

The Contemporary Use of Historical Thought

by Iain Hampsher-Monk

First published in *Studies in Social and Political Thought* 3, 2000.

The following is the text of a talk given by Iain Hampsher-Monk to the annual conference of the Social and Political Thought Programme at Sussex University in November 1999.

I want to outline a puzzle within the history of political thought as it now is conducted, and I hope it is one with a bearing on other fields. The puzzle is how far past political theory can be used in the present. By how, I do not mean in what ways, but how it can be used *at all*. I will first outline what I suspect is a relatively well-known story, and then make some observations on the implications of it, and look at what I think are some unsatisfactory solutions. In this sense, therefore, there is not a satisfactory conclusion.

Once upon a time, in my undergraduate days, there was an academic study called Political Theory in which critical attention was paid to a wide variety of texts produced under a huge range of historical circumstances, from ancient Greece to industrial modernity. They had become, and still are, a kind of canon, and most of us have been exposed to it. It includes the work of Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Mill, and Marx. If you were lucky, the canon may have been supplemented by some lesser-known theorists. The approach to these texts at that time tended to assume that the object of all of them had been to provide some fairly comprehensive answers to the major questions of politics. The study of those texts was conducted as though all these authors were alive and well and working just down the corridor. It was not uncommon to separate political theory into the study of the chronological series of authors on the one hand, and an atemporal study of concepts on the other. But no disciplinary distinction was made between approaching texts or concepts, and the primary disciplinary attitude was analytic. My philosophy professor, Anthony Flew, told us not to be impatient, when studying Plato, to be studying contemporary political philosophy – because we already were!

It was precisely against this kind of position that the famous historical revolution in political theory associated with John Pocock, Quentin Skinner,

and John Dunn was conducted. That revolution, like all successful revolutions, was conducted with some panache, and indeed some hyperbole. There is no doubt that the self-conscious theoretical underpinnings in the philosophy of language provided by these writers has given both an intellectual coherence and strength to the movement as well as providing a serious source of contention. It has also provided, I think, some helpful practical and methodological guidelines for scholars working in the field.

This methodological revolution is also aptly known as the Cambridge School. Both Skinner and Pocock are Cambridge graduates, and the contribution of Cambridge University Press to the venture has been quite overwhelming. However, whereas Skinner has remained in Cambridge, many of the scholars who are identified with the school have no institutional affiliation with Cambridge University.

What the revolution consisted in can be specified either very generally as a particular aspect of the twentieth-century linguistic turn, or with a degree of precision which discriminates sharply, for example, between the methodological positions of Skinner on the one hand and Pocock on the other. At its broadest level, the revolution comprised two impulses. First of all, there was an insistence on the primacy of history as the mode of understanding to be brought to the reading of political theory texts, and secondly, the deployment of a much more self-conscious methodological justification for this than had ever been deployed before, in Anglophone scholarship at least. There was an insistence that this historicity be brought to bear on the study of political theory in general, confronting the way in which texts were often treated in philosophy and social science departments, Pocock's claim was quite imperialistic. He wrote that we were experiencing the emergence of a truly autonomous method, one which offers a means for treating the phenomena of political thinking strictly as historical phenomena, and, since history is about things happening, even as historical *events*; as things happening in a context which defines what kind of events they are.

This first aspect of the revolution can be seen as a reaction to, or counterattack against, the massive post-war rise of the social sciences, based on natural-science models of explanation. From this perspective Max Weber, for example, was interesting because he put forward certain propositions about the various forms of political authority can take, and the conditions in which they flourish. Such a theory could form the basis of aspirations for a framework of social science, conceived under premises which had perhaps barely been formulated at the time Weber was writing. Using Weber in such a way was likely to lead to a distortion of his meaning, though of course this must be shown in particular cases. But yet in a sense, social scientists could be unworried by this. Concerned as they were with examining the truth or

falsity of a set of propositions, it did not really matter whose propositions they were. To the historian, by contrast, it was not the usefulness of the propositions in generating a research agenda concerning their current truthfulness that was important. What was important was their relationship to what was being said, and what was going on before and around them. It was the embeddedness of political thinking and writing that was important, and not its truthfulness, or the range of its applicability.

The second feature of the historical revolution I have mentioned was a concern to provide an explicit philosophical account of what we are doing when we offer an account in the history of political thought. Pocock and Skinner approached this, at least initially, in different ways. Skinner's methodological work dates alongside his earliest substantive writings, and involved the application of a relatively well-worked area of linguistic philosophy – speech-act theory, associated with J. L. Austin and Richard Searle – to questions of interpretation. Pocock however, was already a well established historian of political thought before he started to refine his methodological reflections, and even then the process was a relatively long exploration, involving an attempted engagement with Thomas Kuhn's paradigm before settling on the notion of the language underpinned by a Saussurian analysis.

The nub of Skinner's position is the idea that a work of political theory is a linguistic performance. This is so in two specific senses. One is that explored by Austin and Searle, Austin had pointed out that rather than referring to things, linguistic acts, written and spoken, perform. The notorious example is the first-person use of the word 'promise' which performs that which it designates. There are many others, a number of which are of huge importance in political language and action. Consider for example, the political implications involved in the use of verbs such as 'founding,' 'banishing,' 'abolishing,' 'declaring independence,' or 'the rights of men' or women. In speaking or writing therefore, we also often perform, and paradigmatically so in the case of political action.

Aligned to the notion of performance is the somewhat tricky notion of 'intention.' Skinner couches commitment to the historicity of an interpretation in terms of the recovery of the author's intention. Some critics complained that such inscrutably private a notion as an intention could not be used as a criterion of meaning. But intention is meant as a shorthand, to indicate the existence of a convention or conventional repertoire of meaning, within which intentions could be framed. As in the much-loved analogy of the game of chess, a move can only be made within the context of an established rule-governed framework. So, within a language comprising meanings, associations and expectations, grammar and syntax, some

locutions are more easily conceivable than others, and some are simply inconceivable. Consequently, the ascription to an author of an intention to perform an inconceivable move, as judged by these publicly recoverable criteria, can rightly be judged to be an improbable or impossible meaning.

This is perhaps most clear in the case of the ascription of genres which have not yet emerged, the deployment of which could not therefore be reasonably be ascribed to the author. Thus, for example, the claim - periodically advanced since Jean-Jacques Rousseau - that Machiavelli's *Prince* was a satire in the eighteenth-century sense of that word, designed to expose through exaggeration the character of princely government, is to be ruled out in that if Machiavelli's cultural repertoire does not include such a genre, then it was not open to him to frame an intention to write such a work.

However, Skinner exploits the notion of intention in a distinct, more dynamic way, to reveal the character of innovation. In doing so, he shows how his analysis might contribute both to the construction of a historical narrative concerning the development of thought, and to our understanding of the political character of such a change.

Political writers commonly seek to persuade through exploiting different elements of ethically loaded terms. Two such elements are their commendatory character and their role in referring. The political author, seeking to persuade an audience to accept a particular set of arrangements as acceptable, will identify a term that has positive commendatory overtones and look for ways to insinuate that the arrangements he wishes to have accepted possess the relevant empirical features to which the term refers. One classic modern version of this, Skinner claimed, was the way 'competing elite' theories of democracy managed to capture the commendatory tones of the term 'democracy' for a set of elitist arrangements which did not, at the outset at least, qualify as democratic at all. Another example would be the way in which Edmund Burke steals the commendatory, yet awkwardly, for Whigs, radical associations of the term 'social contract' for a society that denied almost all the voluntarist elements that the term was meant to conjure up.

This rhetorical device of using one set of stable meanings and associations as a hinge on which to swing opinions to another set, in a different direction, exemplifies very clearly what political persuasion is all about, as well as revealing a major source of change in political theory. It provides a usable program for researchers, giving them an agenda and some criteria of significance in assessing what is important in an often bewildering range of locutions and material.

Deploying either of these notions of intention requires a knowledge both of the general range of intellectual resources available to the author and

of the immediate controversial context in which he or she intervenes. Hence the importance of a new history of political thought with the availability of a much wider range of texts not just as a focus of study themselves, but as an inter-textual nexus from which to identify both the stable context and the innovatory moves.

If Skinner's focus was on the moment of change - the innovatory speech-act - Pocock's was on the enduring identity of that which undergoes change through time, the political language. Whilst acknowledging that speech entails the possibility of political innovation, Pocock's primary concern was to identify relatively discrete and lasting linguistic structures through which humans construe their political predicament. These he called languages, because, in their enduring vocabulary, structure, syntax and associations, they mimic natural languages. Like natural languages, they provide for, and are the condition of speech. Like natural languages too, they limit, at any one moment, what might be said, although speech, over time, might alter the language itself.

The language to which Pocock devoted a major study was the language of republicanism, from ancient Greece to the American frontier. Pocock's earlier study on the *Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law* considered languages which, for a variety of reasons, both sociologically and conceptually were unrelated to one another. But his work has been increasingly concerned with the interaction between languages, particularly between the language of jurisprudence and that of revived classical republicanism as it was applied to Britain's mixed monarchy.

In Britain, Pocock's work transformed the picture of the eighteenth century, which had long been confused by an anachronistic projection backwards of a political language fundamentally reconstituted in both its terminology and preoccupations by Burke and the French Revolution. Thanks to the work of Pocock and a series of other scholars, the conservative elements of Scotland and England can now be understood as the site of a huge attempt to adapt traditional political languages to the (for many) threatening features of early modernity, such as the nature of executive power, increasing administrative apparatus, higher taxes, increased trade, a more luxurious lifestyle, and the decline of religious sectarianism.

In Skinner's account, the 'recovery' of meaning stresses conventional availability as a criterion, and the moment of understanding stresses the identification of innovation and departure, which is logically dependent on that conventional meaning. Pocock endorses this view. Both thinkers then, emphasise the primacy of the local historical meaning as a point of departure, and on some stronger readings, as a necessary component of any plausibly ascribable meaning to the text. A number of critics charged that

this new methodology, in insisting on the context-embedded meaning of political-theoretical utterances, was politically emasculating, since it rendered historical texts irretrievable in terms of their use or applicability for contemporary political argument. Nor could it be said that their worries were simply a fantasy in the minds of the readers. Pocock, in a muted and often less explicit way, and Dunn and Skinner much more explicitly, insisted on drawing attention to the impropriety their reflections had led them to perceive in deploying historical arguments and concepts for contemporary political purposes. Amongst the propositions controversially advanced by Skinner, was that there were no enduring political ideas such as could properly be said to be the subject of historical enquiry. 'The problem,' he wrote 'was not that such histories can sometimes go wrong, but that they can never go right.' Even if there may at a suitable level of abstraction be enduring questions of political theory, which Skinner doubted, the historically specific answers necessarily given to them could not be relevant to our present concerns. More generally, we should not expect to learn anything directly applicable and relevant to our own political situation by the proper, i.e. historical, study of political theory.

Indeed, given the impressive theoretical structure of Skinner's argument, it might not be too much to say that the disqualification of any diachronic employment of political concepts or theories was not only an intention of the complex set of speech-acts comprising his methodological offensive, but that it was a strict and logical implication of them. None of this, he was keen to stress, was equivalent to denying that there were things to be learned from history. However, the kind of learning that was held to be possible was of an anthropological or culturally mind-broadening character, gaining insights into that which is strange, rather than direct access to truths for immediate employment. Nevertheless, this strangeness was bought at a price. To be truly strange was surely to be incapable of being used in our own world. It seemed to many that the effort involved in discovering the strangeness of the writing of Locke or Rousseau rendered it, like Azande witchcraft in Peter Winch's famous account, an activity which could hardly be translated into our terms at all. The more historically specific a speech-act was, the more unavailable it must be to its modern investigators. Unavailable that is, not to the sensitised understanding, but as a component of action. Indeed, there was some joyful celebration at the caesura which proper understanding created between even the greatest texts and the present. In his introduction to what I think remains one of the best studies of Locke, John Dunn remarked:

I simply cannot conceive of constructing an analysis of any issue in contemporary political theory around the affirmation or negation of anything which Locke says about political matters.

Although he later expressed regret at what he very candidly called the 'dismayingly unequivocal character' of this remark, his subsequent attempts to distinguish what is still living in the philosophy of John Locke, seem to me to have salvaged very little. So the tremendous strength of the contextualist case which comes out of this historical revolution as a technical philosophical argument is arguably bought at the cost of the contemporary political availability of past political theory, or propositions or concepts within it. One could not, it seems, gain on the swings of historical context, and there were real gains, without losing on the political roundabouts.

One interesting political theoretical reaction to deep historical contextualisation, a reaction that is found prominently in studies of Marx and Hobbes, is the tough-minded reconstruction of a thinker's argument. Game-theoretical appropriations of Hobbes, and the colourfully dubbed 'No Bullshit Marxism Group' sought to tighten their subject's arguments. Works such as those by John Elster or GA. Cohen on Marx, and Kavka or Hampton on Hobbes, do not for the most part, attempt to be historical reconstructions. Rather, they employ the logical and methodological refinements of modernity in order to reconstruct the integrity of, or in some cases explore the implications of, an argument originally put forward in different and less rigorous terms.

Whether such exercises can be considered historical, in even a broad sense, has been hotly contested. But it is the identity of the argument here that is at issue. On one view, closely associated with Skinner's writings, the characterisation of any significant propositions within an argument which relies on categories, or perhaps even degrees of refinement of categories unavailable to the author, could not count as an explanation of the intended meaning of the work. However, if we identify the historical subject, and, therefore, the intention to be recovered, as 'the argument taken as a whole,' then perhaps we need not be committed to, or limited by, the categories available to the author in constructing any particular syntactic formulation comprising a stage in the argument. The philosophical analysis of action and intention underpinning the theory of speech- acts focuses on the constraints imposed on any agent's intentions by the available repertoires of meaningful actions or speech. Nevertheless, anything as complex as a political philosophical text, whilst it undeniably comprises a series of locutions, embodying intentions circumscribed by available meanings, anything as

complex as a political philosophical text *as a whole*, only embodies intention at a much higher level of abstraction or generality than that of the particular propositions comprising it. It is incongruous, in one sense, to think of Hobbes framing *an intention* to write *Leviathan*, where ‘by intention,’ we mean the deployment of meanings and locutions previously enshrined in usage. If there was a single intention behind the work, it was surely as Hobbes tells us, to ‘set before men’s eyes, the mutual relationship between protection and obedience.’ If we construe this as primary, then even a historical interpretation of Hobbes’s argument might require us, as Pocock wisely, if somewhat deprecatingly put it thirty years ago ‘to understand past political thought by raising it to higher levels of generality and abstraction.’

On this view, any principle of interpretive charity might suggest that resources, even those unavailable to the author, which assist in securing the overall integrity of the argument should be supplied by the exegete. This would legitimise the deployment of some rational-choice techniques in order to assist Hobbes’s argument in achieving his or its overall intention. To take another well-worn example: if we read Marx’s programmatic statement in the ‘Preface’ to the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* as the intention that *Capital* was meant to embody, then an exercise such as Cohen’s which starts from that, and seeks to reconstruct Marx’s more detailed arguments in such a way as to further the coherence of Marx’s programme, might not only be considered a legitimate interpretation, but a legitimate *historical* interpretation, at least as judged by revisionist standards of intentionality. Cohen claims that his study is subject to two constraints. Those constraints are what Marx wrote, and the standards and rigour of twentieth-century analytical philosophy. His aim is ‘to construct a tenable theory of history which is in broad accord with what Marx said on the subject, and which he could have recognised as a reasonably clear statement of what he thought.’

We might extend the analogy which has sometimes been drawn with the parallel movement for historical authenticity in musical performance, which has become so powerful at precisely the same period in question. Concern with authentic instruments and performance styles may allow us to recover, as it were, the precise *sounds* envisaged or intended by the composer. But the composer’s *intentions* may be construed as the desire to affect hearers in certain ways, and not just to have certain sounds produced. On one view, historically authentic sounds are, ipso facto, incapable of affecting modern sensibilities in the way intended by their composers. To accomplish this now a completely different sound must be produced. As the celebrated music critic Hans Keller famously remarked, ‘We have period instruments, but we do not have period ears!’ Is there a parallel in the history

of political thought? It sometimes seems to me, that lecturing on a thinker such as Hobbes is akin to a musical performance. It is an attempted re-enactment of a text or score, in which the performer must be both imaginative and persuasive, whilst seeking faithfully to represent the composer or writer's thoughts. It may be that by struggling to recover the historically authentic meanings through which an author constructed his or her argument, we deny to ourselves the possibility of recovering the rhetorical, persuasive effect they intended to bring about by those means.

Recently, however, members of the historical school have been displaying signs of wishing to avoid the kind of strictures that I - and they - have suggested their methodology imposes on them. So, for example, for Pocock, that discourse which first identified land as the guarantor of stability of interest in the citizen, and then saw the endowment, first of a national church, and then of a cultural clerisy, as a necessary means of superintending the volatility of a commercial and increasingly private virtue, was not only a discourse by which eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century political thinkers accounted for their own reality and the stability of society: the authority of it reaches also to the present. This enables Pocock to observe acidly on its final destruction by people (Thatcherites) he describes as neo-Jacobins masquerading as conservatives, using the device of 'a state claiming to limit its own powers to destroy the independence of the universities, motivated by a contempt for their nature and function.' If a theory is an abridgement of a practice, even an intellectual one, one could still pursue the present intimation of that practice, or its abridgement. Even more strikingly, in Pocock's writing on Burke, we find the leap to the present. He writes that it would be wrong to criticise Burke's admittedly overdrawn picture of the French revolution, for Burke

seems to have known more about what revolution could become than what it was yet like ... we may protest that in 1797 France was in full retreat from Jacobinism: but the emergence of the Nazis, the red guards and the Khmer Rouge in our time suggests that Burke's last work was the 1984 of its generation. He had discovered the theory of totalitarianism and was enlarging it into prophecy.

For Pocock, the threat of linguistic, and therefore political discontinuity seems to constitute the crisis of our time, threatening first from the left, and now from the right. Pursuing an awareness of the history of our political language, in all its richness, right through to the present, is therefore for him both an urgent and a civic task, and an absolute prerequisite for making its

intimations available in the present. The values of the academy are not the values of the market or of the state. Yet its civilising function is somehow vital to each, and vital to maintaining the bleak but not unhopeful conviction that although ‘things fall apart the centres nevertheless somehow hold.’

John Dunn and Quentin Skinner too have for some time now been deploying the historical understanding of political theory for contemporary purposes. John Dunn’s edited book of essays – interestingly published by OUP and not Cambridge – about an idea, *Democracy*, subtitled ‘the unfinished journey 508 BC to AD 1993,’ is, inasmuch as a collective endeavour can be, a history. In it, despite drawing our attention to the massive differences between Greek and modern democracy, the editor asserts the existence of clear continuities of meaning between them and indeed the persistence of at least one perennial problem, namely, whether ‘in the life that human beings live together, the balance between arbitrary external constraint and reasonable personal choice can be decisively shifted towards the latter.’

In that same book, David Wooton points out that the Whiggish perception of the Levellers as having anticipated twentieth-century liberal society means that ‘we are still waiting for a satisfactory account of the Levellers which will succeed in making their apparent modernity seem no more than an illusion of perspective.’ He seeks to ‘restore the Levellers to their age’ by showing that unlike moderns they were not democrats, nor secular, forward-looking thinkers, but essentially religious, and nostalgic, with no conception of modern political processes. This turns out to be more than slightly tongue-in-cheek. He claims in fact that the Levellers *were* nearly secular democrats, who appealed against history, claiming ‘we are men of the present age.’ They appealed to universal standards and abstract principles, and if they would have been uneasy at the sight of the modern party’s ‘queasy mixture of principle, interest, and expediency,’ then this, as Wooton remarks, ‘hardly marks them out as visitors from another culture.’ It turns out that the major feature that separates the Levellers from us is their ‘extraordinary faith in the power of words,’ but that when we read them, we seem to achieve the impossible: ‘we seem to hear the dead speak. ... To our surprise, the language that they speak is sometimes indistinguishable from our own.’

Skinner, in another chapter of Dunn’s *Democracy*, devoted to Italian city-republics, pursues a theme explored in a number of his articles going back to the early 1980s. Whilst warning against assuming any easy identification of city-republics with democracy, he claims that they nevertheless contributed to the ‘history of modern democratic theory and practice’ and specifically ‘engendered a rich political literature in which a

number of arguments in favour of government by the people were articulated for the first time in post-classical thought.'

Elsewhere, Skinner has also taken up the question of whether negative liberty and republicanism can coexist. He raises in that context the question of what the point of doing political theory is. He is deeply troubled at charges of irrelevance and antiquarianism. He argues that the point of political theory is to understand where and how the language in which we describe our political selves derives. Uncovering the original definitions of concepts still in half-understood use is, he claims, a way of making sense of our present world. Engaging in intellectual archaeology, like one of his intellectual heroes (R.G. Collingwood, not Michel Foucault!), can expose for us 'values we no longer endorse, and questions we no longer ask, and so prevent us from being bewitched by our own intellectual inheritance.' Skinner suggests that such bewitchment is exemplified in Berlin's analysis of liberty. Since the burial of the neo-Roman theory of liberty by layers of liberalism, we have had masked from us the possibility that negative liberty could be threatened, even in the absence of coercive interference.

This suggests a much stronger connection than Skinner has sometimes proposed between being a historian of political thought and being a political theorist who might approach a text with non-historical intentions. But a condition of being a good intellectual historian is the ability to appropriate the past in ways that might open up the present, rather than merely endorse it. The possibility of values and theories from the past being so radically different as to widen and educate our sensibility of the possible, and at the same time their being politically relevant to the genealogy of our present condition seems superficially at least, in some tension.

These tensions were pressed further by both the content and the context of Skinner's inaugural lecture, subsequently developed into his *Liberty before Liberalism*. Saying what he does there about the political relevance of political enquiry, within the context of Cambridge's historical tradition, are clearly acts which confront the supposedly autonomous character of history. The intention behind elaborating the argument and publishing it for a wider audience must, at least in part, also be a political one. Not, clearly, in any crude programmatic sense; yet in recovering and inviting us to consider the conceptual merits of a republican argument, Skinner is clearly concerned to promote republican thinking. It is interesting that he presses with great vigour the conceptual coherence of the argument, whilst leaving sketchy the immensely problematic historical account of the relationships between his chosen neo-Romans, and the wider language of republicanism whose generous influences have been so amply charted by Pocock and his followers. Skinner's choice and silence here are interesting,

in view of the fact that this broader republicanism does indeed become enmeshed in an essentially liberal discourse. If this reading is right, Skinner's text exhibits two paradoxes in which the tensions between the speech-act and the genre in which they are embedded serve to emphasise further the audacity of their author's intentions. Here, Skinner, giving his inaugural lecture in history, allows the political speech-act to dominate the historical: a Regius professor of history advocating a predominantly anti-monarchical republicanism.

I do not find any of these aspirations I have been reviewing to be uncongenial, either in a political or an academic sense. On the contrary, I find them exciting and interesting. What I do find these developments difficult to reconcile with are the philosophical foundations on which at least the most rigorous and thoroughgoing version of the historical revolution was built. Nor do I do see any methodological revisions in train, let alone any of a comparable degree of technical sophistication to those which established the original position.

Iain Hampsher-Monk is Professor of Political Theory at the University of Exeter, and editor of the journal *History of Political Thought*. His latest publications include *Burke: Revolutionary Writings: Reflection on the Revolution in France, and the First Letter on a Regicide Peace* (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, 2014) and *Concepts and Reason in Political Theory* (ECPR press, 2015).

Bibliography

Cohen, G.A. (1978) *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Dunn, J. (1968) 'The Identity of the History of Ideas' *Philosophy* XLIII, April 1968

Dunn, J. (1969) *The Political Thought of John Locke* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Dunn, J. (1990) 'What is Living and What is Dead in the Political Theory of John Locke' in his *Interpreting Political Responsibility* Cambridge: Polity press

Dunn, J. (ed.) (1992) *Democracy: The Unfinished Journey, 508 BC to AD 1993* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Pocock, J.G.A. (1962) 'The History of Political Thought: A Methodological Enquiry' in P. Laslett and W.G. Runciman (eds) *Philosophy Politics and Society* Second Series, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Pocock, J.G.A. (1957) *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal law* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Pocock, J.G.A. (1993) 'A Discourse on Sovereignty' in N. Phillipson and Q. Skinner (eds.) *Political Discourse in Early Modern Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Pocock, J.G.A. (1987) 'Editor's Introduction' to Edmund Burke *Reflections on the Revolution in France* J.G.A. Pocock (ed.), Indianapolis: Hackett

Pocock, J.G.A. (1989) 'The Ogre may Wear a Different Face ...' preface to second edition of his *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press

Skinner, Q. (1969) 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas' *History and Theory*, 8

Skinner, Q. (1998) *Liberty Before liberalism* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

This talk drew on the speaker's following essays that were forthcoming at the time of the original publication:

'The History of Political Thought and the Political History of Thought' in Dario Castiglione and Iain Hampsher-Monk (eds.) *The History of Political Thought in National Context* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001

'Recent Anglophone History of Ideas' in Gunther Lottes and Joachim Eibach (eds.) *The Compass of Historiography* Hildersheim: Brockmeyer Verlag, 2001

'The History of Political Thought, Then and Now' forthcoming in *Political Studies*