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## Editorial **Political Power and Human Nature in Ancient Thought**

Ancient reflection on political power culminated in Greek philosophy and the political and legal thought of the Roman Empire. There is a broad range of literature dedicated to both of these topics. Greek and Roman thought remain a source of inspiration for many philosophical and philosophical-political formations. The problems and questions posed by Greek philosophy, regardless of the social and cultural conditions in which they were formulated, are the foundation of European culture. Among the most important problems that we inherited from the ancient Greeks is reflection on the essence of political power, reflection on nature in general and the nature of man in particular, as well as on the issue of the political system and the nature of state law.

In the context indicated above, Greco-Roman civilization is the birthplace of democratic and republican regimes. However, it is also home to the critique of democracy, which has its source in philosophical reflection on truth and justice. To this day, critical reflection on democracy, understood both as an idea ordering social life and as a specific political system, refers, as its source, to ancient reflection. Heraclitus of Ephesus and Plato are most often cited in this context.

The history of Rome, both in its Republican and Imperial periods (the Principate and Dominate), also provides many interesting themes concerning the political system, the relationship between freedom, republicanism, and authoritarian forms of power. Let us also add that a reference to the history and political customs and institutions of ancient Rome lies at the heart of Niccolò Machiavelli's reflection, and by way of his thought – at the heart of the modern notion of

political power. It is thus impossible to overestimate the importance of reflection on Greco-Roman antiquity, which not only inspired the political thought of the Middle Ages, but also that of later periods.

Less known and popular among scholars of political thought and political philosophers are the political aspects of ancient Egyptian thought and that of the ancient Middle East – the oldest centers of civilization in our culture. In turn, the research of historians and archaeologists, which is understandable when we consider broadly-understood political issues, focuses more on the issues of the organization of state and city-state than on the intellectual context in which these systems arose. There is no doubt, however that in ancient Egyptian and Sumero-Akkadian thought there is much interesting and inspiring material, which often allows the philosopher of politics a slightly different view on certain issues. An example would be Sumero-Akkadian reflection on human nature, inscribed on the one hand within the broader context of the general question about the nature of the world and gods, and on the other touching the issue of the relationship between human nature and political power.

This issue *Horizons of Politics* addresses the problems and subject matter mentioned above. We hope that it will contribute to enriching reflection on the Greco-Roman tradition on the one hand, and on the other, lead to wider interest of political philosophers in the thought of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia.

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