This book boasts to be the ‘first general and comprehensive treatment of the political thought of ancient Greece and Rome ever to be published in English’. It seems to me to be significant that the more general term ‘thought’ was chosen for the title in preference to ‘philosophy’. While it concentrates on authors noted for the writing of philosophy, it is by no means confined to them, and like so much else that deals with ancient Greece, it takes Homer as its starting point. After a chapter entitled ‘Greek political thought: the historical context’ by Paul Cartledge, Kurt Raaflaub examines ‘Poets, lawgivers, and the beginnings of political reflection in archaic Greece’, beginning with sections on the relation of political thought to the polis and to archaic poetry, and taking us through Homer, Hesiod, and other poets to Solon and beyond. As an early Athenian poet and law-giver Solon is particularly important for the fact that he loomed large in the minds of successive generations of Athenians. The chapter goes on to consider other law-givers, early philosophers, and near-eastern parallels. Already we know that ancient political thought is seen as something that lives on for generations across a range of Greek communities, not something that flowers with Plato and withers after Aristotle. Political thought is seen rightly as something central to the history of that world.

Greek tragedy, or rather Athenian tragedy (for that is what we possess), may also be intensely political, written and performed for an audience intently conscious of their own political rights, duties, and heritage. Where Theseus appears on stage, for instance, we may expect a distinctly political message. Simon Goldhill covers such matters as the clash of state and the individual in Sophocles’ Antigone and the political dimensions of Aeschylus’ Oresteia. Comedy is treated more briefly, with curiously little attention paid to the alternative political arrangements of Aristophanes’ Assembly-Women. Even when watching comedy, the Athenians remained highly politically aware. One criticism of the comedy section is that it does not appear to have been indexed: there is no entry on Aristophanes, let alone most of his plays.
We have not yet arrived at Plato, for first come four chapters on ‘Herodotus, Thucydides and the Sophists’ by Richard Winton; on Democritus by Christopher Taylor; on the Orators by Josiah Ober; and on Xenophon and Isocrates by Vivienne Gray. Even when Plato and his own peculiar version of Socrates arrive we are treated to several chapters: ‘Socrates and Plato: an introduction’ by Melissa Lane; ‘Socrates’ by T. M. Penner; ‘Approaching the Republic’ by Malcolm Schofield; ‘The Politics [a favourite of his] and other dialogues’ by Christopher Rowe; ‘The Laws’ by André Laks (much noted for his recent studies of this work, and lighter in style and content than much of what the late Trevor Saunders has contributed); ‘Plato and practical politics’ by Malcolm Schofield; and finally ‘Clitophon and Minos’ by Christopher Rowe—for though generally taken to be spurious, this in no way affects their potential interest as works of political thought.

Eventually we reach Aristotle, with an introductory chapter from Schofield, and others on naturalism by Fred Miller, on justice by Jean Roberts, and on constitutions by Rowe. Miller includes material on education and on the household (oikos). They are followed by one on the Peripatos (Aristotle’s school) after his death, while leads naturally on to the Hellenistic philosophies—not, however, before the Hellenistic world has been formally introduced by Peter Garnsey. Some Hellenistic material is organised according to Schools of Thought, with the cynics tackled by John Moles and both Epicureans and Stoics by Schofield; but David Hahn deals with kingship and the constitutions in Hellenistic philosophy (including the important historian Polybius), E.M. Atkins deals with Cicero as a political thinker (and rather more), Thomas Wiedemann brings in materials from Roman historians, and Miriam Griffin tackles Seneca and Pliny.

We are now confronting a period when honesty in political philosophy becomes increasingly dangerous, and straightforward political thought becomes unfashionable. Bruno Centrone deals with Platonism and Pythagoreanism during this period, bringing in Philo of Alexandria (once called a Pythagorean by Clement of Alexandria)
and Plutarch into what otherwise would have been rather a thin chapter. The direction taken by Neoplatonism can perhaps be best understood by reflecting on the fact that most of its famous adherents (Plotinus, Porphyry, Proclus) fail to appear in the index. The place of politics in the Neoplatonist life might best be appreciated from a reading of Olympiodorus *On the Gorgias* or Proclus *On the Republic*, works past the target period (to c. AD 350), but ones which offer insights into third century developments. There follow chapters of Josephus (by Tessa Rajak: interesting material, but how Greek?), imperial stoicism (by Christopher Gill), the Jurists (by David Johnston), early christian writers (Frances Young), before an epilogue (by Schofield) that enables the work to conclude with the seemingly pivotal figure of Augustine. It is difficult, however, to find in this period any writer of political thought who is *politically* interesting. With the *City of God* politics has effectively removed itself from the political sphere, as in much else that belongs to the Roman imperial period.

The cover-note speaks of an ‘international team of distinguished scholars’ including ‘historians of law, politics, culture and religion, and also philosophers’. The work has a comprehensiveness which makes it a vital tool of reference, but many of its contributions go much further than that, offering important insights into the political thinking that was bequeathed to us by the Greeks and Romans. I have delayed this review, since I taught a course on Greek and Roman Political Thought this year (largely confined to Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus and Cicero), and I have been able to test out the work’s usefulness for my own purposes and for those of my students. It was the first volume to be confined to our ‘Short Loans’ collection, ensuring ready access by all students, and essay bibliographies demonstrated that it had been regularly consulted. I personally found the possession of a work of this kind invaluable. It did not always provide the strictly philosophic insights that were occasionally needed, but it never lacked for something to say about matters that were incidentally raised. The book will be widely used by readers of *The European Legacy*, to whose concerns it is central.

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