development of these ideas, however, and the final paragraph asserts one last time that ‘the written laws of early Greece constituted a response by the ruling elites of the early poleis to the anxieties and challenges created by the transformations of the eighth and early seventh centuries as they attempted to work out how to compete for power and prestige’ (p. 197).

There are interesting ideas in this book and considerable scholarship. Still, there is also repetitiveness and a good deal of straw man argument, as well as a seeming lack of interest in recent work in the field of ancient Greek social and gender history. Although the author speaks in the Preface of his determination not to ‘cannibalize’ the ideas of the book for journal articles, a more timely presentation of the main ideas in journal articles might have been a better way to proceed and have resulted in the end in a better book.

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In the introduction to their widely read 2005 volume of critical essays on Aristotle’s *Politics*, Richard Kraut and Steven Skultety promise that all of the essays will address Aristotle’s relevance to ‘ongoing debates in contemporary political philosophy’. This is not an unusual focus — to cite just one more example, Aristide Tessitore’s 2002 *Aristotle and Modern Politics* focuses on just the same thing. These days, however, the pendulum may be headed back in the other direction, away from direct comparisons of ancient to modern, and towards closer readings of classical texts in their immediate contexts. At any rate, that is mostly the order of the day in this admirable volume of recent French-language essays on the *Politics*, gathered from three conferences in Bordeaux. Many of the essays restrict themselves to the *Politics*, some consider it in light of other parts of the Aristotelian corpus, and several consider Aristotle’s relationship to Plato. A few look beyond those confines to the broader ancient Greek milieu, and a very few to the philosophical tradition that would follow. There is hardly any discussion of modern politics at all.

The subtitle promises essays on three themes: family, regimes and education (the conferences from which the papers were drawn suggest a fourth: they were all about the connection of nature with some aspect of Aristotle’s

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political philosophy). But to restrict oneself to these themes is not to restrict oneself at all — it would be hard to write much about the *Politics* that didn’t somehow touch on at least one of them. Indeed, the contributions range widely across the treatise (the only books that don’t come up for extended study are the ones you might expect, VI and VIII). The volume distinguishes itself not by its attention to a central theme, by setting the terms of any debate, or by showcasing a variety of approaches to any particular question, but with small-scale, independent insights about particular stretches of text. The essays are on the whole rigorously argued, erudite, and full of sharp insights. It is hard to imagine anyone interested in the *Politics* who won’t find at least one or two of them particularly engaging (nor, inevitably, will anyone come away without some worries and objections). But there is little more to say about the book as a whole except to offer a sample of its content. I will sketch five of the contributions briefly, and move on to slightly longer surveys of the other three.

Thomas Bénatouïl works through Chapter 14 of *Politics* VII. His goal is to explain the famous claim that ‘war must be chosen for the sake of peace, work for the sake of leisure, and useful things for the sake of noble ones’ (*Pol.* VII 14, 1333a34–36). He argues that these ‘for-the-sake-of’ relations are closely connected to an idea developed only a few lines earlier: that in the best city the young should be ruled by the old, until it is their turn to rule the next generation. Work (especially the military service of the young), Bénatouïl argues, is not just an obstacle that must be cleared out of the way to make room for leisure; rather, there is a ‘pedagogical’ relationship between war and peace, and work and leisure, just as there is between being ruled and ruling: the lessons learned through work, war and being ruled are necessary parts of the education citizens need in order to later take advantage of the leisure and peace they may be able to experience when they are older, and it is their turn to rule.

Valéry Laurand considers kingship, aiming to reconcile the typology of monarchy at *Politics* III.13–17 with Aristotle’s undeveloped earlier promise (I.1, 1257a7–12) to show that the king and the statesman differ not just in the number of their subjects, but because of some deeper difference in kind. Laurand argues that, for Aristotle, kingship is either (1) ‘sub-political’, in the case of tribes and villages, where it provides organization for family-like communities that have not yet become self-sufficient and acceded to true politics, or (2) ‘superpolitical’ in the special case where the king, in virtue of his divine ethical superiority, is a kind of manifestation of the law. Moreover, in practice kings must both delegate to generals and other subordinate rulers (passing power downward, so to speak) and also submit to the authority of the law (passing it upward). Kingship, then, turns out to be quite different from politics, not (as on a more standard interpretation) because of differences between the natures of the rulers and the people ruled, but because kingship, unlike politics, is an ‘empty shell’, barely possible as a real-world social