomplished form in the
«*Institutes*» of famous legal writer and the speaker of the House of Commons
Sir Edward Coke, according to whom parliament was identical to political body
of the realm⁸. It is mindful to emphasize that in the discourse on parliament, two

3. LAMBARDE, W.: *Archeion, or, A Discourse Upon the High Courts of Iustice In England. Composed by William Lambard, of Lincolnes Inne, Gent.* London, 1635, p. 248.

4. HOOKER, J.: «The Order and Usage how to keep a Parlemt in England in these days, collected by John Vowel alias Hooker gentleman, one of the Citizens for the Cittie of Exeter at the Parlemt holden at Westminster Anno domine Elizabethae reginae decimoTertio. 1571», in SNOW, V. F. (ed.): *Parliament in Elizabethan England. John Hooker's Order and Usage.* New Haven-London., 1977, p. 181.

5. HOOKER, R.: «The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity», in HOOKER, R.: *Works* / KEBLE, J. (ed.), 3 vols. Oxford, 1888, vol. III, pp. 408-409.

6. British Library. Lansdowne MS 104.F. 151v; HARTLEY T. E. (ed.): *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I.* Vol. II. 1584-1589. London-New York, 1995, p. 23.

7. *Proceedings*, vol. II, pp. 197-198.

8. «...the king and these three estates are the great corporation or body politick of the kingdome». COKE, E.: *The Fourth Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England. Concerning the Jurisdiction of the Courts.* Authore Edwardo Coke, Milite. J. C. London, 1797, p. 1.

well-known medieval metaphors (that of «natural body» of the realm and «body politic») mingled together and were used interchangeably. Sometimes parliament was identified with «natural body» of the commonwealth (as far as it comprised the whole nation divided into three estates)⁹. But at the same time it formed «body politic» of the «natural body» of the kingdom of England.

The theory of metaphorical presence of the whole kingdom in parliament implied that the parliamentary statutes approved by monarch, Lords and Commons, bound every one, as far as, «consent of the Parliament» was taken «to be everie mans consent»¹⁰. Almost every legal author repeated this maxim¹¹.

There was a direct connection between the theory of embodiment, idea of binding force of statute law, and the problem of responsibility of parliament men, whose main function was to produce good laws for the benefit of all and everyone. Echo of the concept of embodiment can be heard in some speeches of Elizabethan MPs, while they were reflecting on their mission. Thus, in 1601 William Hakewill speaking on the bill concerning merchants, said:

We must laye downe the respectes of our owne [persons], and put on others' and their affections ffor whom we speake, ffor they speak by us. Yf the matter which is spoken of touche the poore, then thinke me a poore man he that speaks; sometimes, he must be a lawyer, sometimes a painter, sometimes a marchante, some tymes a mean artificer¹².

In other words he suggested his colleagues to forget about their own selves and circumstances of their lives, to mobilize their imagination and literary to transmute into different persons, in order to work out just and useful laws.

Of course, the idea of representation (or delegation) in a present day sense, was not entirely alien to Elizabethans. The fact that MPs were sent to Parliament to voice the urgent needs of their local communities was often mentioned in debates. The concept of representation naturally implied that MPs should take care of their countrymen, first and foremost – of their neighbours. Speakers in the House of

9. See for example the speech of some anonymous MP concerning parliament men as members of the natural body of state. *Proceedings*, vol. I, p. 129-130.

10. SMITH, *op. cit.*, p. 49. In another place he stated that no one could disapprove parliamentary statutes, «no man can complaine, but must accommodate himself to find it good and obey it». *Idem*, p. 48.

11. See, for example Christopher Hatton's statement that «every mans consent in England is employed in the persons there assembled. *A Treatise Concerning Statutes, or Acts of Parliament and the Exposition threof. Written by Sir Christopher Hatton, late Lord chancellor of England*. London, 1677, p. 5. Parallels could be found in: HOOKER, J.: *Order and Usage*, p. 181; Lambarde, W.: *Archeion*, p. 245.

12. HARTLEY T. E. (ed.): *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I. Vol. III. 1593-1601*. London-New York, 1995, p. 433.

Commons used to talk verbosely about the well-being of their «fellow-subjects» committed to the MPs. Englishmen entrusted parliament men with their own lives, lives of their wives and children, their property, virtually everything they had¹³. Pathetic statements on the responsibility of MPs for the present prosperity and the well-being of their compatriots in future, became commonplaces of political language. But on the other hand, in theory MPs didn't have to follow any direct instructions or imperative mandate from their constituencies. Their relationship with electors was never described in terms of accountability. Here the impact of the theory of mystical embodiment of the whole people in Parliament is obvious, as far as the nation gathered in parliament could not possibly be accountable to itself. Following their own judgment and experience, MPs were to produce laws, beneficial for those people who had sent them to the session of Parliament, meanwhile their views on what would be reasonable and useful, might have differed over many questions. But having delegated the right «in their behalf to foresee and take ordere in and for all things necessarye»¹⁴ electors had to conform to the laws created by the collective wisdom of Parliament, this «ultimum sapientiae» as Edward Coke called it¹⁵. In practice MPs spoke rather instead their constituencies than on their behalf¹⁶.

These fundamental principles deriving from the theory of metaphorical embodiment had a profound impact on the perception of MPs' *modus operandi*. Most of the English political writers of the XVI-XVII centuries, reflecting on the role of MP, described it using the terminology of the legal profession, specifically the terms «procuration» and «advocacy»¹⁷. In court legal counsellor or attorney represented someone's interests, guided by professional knowledge and experience, not following instructions of his client, as far as lawyers knew better what would be the best strategy. Like attorneys, MPs were supposed to enjoy *plena potestas* – the full authority to act freely on behalf of their electors. The concept

13. In 1566 Speaker Richard Onslow said: «...consideringe whose mouth I am which chose me to speake for them, beinge the knightes, cittizenes and burgeses, who were not also by the comones chosen for their eloquence, but for their wisdom and discesione, by this meanes being a fitte men to whome the comones have committed the care and charge of them selves, wives and children, lands and goodes, and soe in their behalf to forsee and take ordere in and for all things necessarye...» – *Proceedings*, vol. I, p. 168.

14. *Proceedings*, vol. I, p. 168.

15. COKE, E.: *The Fourth Part of the Institutes*, p. 2-3.

16. Arthur Hall forewarned his fellow-commoners: «Your number of Parliament now you see in your house are fewe to the huge multitude of them whose consents are bounden by your agreement». «An Admonition by the Father of F.A. to him being a Burgesse of the Parliament for his better Behaviour therein», in *Miscellanea Antiqua Anglicana, or a Select Collection of Curious Tracts, Illustrative of the History, Literature, Manners and Biography of the English Nation*, vol. I. London, 1816, pp. 49-110. This quotation, p. 82.

17. See cited above: SMITH, Th.: *De Republica*, pp. 48-49; LAMBARDE, *Archeion*, p. 248.

of *plena potestas* as opposed to that of imperial mandate from the estates, local communities, social groups or professional corporations, is central to the theoretical model of representation in Early Modern England. In connection with Parliament this term appeared for the first time in 1295, when MPs were ordered to come for the session with as wide powers as possible (in order to make their electors to pay taxes, voted by parliament). By the XVI century the notion of MP as an attorney invested with *plena potestas* was widely admitted¹⁸. For example, MP in his capacity as advocate was referred to during the parliamentary session of 1592-1593 in a quite unusual context - in connection with the case of one Thomas Fitzherbert who had happened to be outlawed before he was elected to Parliament. In the debates around the legitimacy of his election professional lawyers argued that as far as the English laws did not prevent an outlaw from representing other person in court, being his attorney or executor of his will, Fitzherbert was able to seat in Parliament¹⁹.

Perception of MPs as advocates had important social consequences connected with the personnel of parliament: it sanctioned and justified the nomination of «aliens» as gentlemen of the counties or burgesses in the course of parliamentary elections. In practice, the requirement that MP should be a resident in his constituency was widely ignored in the XVI century. In 1571 a vivid discussion in the House of Commons was triggered by a bill, submitted by some anonymous author who proposed to cancel the obsolete statutes of Henry V and Henry VI which prescribed the towns and boroughs to send to Parliament only their residents. In the polemics two polar opposite opinions were set forth. One group of orators defended the residency requirement as a necessary barrier against the clients of mighty magnates who occupied parliamentary seats owing to the pressure of their patrons on the poor and scarcely populated towns. Their opponents made emphasis on the ability of «aliens» (in many cases wealthy gentlemen, or lawyers with good political connections at court), to render better service to small boroughs than their humble residents, although the latter knew the local situation better. The theory of «procurator» can be easily found behind their arguments. One of the speakers, lawyer F. Alford offered a palliative: of two representatives chosen in the town, one should have been a local dweller or a gentleman from

18. More on this subject see in: EDWARDS, J. G.: «The Plena Potestas of English Parliamentary Representation», in: FRYDE E. B., MILLER E. (eds.): *Historical Studies of the English Parliament*, 2 vols. Cambridge, 1970, vol. I, pp. 136-149; PAYLING, S. J.: «County Parliamentary Elections in Fifteenth-Century England», *Parliamentary History*, vol. 18, pt. 3, 1999, pp. 237-259. Here p. 239; ELTON, G. R.: «*The Body of the Whole Realm*», p. 26; DEAN, D. V., JONES, N. L.: *The Parliaments of Elizabethan England*. Oxford, 1980, pp. 2-4; JONES, N.: «Parliament and the Political Society of Elizabethan England», in HOAK, D. (ed.): *Tudor Political Culture*. Cambridge, 1995, pp. 226-242.

19. D'EWES, S.: *The Journals of All the Parliaments during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, both of the House of Lords and House of Commons*. London, 1682, p. 480.

the neighborhood, while another could have been «alien» - learned, independent and capable of delivering his thoughts in public. Together they would be as wise prophet Moses and his young energetic brother Aaron²⁰.

Thomas Norton, an authoritative MP and well-known «man-of-business» of the Privy Council²¹, took part in the abovementioned discussion and supported the bill. He also focused on social and intellectual dimensions of the problem –the quality and capacities of chosen representatives. As far as their primary function was to serve both– the commonwealth, and the local communities, the best and wisest should have been chosen with no regard to the formal residential qualification²². These debates demonstrated that in many cases Elizabethan MPs were ready (at least in theory) to admit the priority of public interests and needs of the commonwealth over local ones²³. Hence – the notion that MP should have been an independent individual of high social status and abilities, acting rather as a commonwealth man than as a mouth piece of local community.

A coherent and explicitly set forth theory of representation, as well as an elaborate concept of a model MP could hardly be found in the English texts of the XVI c. But as we've already seen reflections on this theme were scattered in various political and legal treatises. Elements of such theory can be traced in the discourse of parliamentary debates, they were also present in the «acts of speech» of the highest officials of the Crown as well as of rank-and-file MPs. It would be interesting to explore political language of various orators in order to reconstruct their notion of an accomplished parliamentary man, and to see whether the views acceptable to the authorities and to MPs themselves were essentially similar or there was some difference in their interpretations.

The structure of parliamentary rituals –official speeches of lord chancellors at the opening ceremonies of the sessions, elections of speakers in the House of Commons, their disabling speeches at the presentation to the monarch in the House of Lords, ritual approval of candidates by the sovereign– all these

20. «And for the choice of townes men hee sayd hee was of this mynd, that Moyses and Aaron should be conioyned together and that there should bee one of their owne, or some gentleman neere them who had knowledge of the state of the country, and the other a man learned and able to utter the mynd of his opinion» *Proceedings*, vol. I, p. 230.

21. G. Elton thought that this bill was approved by the Privy Council. ELTON, G. R.: *The Parliament of England 1559-81*, Cambridge, 1986, p. 227.

22. «...the choice should be of such which were able and fit soe greate a place, without respect or priviledge of place, for that by reason of his beinge a burgesse it might not bee intended hee was any thinge the wiser. Withall be argued that the whole body of the realme and good service of the same was rather to be respected then the private regard of place or priviledge of any person» *Proceedings*, vol. I. 1558-1581. Leicester, 1981, pp. 225-226.

23. As an example, see the words of Arthur Hall who stated that the main goal of MPs was the well-being of their country. HALL, A.: *Admonition*, p. 87.

ceremonial occasions provided many opportunities to utter opinions on the mission, as well as on social, intellectual and moral qualifications of members of parliament.

It would be an exaggeration to say that lord chancellors (or lord keepers), who served as «the mouth of the Queen» and delivered words on her behalf²⁴, spoke much on this subject, but one could reconstruct a portrait of an ideal member of parliament based on their statements. First and foremost this person should have been a confessor of true religion, pious, loyal to the Queen and the commonwealth, and possess such cardinal «properties» as wisdom and discretion. According to Lord Keeper Nicholas Bacon, such were the chief qualities of the Queen's subjects which she took into account when decided to call the parliament in 1559 in order to discuss with them some weighty matters of state²⁵. His successors also invariably made emphasis on MPs' fidelity and love to the Queen – their Sovereign Lady.

«Election» of speakers was an important step in constituting the House of Commons as a self-dependent body. All the stages of this ceremony (nomination, first and second disabling speeches by nominee) brought to focus the status, professional qualifications, intellectual abilities and civic virtues of the candidate, this «crème de crème» of the MPs, who was to become an intermediary in their communication with the Queen and the Lords. In a sense speaker was to be a model parliament man – «elect» among those who themselves were «the chosen members» of the realm²⁶. The purpose of his disabling speeches was to demonstrate through ritual self-humiliation his outstanding oratory talents, his command of rhetoric and various «political languages» (those of scholastics, classical humanism, law, medicine and other professional jargons), although some of the orators stated that eloquence was not the most important feature for parliament man²⁷.

24. Traditionally the Queen addressed members of parliament as «her trustie and wel beloved knights and burgesses», «loving subiects of her common howse». *Proceedings*, vol. I, pp. 40-41.

25. «Reposing her selfe not a little in your fidelities, wisdoms and discretions, [the Queen] meaneth not at this tyme to make any resolution in any matter of weight before it shel be by you sufficiently and fully debated, examined and considered» *Proceedings*, vol. I, p. 34.

26. In 1572 Speaker Robert Bell stated: «It behooveth such person to be wise, learned, discrete, grave and temperat, and also to have ability of living to carrie the countenance of that vocation». *Proceedings*, vol. III, p. 338. See also the speech of Fransis Knowles on the same matter: *Proceedings*, vol. I, p. 337. In 1598 G. controller of the Royal Household William Knowles said that speaker should be «wise and learned, sycret, circumspect, pious and loyal» *Proceedings*, vol. III, p. 227. See also the speech of William Knowles in 1601 to the same effect: *Proceedings*, vol. III, p. 300.

27. In 1566 speaker Onslow stated that as far as members of the lower house were «chosen by the plaine commones it is necessary they elect a plaine Speaker fit for the plaine matter, and therefore well provided at the firste to have such a one as shall use plaine words, and not either so fine that they cannot be understood or else so elloquent that nowe and then they mise the cushen». *Proceedings*, vol. I, p. 168. Another MP, Arthur Hall wrote in his treatise, that he was «not expecting

Most statements nominees made concerning themselves were far from being flattering and constituted a long catalogue of their imperfections and disabilities, or as Christopher Yelverton said in 1597 – «anatomy of his wantes»²⁸. But there were some personal qualities of which candidates spoke invariably in a positive way – their undoubted loyalty to the Queen, love to their country, selflessness and readiness to work for the sake of the Commonwealth²⁹.

Disabling themselves candidates at the same time highly praised «the most noble and grave assembly» of the House of Commons³⁰ which had nominated them as speakers (although undeservedly). Glorification of the fellow-commoners was a recurrent theme in the nominee's speeches³¹. In fact speakers' ritual humiliation had direct connection with collective self-appraisal of the House of Commons as a corporate body politic, and played a key role in its public representation. Thus, Speaker John Croke in 1601 praised:

this great and honourable body, whereof some for their excellling vertues and worthiness worthily called to the government and to sit at the highest sterne of our state, in general the choice and selected knightes, citizens and burgesses of this land, among whom many great and grave and famous learned men doe shewe themselves full of wysdome, learning and eloquence³².

One of the best parliamentary orators Edward Coke compared himself with a trembling leaf amidst ripe fruit abundant in the House of Commons

commendation by eloquence and Oratory words, rather than by substance of direct matter, reason and truth». HALL, A.: *Admonition*, p. 82.

28. *Proceedings*, vol. III, p. 189.

29. Speaker Christopher Yelverton said: «Surely as it doeth, and always hath, delighted me to performe any service to this House, or any benefit to my country (to the which I dow vowe every droppe of bloud in my body)». *Proceedings*, vol. III, p. 209. In the same situation speaker Thomas Williams proclaimed: «I am bounden and will not onelie praye for your Highnes, but also serve your Majestie and my country to my power in the place of a citizen, whereunto first I was elected and appointed». *Proceedings*, vol. I, p. 73. Edward Croke formulated the same ideas in the following way: «But how soever I know myself the meanest and inferior to all that ever were before me in this place, yet in faithfulness of service and dutifulness of love I thinke nott myself inferior to anie that ever were before me», *Proceedings*, vol. III, p. 65. Speaker John Croke said that his hesitations had nothing to do with «any sliding backe from the service of your Majestie and my cuntry from which my harte shall never slide», *Proceedings*, vol. III, p. 258.

30. According to Thomas Cromwell's journal for 1572, speaker Robert Bell said: «The assemblie in this place as being a member of the highest courte in this realm, ought to be and is most grave, and therefore is looked for at your hands to make such choice as is most fitt, off which sorte he knoweth a great sorte amongst this company». *Proceedings*, vol. I, p. 337.

31. See the words of speaker Williams, Onslow, Wray and Croke, *Proceedings*, vol. I, p. 73, 126; 244; *Proceedings*, vol. III, p. 257.

32. *Proceedings*, vol. III, p. 283.

How unable I am to doe this office my present speech doth tell, of a number in this House the most unfit. For amongst them are manie grave, manie lerned, manie deepe wise men, and those of ripe judgments; but I an untimely frute not yet ripe, nay but a budd scares fullie blossomed, so as I feare your Majestie will say «Neclecta frugeligantur folia» – amongst soe manie fair frutes ye hav plucked a shaking leafe³³.

In the course of the presentation to the Queen in the House of Lords nominee delivered his second disabling speech which invariably contained panegyric to all members of the House of Commons. At this point the Queen denied his request to spare him of the high office referring to the collective wisdom of commoners who had elected such an apt candidate as their speaker. On her behalf Lord Chancellor praised members of the House of Commons as

wise, sage and discreete knights and burgesses, to whose iudgement and opinion her Highnes thinketh it meete and conveniente for her to have great regarde and give much credit and faith³⁴.

To sum up – in the course of the opening ceremony of parliamentary session and accompanying speeches much had been said on the mission of MPs, their Christian and civic virtues, social and intellectual qualities. There was an obvious consonance in the ways these virtues were described «from above» –by leading officials of the state, and «from below»– by the members of the House of Commons. In both cases the catalogue of MP's merits included piety, fidelity to the Queen, gravity, wisdom and discretion. But commoners added to the portrait of an exemplary MP some other shades, i.e. learning, eloquence, loyalty to the commonwealth, experience, social and professional competency.

Now let us turn from the opening ceremonies to the everyday work of MPs and debates on various problems which added new, and sometimes disturbing overtones to the harmonious concert of the crown and its subjects in debates which touched upon the main functions of Parliament. Traditionally this institution was regarded as the High Council³⁵ of the Realm and the High Court of Justice³⁶. Notion of MPs as the councilors to English monarchs and judges was an important element of their self-identity. In many cases discord was caused

33. *Proceedings*, vol. III, p. 65.

34. *Proceedings*, vol. I, p. 40-41. In 1563 Г. The Queen said to the speaker: «she cannot disable you...for that the wise knightes, cittisens and burgesses have nominated and chosen you». *Idem*, p. 73. In 1567 she called members of the House of Commons «learned and expert men». *Idem*, p. 127. In 1571 the Queen put it in the following way: «as so many wyse expert and greate men had upon good consideracions made choyse of him, she wold not so frustrate and dyscredytt their doings», *Proceedings*, vol. I, p. 244.

35. D^{EWES}, S.: *Journals*, p. 524; *Proceedings*, vol. III, p. 185, 258.

36. *Proceedings*, vol. I, p. 33, 337; vol. II, p. 414, vol. III, p. 185.

by controversies over interpretations of political functions of parliament by the crown and MPs, and by what the Queen regarded as their intrusion in the sphere of Royal prerogative. In his «Order and Usage» John Hooker wrote that parliament man should be

of such audacitie as bothe canne and will boldely utter and speak his minde according to duty, and as occation shall serve, for no man ought to be silent or dum in that house, but according to his talent hee must and ought to speak in the furtheraunce of the King and common welth³⁷.

This concept also implied that parliament men had to possess wisdom, gravity, consistence and loyalty. Status of judges added to this list impartiality and justice.

Such categories becoming platitude, gifted parliamentary orators searched for fresh metaphors to express the same ideas. A man of highly individual political language, Edward Coke turned to Aristotle's «Historia animalium» as a source of inspiration and compared good MP to an elephant.

It appears in a parliament roll, that the parliament being, as hath been said, called *commune concilium*, every member of the house being a counsellor, should have three properties of the elephant; first that he hath no gall³⁸: secondly, that he is inflexible, and cannot bow: thirdly, that he is of the most ripe and perfect memory: which properties, as there it is said, ought to be in every of the great councill of parliament. First, to be without gall, that is without malice, rancor, heat and envy, *in elephante melancholia transit in nutrimentum corporis*. Every gallish inclination (if any were) should tend to the good of the whole body, the common wealth. Secondly, that he be constant, inflexible, and not to be bowed, or turned from the right, either for fear, reward, or favour, not in judgement respect any person. Thirdly, of a ripe memory, that they remembering perils past, might prevent dangers to come... Whereunto we will adde two other properties of the elephant, the one, that though they be *maximae virtutis, et maximi intellectus*, of greatest strength and understanding, *tamen gragatim simper incedunt*, yet they are sociable, and goe in companies; for *animalia gregalia non sunt nociva, sed animalia soli vaga sunt nociva*. Sociable creatures that goe in flocks or heards are not hurtfull, as deer, sheep, &c. but beasts that walk solely, or singularly, as bears, foxes, &c. are dangerous and hurtfull. The other that elephant is *philantropos, homini errant viam ostendit*,³⁹ and these properties ought every parliament man to have⁴⁰.

37. HOOKER, J.: *The Order and Usage*, p. 151.

38. According to Aristotle elephants had no gall.

39. Elephant is 'philanthropic and shows the way to those who had lost it'.

40. COCKE, E.: *The Fourth Part of the Institutes*, p. 3.

Noteworthy also was Coke's marginal note alluding to Virgil, which emphasized the inflexibility of parliament man, who would yield neither to «people's fascias, nor to king's scarlett» (Ilum non populi fasces, non purpura regum flexit).

«Inflexibility» of MP and his «unwillingness to bow» in Coke's text bore witness to the fact that there was a conspicuous shift in political language caused by controversies between the Queen and the Lower House of parliament on several important political questions, namely the problems of succession, Queen's marriage, religious policy, further reformation of the Church of England, measures against «godly» puritan clergy, etc. By the end of the century the most annoying problems for MPs were those of economic and financial nature – monopolies and heavy taxation. It is well-known that Elizabeth in the most unequivocal manner prohibited MPs to discuss these matters. But the limitation of freedom of speech (regarded as ancient parliamentary privilege⁴¹) caused further tensions between the Queen and the House of Commons⁴². Under such conditions traditional virtues ascribed to MPs acquired new meaning and significance. Such famous orators as Paul and Peter Wentworth thought that their duty as councillors was to tell the truth to rulers, even if it might have inflicted on them royal anger and persecution. In 1576 Peter Wentworth sharply criticized the Queen's policy, justifying his boldness by his duty as a true subject and good Christian man. He tried to persuade the colleagues that they could «follow not the prince's mind», reminding them of their duty before God, their commonwealth and monarch, especially if the latter had chosen the wrong way.

Solomon sayth the king's displeasure is a messenger of death. This is a terrible thing to the weake nature of frayle flesh. Why so? For who is able to abyde the feare countenance of his prince? But if we will discharge our consciences and be true to God, our prince and state we must have due consideration of the place and the occasion of our coming together, and especially have regard unto the matter, wherein we shall both serve God and our prince and state faithfully and not dissembling as eye pleasers, and soe justly avoid all displeasures both to God and our prince. For Solomon sayth in the way of the righteous there is life; as for any other way, it is the path to death. Soe that to avoid everlasting death and condemnicion with the high and mighty God we ought to proceed in every cause according to the matter and not according to the prince's mynde... Many times it falls out that the prince

41. Christopher Yelverton considered the privilege of free speech one of the most important features of English political system. «...we esteeme nothing more deare, nor more tender, in our affections then the uncontrolled libertie your Highness hath vouchsafed your subjects in the free debatinge of the matters of this great councill», *Proceedings*, vol. III, p. 204-205.

42. See for example, the questions about the limitation of freedom of speech, which Paul Wentworth asked in connection with the problem of succession in 1567: *Proceedings*, vol. I, p. 154. For the famous questions Peter Wentworth formulated on the privileges of Parliament as the Great Council see: *Proceedings*, vol. II, p. 321-322.

may favour a cause perilous to himselfe and the whole state. What are we then if we follow the prince's minde? Are we not unfaithful to God, our prince and state? Yes, truely, for wee are chosen of the whole realme of a special trust and confidence by them reposed in us to forsee all such inconveniences⁴³.

Owing to the «godly» MPs, people of «puritan» minds, who heavily used biblical language in their arguments in the catalogue of MPs civic virtues, wisdom and discretion gave way to such merits as true belief, independent judgment, courage, self-denial. Not all of MPs were ready to follow the example of these ardent parliamentary tribunes, but many shared their views on vocation of commonwealth men and councilors.

Intertwined with the concept of Parliament as the Great Council, was the idea of its identity with the Roman Senate. Comparison of MPs with senators of ancient Rome was a recurrent theme in parliamentary texts and speeches and a characteristic feature of collective self-identity of Elizabethan MPs formed under the influence of Renaissance culture and humanist educational curriculum with its emphasis on classical tradition and rhetoric of ciceronian republicanism⁴⁴. Roman Senate served as an archetype of council and noble assembly of the worthiest and wisest commonwealth men, no wonder that Elizabethan MPs were looking for the flattering parallels between Parliament and Senate. These analogies can be found in the work of John Hooker, who saw Parliament as a direct descendant of the Senate introduced to Britain by Romans. In his «Order and Usage» he praised the manner of ancient Greeks and Romans to carefully select their ephores and senators and argued that early English kings had adopted the same tradition of choosing the gravest, wisest and most experienced persons to their Parliaments.

The order...among the Romains was that none should be received or allowed to be of their Senate house: unlesse he were grave in yeeres, and wel experienced in common affaires of the publique wealth. The Lacademonians admitted none to be an Ephorus amongst them: but that he were a tried man for knowledge and experience. The Athenians would be assured that he should be wise and lerned, that should be of their counseil. The like order also was and is within this Realm, the same being derived and taken chiefly from emong the Romains, emong and under whome: divers of thold and ancient Kings of this Realm have ben bred and brought up... These

43. *Proceedings*, vol. I, p. 427-428.

44. On reception of classical rhetoric tradition and circulation of ideas of classical republicanism in Early Modern England see: COLLINSON, P.: «The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I», *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 69, 1987, pp. 394-424; VICKERS, B. W.: *Classical Rhetoric in English Poetry*. London-New York, 1970; HOWELL, W. S.: *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700*. Princeton. 1956; *Idem: Poetics, Rhetoric and Logic*. Ithaca-London, 1975; BAKER-SMITH, D.: «Renaissance and Reformation», in FORD B. (ed.): *The Cambridge Cultural History of Britain*, vol. 3. The Sixteenth-Century Britain. Cambridge. 1992. p. 5-8.

good Kings and Princes...finding this land by disordered life, lawless libertie, and lose behavior to be brought to an utter ruin...after many devises, consultations and attempts for redresse, no way could be found so good...as to erect and establish a Senate of the moste grave, wise and expert personages of the whole Realm, called by the name of a Parliament. For...the best order of government of the common welth: proceedeth always from thold and ancient Senators, which are reputed and taken to be the fathers of the common wealth. For as fathers for their Children: so these for the common welth are moste careful and tender⁴⁵.

Addressing the question of the qualities of MPs he prescribed that

in choice of the Knights, Citizens and Burgesses: none be chosen which are straungers to the commonwealth, yung of yeeres, weke of discretion, and timerose to speak: but such as are grave, wise, and ancient, and expert, fearing God, dealing truly, according to the auncient orders, lawdable customes and prescribed laws of this Realm⁴⁶.

Arthur Hall also compared Parliament, which created new statutes and annulled obsolete laws, to Roman Senate and moreover – Rome itself, pathetically calling Parliament «this Rome of enacting and disannulling»⁴⁷. In the same edifying manner his colleagues referred to Senate on various occasions. Thus, in 1589 speaker Christopher Yelverton asked the Queen to pardon commoners in case «anyone of that senate might offer any conceipt of offence» to the Crown while speaking *impromptu* in debates⁴⁸. As far as it was Roman senator who embodied the classical ideal of active and conscious politician, ciceronian «vir bonus», Elizabethan MPs liked to try on roman togas too. Speakers of the House of Commons were often called «consuls» or «prolocutors»⁴⁹. In the course of debates on weighty matters commoners urged their colleagues to be true senators, as did Palmer, MP from London, who spoke in favor of a bill aimed against foreign merchants and asked his fellow commoners to take care of their native country and to be «Patres Patriae», or Roman «Patres conscripti» for their poor neighbours⁵⁰. There was no better praise to living MP or epitaph to the diseased one than to mention that he had been a senator in many Parliaments, as was written in the collection of epitaphs dedicated to Edward Lewkenor, a well-known justice of the peace from Sussex and active parliament man⁵¹. To sum up – Renaissance fascination

45. HOOKER, J.: *Order and Usage*, pp. 116-117.

46. *Idem*, p. 125.

47. *Idem*, p. 82.

48. *Proceedings*, vol. III, p. 204.

49. See, for example: *Proceedings*, vol. III, p. 459, D'EWES, S.: *Journals*, p. 677.

50. D'EWES, S.: *Journals*, p. 508.

51. «...the state hath lost a senator in many Parliaments» in *Threnodia in Obitum D. Edouardi Lewkenor*. London, 1608, p. 50.

with ancient Rome and the use of humanist rhetoric added to the portrait of an accomplished English parliament man a nice classical finish, turning him into a toga-clad Roman citizen.

English parliament was one of few representative bodies which had been summoned by monarchs throughout the Early Modern Period without considerable caesura. Alongside its activity and institutional development, the formulation of theoretical views (no matter how conceptually coherent they were) on the principles of representation was a sign of maturity and sophistication of the English parliamentary system. The notion of a model MP was an integral part of the theory of representation. Central to the latter was the concept of metaphorical embodiment of the whole realm of England in parliament, which to a great extent determined interpretations of the mission and functions, as well as social, moral and intellectual qualifications of MPs. They were perceived as attorneys invested with *plena potestas*, councillors of the Great Council of the Realm, judges of the High Court of Parliament, responsible for the well-being of the commonwealth, whose decisions bound all and everyone. To fulfill this mission MP should have been an independent rationally-thinking actor, guided by his wisdom, experience and mixed loyalty to God the crown and commonwealth. Not bound by any imperative mandate of his constituency, he was supposed to take care of his local community as well as of the common wealth of England as a whole. The image of a good MP embodied political and moral ideal of Elizabethan age – grave, wise, discreet (virtues most agreeable to the Queen), independent, learned, eloquent and competent (characteristics preferable to MPs themselves). In parliamentary debates the language of Scripture and that of classical humanism intertwined and were equally employed to inspire and encourage MP, who ought to be a good Christian ready to scarify his life for the sake of true faith, and a Roman citizen – ciceronian orator, «*vir bonus*», senator and «*pater patriae*». Both religious and civic moral values, ideals of classical republicanism shaped the ideology of commonwealth men, which was crucial for the self-identity of MPs and political culture of Elizabethan age.

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OLGA VLADÍMIROVNA DMÍTRIEVA
THE THEORY OF REPRESENTATION AND THE CONCEPT OF IDEAL MEMBER
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