

# Nuova Rivista Storica

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## Abstracts

LUCIO VALENT, «We are with Europe, but not of it». Alcune note sull'antieuropismo britannico

*No other historical topic is debatable and disputed as the British anti-European sentiment. Today, with the Brexit going on its (although difficult) way, it has attracted a loads of books, book's chapters and scientific articles, and – on a broader basis – the public opinion's attention. Usually, on the daily debate on newspapers and social media, anti-Europeanism and Euro-scepticism are confused as synonymous, while the latter normally is the today transformation of a long cultural tradition represented by the former.*

*This article will try to analyse the British anti-Europeanism, on a long-period basis, from the start of the XVIII Century (the accession to the British throne of the Hannover Family) up to the referendum of 2016. In my study, I will try to reasoning on the cultural roots of this phenomenon; and I will particularly emphasise how this feelings sprang from (or were deeply influenced by) religious prejudices, nurtured by early modern events that characterised the life in the Isles (Reformation, Civil War). We will see how the confrontation between the British political, cultural and religious traditions and the European ones deeply shaped the idea of what the Continent was in British society: a cradle of iniquity caused by different forms of absolutism, nurtured by Catholic tradition. Then, the article will go on in studying the XIX Century's environment. Throughout the decades it will be possible to appreciate, firstly, the blossoming of hopes that Europe would transform itself in a more liberal-democratic area, in the first part of the Century; and then the slow but steady makeover of the British anti-Catholicism into anti-militarism and anti-authoritarianism. They were the backlashes of Germany's rise to the position as regional leading power, which characterised the last quarter of the Century. The British elites and popular reactions will be taken into account, up to the start of the First World War. In its last part, the article will go on with an in-depth analysis of the British elites' and public opinion's attitude towards Europe up to the Brexit referendum. The confrontation between the British liberal-democratic tradition and the European fascination to totalitarian projects will be taken into account as well as the post-Second War experience. Perhaps a long but an easy leap, thanks to which it will be possible to understand how much the recent perceptions of the Continent intertwined with the inherited anti-Europeanism in shaping a singular but solid Euro-scepticism which has tarnished bilateral relations, and has made the British-European cooperation a story of political cooperation or contraposition, of cultural understanding or misunderstanding, of misused social relations.*

Keywords:

*British Anti-Europeanism*

*British Culture*

*Brexit*