



Intellectuals in Politics in the Greek World(Routledge Revivals): From Early Times to the Hellenistic Age

Frank Vatai

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Intellectuals in Politics in the Greek World, first published in 1984, was the first comprehensive study of this recurrent theme in political sociology with specific reference to antiquity, and led to significant reevaluation of the role of intellectuals in everyday political life.

The term 'intellectual' is carefully defined, and figures as diverse as Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle; Isocrates, Heracleides of Ponteiuss and Clearchus of Soli are discussed. The author examines the difference between the success of an intellectual politician, like Solon, and the failure of those such as Plato who attempted to mould society to abstract ideals.

It is concluded that, ultimately, most philosophers were conspicuously unsuccessful when they intervened in politics: citizens regarded them as propagandists for their rulers, while rulers treated them as intellectual ornaments. The result was that many thinkers retreated to inter-scholastic disputation where the political objects of discussion increasingly became far removed from contemporary reality.

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