



# **Citizens to Lords: A Social History of Western Political Thought from Antiquity to the Late Middle Ages**

*Ellen Meiksins Wood*

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## **Citizens to Lords: A Social History of Western Political Thought from Antiquity to the Late Middle Ages** Ellen Meiksins Wood

In this groundbreaking work, Ellen Meiksins Wood rewrites the history of political theory. She traces the development of the Western tradition from classical antiquity through to the Middle Ages in the perspective of social history—a significant departure not only from the standard abstract history of ideas but also from other contextual methods.

Treating canonical thinkers as passionately engaged human beings, Wood examines their ideas not simply in the context of political languages but as creative responses to the social relations and conflicts of their time and place. She identifies a distinctive relation between property and state in Western history and shows how the canon, while largely the work of members or clients of dominant classes, was shaped by complex interactions among proprietors, labourers and states. Western political theory, Wood argues, owes much of its vigour, and also many ambiguities, to these complex and often contradictory relations.

From the Ancient Greek polis of Plato, Aristotle, Aeschylus and Sophocles, through the Roman Republic of Cicero and the Empire of St Paul and St Augustine, to the medieval world of Averroes, Thomas Aquinas and William of Ockham, *Citizens to Lords* offers a rich, dynamic exploration of thinkers and ideas that have indelibly stamped our modern world.

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