

How did democracy, a regime of a numerically insignificant minority in Antiquity, evolve to a 21st century self-evidence in (and beyond) the Western world? That is what this book is about.

The Road to Political Democracy is two books in one.

In the first part it drafts the red line of the growth of democracy, through the enhancement of its four main Aristotelian features: the rule by turn, the rule of law, education and the role of the middle class. What lessons can we learn from that maturation today?

In its second part it describes and cites the historical milestones in the evolution of the democratic regime. It covers twenty-five centuries of evolution, starting with Plato's and Aristotle's works in Greek Antiquity to today's question as to whether democracy is a universal value. This book will guide you through all the pioneering stages through which political democracy has passed. It quotes, comments and highlights the specific importance of the main writings of American, British, French, German, Greek and Roman philosophers, economists, jurists and sociologists, and provides you with an overview of the principal declarations and international treaties on human rights.

Given the spring of democracy in the Muslim world, the youth movement for greater factual equality in some Western countries and the substitution of some communist regimes by severe capitalism, the factual world can make use of this reference work. It reports on today's thinking on the long evolution of democracy as a political regime, its setbacks and its directions.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Robert Senelle is Professor Emeritus of Public and Comparative Law at the University of Ghent (Belgium). Emile Clement is Honorary Director of the Chamber of Representatives of the Belgian Parliament. Edgard Van de Velde was associate professor constitutional, comparative and European law at EHSAL-Brussels (Belgium) from 1985 until 2008. The authors have an extensive bibliography on issues of constitutional and comparative law.

QUOTES

"Professor Robert Senelle, Emile Clement, and Edgard Van de Velde ... begin with the greatest philosophical thought on the subject, and they turn to the embodiment of that thought into actual institutions. Readers on both sides of the Atlantic will benefit from their efforts."
(Stephen Breyer, Justice of the United States Supreme Court)

"A political democracy can only thrive when it exists not only on paper, but also in the hearts and minds of the citizens. This precious book can be a contribution to that important objective."
(Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council)