



*philosophica*

[305]

*philosophica*

serie arancio

*diretta da* Alfonso M. Iacono

*comitato scientifico*

Stefano Petrucciani, Manlio Iofrida

Gianluca Bocchi, Giuliano Campioni

Simonetta Bassi, Giovanni Paoletti, Alessandro Pagnini

Tyrants at Work  
Philosophy and Politics in  
Alexandre Kojève

*Edited by*  
Marco Filoni and Massimo Palma

*visualizza la scheda del libro sul sito [www.edizioniets.com](http://www.edizioniets.com)*



Edizioni ETS



[www.edizioniets.com](http://www.edizioniets.com)

© Copyright 2024

Edizioni ETS

Palazzo Roncioni - Lungarno Mediceo, 16, I-56127 Pisa

[info@edizioniets.com](mailto:info@edizioniets.com)

[www.edizioniets.com](http://www.edizioniets.com)

*Distribuzione*

Messaggerie Libri SPA

Sede legale: via G. Verdi 8 - 20090 Assago (MI)

*Promozione*

PDE PROMOZIONE SRL

via Zago 2/2 - 40128 Bologna

ISBN 978-884676890-2

ISSN 2420-9198

## PREFACE

*(Free) Time is a Tyrant*  
En guise d'introduction (*again*)

«Simonides the poet came once upon a time to Hiero the tyrant. After both had found leisure, Simonides said...». This is how the dialogue *Hiero or Tyrannicus* by Xenophon begins, with a famous expression. Starting from this dialogue, between 1948 and 1954, Leo Strauss and Alexandre Kojève engage in a polite but clear dispute. From this opening, a fact emerges. Both the poet and the tyrant work. It is only in a rare moment of *scholè*, of leisure time, that Simonides and Hiero have the time and opportunity to engage, to discuss wisdom and power, philosophy and politics.

This time, this opportunity, is what allowed a bunch of scholars to meet in Rome in May 2023 at Link University and discuss Alexandre Kojève for two days. They delved into the many facets of his philosophical discourse, the unsaid and implications of his political thought, his actions, strategies, and practical performances. Meanwhile, unfortunately, many tyrants were at work – and so did the masters of war.

This volume collects, revised and reworked, the contributions from those two days in May. At the heart of it all is a precise and shared intention: to restore the depth and contradictions – theoretical and biographical, political and speculative – of an author who encapsulates the substance and surface of the twentieth century. An author who wrote a lot but published very little. A philosopher who was a bureaucrat, a partisan who became a Vichy advisor, stimulating and being influenced by some of the best minds of his century, not shying away from the worst. A thinker who staunchly defended the idea that both Simonides and Hiero, the tyrant and his advisor, should work. Perhaps because in the end there was a space similar to that of the beginning: a time freed from labour, a realm of freedom from being tyrannized by work. But if everything in Kojève is complicated, this thought of an ultimately non-tyrannical and not even human end is even more so. An idea, among other things, generated on Sundays, the only day when the functionary Alexandre Kojève did not work. And he wrote books destined for posthumous discoveries, as well as directing action.

Kojève signed only two books with his name on the cover in his lifetime: one is very famous – the Hegelian seminar of the Thirties, compiled by Raymond Queneau –, the other one appeared just before he died – the beginning of a historiographical project on pagan philosophy. Alongside some articles, some reviews which were published in very different places, and many working notes known only to insiders, there are thousands of pages destined for oblivion or research. And research, after so much Kojévian mythology, has recently opened

up. Many have begun to delve into archives, translate unpublished works, and seek new sources.

Many of the contributions in this book start from this need: to study the entire corpus of Kojève, combining hermeneutical and philological approaches, reconstructing the biographical path with an investigation of intellectual alliances and hostilities. It is necessary to read the unpublished works (especially the long manuscript known so far as *Sofia*) together with the posthumous treaties, the passages from the always cited *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* with administrative documents. To reveal inconsistencies along with obsessions. The result is an even more complicated profile, a crystal of twentieth-century history, a crossroads between East and West at the height of totalitarianism and the Cold War, when a man floated wisely on the surface of the Iron Curtain, perhaps protected, perhaps very clever, certainly in control of what he could say, what he could make understood. At the border between public writing and private provocation.

The volume is divided into two sections: the first, *Wisdom Doesn't Work. Philosophy and Idleness*, contains contributions on the metaphysical perspective of wisdom, idleness, and the humour that characterizes it. The second, *Working for Tyrants. Politics and Thinking Politics*, brings together essays on Kojève's political thought and action, his political friendships and enmities.

The reader will find essays in English, in French, some quotations in German, titles in Russian or Hebrew. Kojève was a man who spoke and thought in many languages – there is no need to reduce his reception to a single one.

Our thanks go to all those who participated for their scientific and personal contribution.

*Ce n'est qu'un début.*

Marco Filoni and Massimo Palma  
December 2023

## CONTENTS

(Free) Time is a Tyrant. <i>En guise d'introduction</i> (again) <i>Marco Filoni, Massimo Palma</i>	5
---	---

### Part I

#### Wisdom Doesn't Work. Philosophy and Idleness

Out of Work: Kojève's Philosophy of Inoperativity <i>Isabel Jacobs</i>	9
Kojève's Concept of Recognition. From Ontology to Politics, and Back <i>Ovidiu Stanciu</i>	23
Notes on Alexandre Kojève, from Atheism to the «Aesthetization of Truth» <i>Elettra Stimilli</i>	33
Les malheurs de la Sophia: sagesse et humour chez Alexandre Kojève <i>Dimitri Tokarev</i>	39
The Intrusion of Play into Time. Alexandre Kojève's Ludic Philosophy of History <i>Danilo Scholz</i>	47

### Part II

#### Working for Tyrants. Politics and Thinking Politics

Kojève's Case for a Multipolar World <i>Kyle Moore</i>	65
---	----

Globalization and Politics from Alexandre Kojève to Eric Weil <i>Edoardo Raimondi</i>	75
Kojève's Post-Communal Politics <i>Jorge Varela</i>	87
Corollaries to the New Nomos. Marginalia to the Kojève-Schmitt Controversy <i>Massimo Palma</i>	95
L'«autorité du père» en question dans la philosophie de Kojève <i>Rambert Nicolas</i>	105
Posthumous Chronicles of Philosophy, Politics, and Espionage. Alexandre Kojève and the KGB <i>Marco Filoni</i>	127

## Appendix

### *La philosophie e le Parti Communiste (1929)*

Introduction. Entre héritage russe et texte programmatique <i>Rambert Nicolas</i>	139
La philosophie et le Parti Communiste <i>Alexandre Kojève</i>	151
About the contributors	159







L'elenco completo delle pubblicazioni è consultabile sul sito

**www.edizioniets.com**

alla pagina

<http://www.edizioniets.com/view-Collana.asp?Col=philosophica>



---

### Publicazioni recenti

307. Marinelli Maria Caterina, *Alle origini della Dottrina della Scienza. Maimon, Reinhold e Schulze*. In preparazione.
306. Gigante Marco, *L'inizio indicibile. Forme di vita e linguaggio in Wittgenstein*. In preparazione.
305. Filoni Marco and Massimo Palma [edited by], *Tyrants at Work. Philosophy and Politics in Alexandre Kojève*, 2024, pp. 168.
304. Fiorilli Mattia, *Esperienza e trascendentale. La conoscenza antropologica come condizione della morale kantiana*, 2024, pp. 228.
303. Fidelibus Francesca e Vinciguerra Lorenzo [a cura di], *Vico e dintorni. Scritti in onore di Riccardo Caporali*, 2024, pp. 218.
302. Ciglia Francesco Paolo, Di Biase Giuliana [a cura di], *Inabissarsi nel Divino. Mistica, religioni, filosofie*, 2023, pp. 432.
301. Savettieri Chiara [a cura di], *La «Catastrofe» dal Settecento all'Età contemporanea. Immagini, temi ed usi*, 2023, pp. 216, ill.
300. Gallo Franco, *Un'idea di prosa. Nietzsche, Walter Savage Landor e la conversazione immaginaria*, 2024, pp. 100.
299. Manca Danilo, *Hegel, Husserl e il linguaggio della filosofia*, 2023, pp. 312.
298. Cristofolini Paolo, *Il "coraggio della scoperta". Scritti tra filologia e filosofia*, a cura di Manuela Sanna, 2023, pp. 216.
297. Tenti Gregorio, *L'estetica di Schleiermacher*, 2023, pp. 204.
296. Caponigro Gabriella, *«Un canto sale nel donare». Erranza ed esilio della parola nel pensiero di Emmanuel Levinas*, 2023, pp. 144.
295. Altini Carlo, *Potenza come potere. La fondazione della cultura moderna nella filosofia di Hobbes*. Seconda edizione rivista e ampliata, 2023, pp. 288.
294. Pintus Giuseppe, *Il dono e il bene. Studio su Jean-Luc Marion*, 2023, pp. 200.
293. D'Alessandris Francesca, *La persona e la traccia. Ipotesi sull'esistenza e il suo racconto a partire da Paul Ricoeur*, 2023, pp. 208.

Edizioni ETS

Palazzo Roncioni - Lungarno Mediceo, 16, I-56127 Pisa

[info@edizioniets.com](mailto:info@edizioniets.com) - [www.edizioniets.com](http://www.edizioniets.com)

Finito di stampare nel mese di maggio 2024