



Order and History (Volume 2): The World of the Polis (Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Volume 15) (v. 2)

Eric Voegelin

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This second volume of Voegelin's magisterial *Order and History*, *The World of the Polis*, explores the ancient Greek symbolization of human reality. Taking us from the origins of Greek culture in the Pre-Homeric Cretan civilizations, through the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Hesiod, and the rise of philosophy with the Pre-Socratics Parmenides and Heraclitus, this masterful work concludes with the historians of the classical period.

In *The World of the Polis*, Voegelin traces the emergence of the forms of the city-state and of philosophy from the ancient symbolism of myth. He maintains that the limits and ultimate goals of human nature are constant and that the central problem of every society is the same—"to create an order that will endow the fact of its existence with meaning in terms of ends divine and human." Thus, Voegelin shows how "the meaning of existence" achieved concrete expression in the typical political, social, and religious institutions of Greece and in the productions of its poets and thinkers. He deals with more than fifty Greek writers in the course of his analysis of the rise of myth and its representation of the divine order of the cosmos as the first great symbolic form of order, one later supplanted by the leap in being reflected in the emergence of philosophy.

The book is a tour de force, a virtuoso performance by a scholar and philosopher of great power, learning, and imagination that places its subject matter in a new light. The editor's critical introduction places *The World of the Polis* in the broader context of Voegelin's philosophy of history. Scholars and students of political science, philosophy, and the history of ideas will find this work invaluable.



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