Conceptual History 1

(Political theory in the age of Hellenism and in Rome in the early imperial period 2)

(lecture)

BTÖ-DK-003A

The series of lectures aims at giving a guidance through the political theories in post-classical age. It faces a specific challenge. The most prominent philosophers of the era all insist emphatically that individuals can achieve perfect happiness, the highest goal, completely on their own and under any kinds of inhospitable political conditions. This being emphasized, however, most of them did engage in genuine political philosophy. Even if one can subscribe to Isaiah Berlin's claim that the radically depoliticized outlook of Hellenistic philosophers signalled one of the most revolutionary and crucial breaks in the history of Western political thought, some of the central theses expounded in the period, such as the Stoic natural law and the Epicurean social contract, are still with us in one way or another. The political theories in the Imperial Age show

Requirement: an essay of 10.000 characters on some of issues discussed in the class, and to be presented at the end of the term.

The course:

1. The Stoics IV: The social self and the wise in the city of fools
2. Epicureans I: Happiness and communal life
3. Epicureans II: Early contractualism and justice
4. Cicero on the forms of government. The state as an organic unity
5. Cicero on the ideal state based on natural rights.
6. Authority and tyrannocyde
7. Roman liberty
8. The notion of person, legal and philosophical
9. Roman cosmopolitanism
10. Seneca’s views on politics and his notion of clemency
11. The theories of just war
12. Augustine’s political views

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Venue: D 304

Time: Monday 14:30-16.00 PM

Literature:

Atkins, J., Roman Political Thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Atkins, J. and T. Bénatouïl (eds.), 2022, The Cambridge Companion to Cicero’s Philosophy, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Balot, Ryan K., (ed.), 2010, A Companion to Greek and Roman Political Thought, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Brouwer, R., 2021, Law and Philosophy in the Late Roman Republic, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lane, M., Greek and Roman Political Ideas, Hammondsworth: Penguin, 2014.

Laurand, V., 2005, La politique stoïcienne, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Rowe, C., & M. Schofield, (eds.), 2000, The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.