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## Editorial The Reflections on the Power

“Man is by nature a political animal,” states Aristotle in his *Politics*. This thesis, which the majority of Ancient Greek philosophers would agree with (at least those preceding the Hellenistic period), brings with it important consequences.

Above all, as the Stagirite propounds, this means that logically-speaking, the state precedes the individual. The individual is necessarily subject to the state. Moreover, an individual can actualize his/her humanity only within a political community. This results from the inseparable link between two distinctive human features: politicalness (*zoon politikon*) and rationality (*zoon logikon*). The most important way to actualize rationality within a political context (and simultaneously the most important task of the state) is to decide what is just.

Very significant conclusions also arise from Aristotle’s justification of the notion of *zoon politikon*. His argument is based on an analysis that can be described as historical-structural: the state is a community that includes other, earlier communities, and these in turn form the basis of its structure. No community is autonomous vis-à-vis the state – each of them is subject to it. Politics understood this way is an overarching, autarkic whole, having precedence over both individuals and all other communities. The structuring of the political community is accomplished through deciding what is just.

At the heart of European philosophical and political reflection lies the recognition of political power as a natural and necessary, all-encompassing institution that not only “enables life, but makes it better.” However, during the Hellenistic period, with its changes to the political structure of Hellas, the notion of *zoon politikon* is called into question. Christianity, even if it does not directly question this notion, definitely weakens the aspect of the state’s encompassing all other communities. Modern political reflection both takes away its quality of being a natural institution and questions the ethical dimension of political power. The Cartesian *Cogito* then becomes the basis for questioning even the possibility of building an authentic, real community life.

So, what is political power? What is its nature? Is it true that we are political in nature and, as Aristotle suggests, only other animals or gods can live outside of the state? Does the communal nature of man necessarily have to be crowned with a political dimension? What are the possible forms of organizing political life? Is it possible to establish a form of power that would be compatible with the autonomy of the individual, with the autonomy of the various communities subjected to its rule? Beginning with this volume of *Horizons of Politics*, we are launching a series of publications whose aim it is to analyze the understanding of political power within European culture throughout history, including the reflection of ancient Egypt and the ancient Near East. The first volume submitted to the reader is meant as an introduction to the aforementioned project. In it, we would like to present an array of diverse perspectives from which to view the issue of political power, as well as a variety of methodologies used in its analysis.

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