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978-1-107-01743-6 - French Liberalism from Montesquieu to the Present Day

Edited by Raf Geenens and Helena Rosenblatt

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## FRENCH LIBERALISM FROM MONTESQUIEU TO THE PRESENT DAY

There is an enduring assumption that the French have never been and will never be *liberal*. As with all clichés, this one contains a grain of truth, but it also overlooks an important school of thought that has been a constant presence in French intellectual and political culture for nearly three centuries: French political liberalism. In this collaborative volume, a distinguished group of philosophers, political theorists and intellectual historians uncover this unjustly neglected tradition. The chapters examine the nature and distinctiveness of French liberalism, providing a comprehensive treatment of major themes including French liberalism's relationship with republicanism, Protestantism, utilitarianism and the human rights tradition. Individual chapters are devoted to Montesquieu, Tocqueville, Aron, Lefort and Gauchet, as well as to some lesser-known, yet important, thinkers, including several political economists and French-style 'neoliberals'. *French Liberalism* is essential reading for all those interested in the history of political thought.

RAF GEENENS is a postdoctoral researcher at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, where he also lectures on ethics and the history of natural law. His research, as a member of the Leuven-based research group RIPPLE, concerns contemporary models of democracy as well as the history of continental political philosophy. He is the co-editor of *Reading Tocqueville. From Oracle to Actor* (2007) and *Does Truth Matter? Democracy and Public Space* (2009), and is preparing a monograph on contemporary French philosopher Claude Lefort.

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