



Roman Political Thought and the Modern Theoretical Imagination (Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture Series)

Dean Hammer

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Links modern political theorists with the Romans who inspired them

Roman contributions to political theory have been acknowledged primarily in the province of law and administration. Even with a growing interest among classicists in Roman political thought, most political theorists view it as merely derivative of Greek philosophy.

Focusing on the works of key Roman thinkers, Dean Hammer recasts the legacy of their political thought, examining their imaginative vision of a vulnerable political world and the relationship of the individual to this realm. By bringing modern political theorists into conversation with the Romans who inspired them—Arendt with Cicero, Machiavelli with Livy, Montesquieu with Tacitus, Foucault with Seneca—the author shows how both ancient Roman and modern European thinkers seek to recover an attachment to the political world that we actually inhabit, rather than to a utopia—a “perfect nowhere” outside of the existing order.

Brimming with fresh interpretations of both ancient and modern theorists, this book offers provocative reading for classicists, political scientists, and anyone interested in political theory and philosophy. It is also a timely meditation on the hidden ways in which democracy can give way to despotism when the animating spirit of politics succumbs to resignation, cynicism, and fear.

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