

TIME, HISTORY, AND POLITICAL THOUGHT

Between the cliché that ‘a week is a long time in politics’ and the aspiration of many political philosophers to give their ideas universal, timeless validity lies a gulf which the history of political thought is uniquely qualified to bridge. For what the history of political thought shows is that no conception of politics has dispensed altogether with time, and many have explicitly sought legitimacy in association with forms of history. Ranging from Justinian’s law codes to rival Protestant and Catholic visions of political community after the Fall, from Hobbes and Spinoza to the Scottish Enlightenment, and from Kant and Savigny to the legacy of German Historicism and the Algerian Revolution, this volume explores multiple ways in which different conceptions of time and history have been used to understand politics since late antiquity. Bringing together leading contemporary historians of political thought, *Time, History, and Political Thought* demonstrates just how much both time and history have enriched the political imagination.

John Robertson is Professor Emeritus of the History of Political Thought at the University of Cambridge and Honorary Professor of the History of Political Thought at the University of St Andrews. Previously he taught at Oxford, and he has held visiting appointments in the United States, Italy, France and China. He is a Foreign Member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, Naples. His publications include *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples 1680–1760* (2005), *The Enlightenment: A Very Short Introduction* (2015) and, as editor, *A Union for Empire: Political Thought and the Union of 1707* (1995) and *Andrew Fletcher: Political Works* (1997).

Time, History, and Political Thought

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looked beyond them to directions in which the conference theme might be taken in future. As chairs and in other ways, Sophie Lunn-Rockliffe, Annabel Brett, Richard Serjeantson, Tom Pye, Duncan Kelly, Kenzie Bok, Charlotte Johann, Eloise Davies and Hester van Hensbergen provided the conference with leadership and co-ordination throughout. Around 100 conference delegates provided the best of audiences, repeatedly asking questions relevant and constructive; I am particularly grateful to those who travelled a distance to be there, among them Elsbeth Heaman, Paschalis Kitromilides, Li Hongtu, and Shannon Stimson. Conference organisation was made much easier and more enjoyable by many staff in both Clare College and the Cambridge History Faculty. Finally, and not least, funding which made the conference possible was provided by the Cambridge Centre for Political Thought and the Faculty of History's Trevelyan Fund. I am very grateful to both, and especially to David Runciman, benefactor as well as first Director of the Centre.

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Precisely because of the extent and depth of my debts, however, it is all the more essential to state that responsibility for shortcomings in what I myself have contributed to the volume, and for all editorial decisions, is mine alone.

¹ As also the volume which ensued: Annabel Brett, Megan Donaldson and Martti Koskenniemi, eds., *History, Politics, Law. Thinking through the International* (Cambridge, 2021).

Note on References and the Bibliography

Footnote references for each chapter provide full details of author, title, place and date of publication at first mention, thereafter author surname and short title only. Unless otherwise indicated, the final numbers are page references (without p. or pp); where there may be ambiguity, p. or pp. are inserted. All references are then collected in the unified Bibliography, which also provides the name of the publisher, where identified.

Within the Bibliography are listed many of the works – books, collaborative volumes and articles – which have inspired or made important contributions to the current discussion of the roles of history and the significance of temporality in the study of politics. But the Bibliography is not comprehensive in its coverage of this literature, an ambition which would have required a separate research exercise – and would almost immediately have become out of date.