secularist state and military elites. In a highly misinterpreted fashion, Islam in Turkey has been seen as an obstacle that needs to be eradicated from the public sphere for the sake of democracy up until the mid-2000s. Seen in this light, this study indicates a future research agenda revolving around big questions such as why some faith-based social movements are more successful in democratization than their secularist counterparts. Cogently argued and written in an elegant manner and an accessible tone, this book is a must-read for a greater clarity on Islamist discourse in Turkish politics. It seems that the ongoing clash between Ankara and Pennsylvania is not likely to cease any time soon. In this respect, the book is further important as it provides some implications for the future of political Islam in Turkish politics.

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José Colen and Elisabeth Dutartre-Michaut (eds), The Companion to Raymond Aron. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, 304 pp., £73.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1-137-52242-9

It is perhaps not immediately obvious in today’s geopolitical context why one should return to the thought of France’s most famous Cold Warrior. Raymond Aron is best known outside of France, if at all, for his theoretical contributions to nuclear diplomatic strategy, as well as for his critique of contemporary French intellectuals’ sympathy for Communist ideology. In a time marked by conflict between non-state groups, a resurgence of religious fundamentalism, and the destabilization of national borders, a thinker whose work bears so strongly the mark of mid-twentieth-century political and ideological conflicts may seem to have little to offer. It is largely in order to counter this view of the French philosopher and sociologist that José Colen and Elisabeth Dutartre-Michaut’s new Companion to Raymond Aron aims to present Aron’s work to an English-speaking public. As Pierre Manent, often considered Aron’s intellectual heir in France, mentions in the foreword, not only do Aron’s insights on Cold War politics continue to teach us something about the post-9/11 world, but his example as a thinker who continually regarded contemporary political events in light of philosophical questions, is one to be followed in any historical moment.

This ambitious double aim – to argue for the immediate relevance of Aron’s political analysis and to demonstrate the general philosophical merit of his approach to historical interpretation – is one that many of the Companion’s contributors achieve skillfully, while at the same time presenting the main features of Aron’s large body of work to potential scholars. These contributors range from some of Aron’s own students and colleagues – as well as some of their own students, members of a second generation of ‘Aronians’ – to a number of younger scholars, many of whom are from outside of France, who though less intimately familiar with the world in which Aron wrote, bring new perspectives to his writing and its legacy. In this volume at its best, Aron appears not only as a commentator on the Cold War and postwar industrial society, but as a thinker who throughout his career articulated continuities between the historical events he lived through and the tradition of political philosophy stretching back to Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Tocqueville. The Companion’s most persuasive pieces demonstrate the ways in which Aron’s work
exemplified the struggle to balance personal commitment to ideals of peace and equality with the realities of unjust historical situations; and find in it a means to better understand and criticize twenty-first-century political events.

But despite the Companion’s many achievements in bringing Aron’s work into the present, the volume’s greatest weakness is, ironically, a fixation on the ideological context of Aron’s past. It is true that as a centrist liberal with a contrarian disposition, Aron was often marginalized in a French intellectual world dominated by leftist writers. Yet rather than take full advantage of the opportunity to present Aron’s work free of the ideological baggage of the 1950s, many of the parts of the book’s contributions that do the most to set its overall tone overcompensate for Aron’s past slights by turning the story of his career into something of a hagiography. Nicolas Baverez spends well over half of his introductory chapter, for example, narrating the heroics of a lone figure who not only singlehandedly introduced his French contemporaries to Weberian sociology and Husserlian phenomenology, but also foresaw the dangers of Soviet totalitarianism where others overlooked them for decades. Baverez’s chapter ends by suggesting compelling arguments for the contemporary usefulness of Aron’s thought – for example, reading Aron’s mid-century writings on ‘universal history’ as a guide for thinking about contemporary globalization. As is the case in too many of the contributions to this volume, however, the space devoted to telling Aron’s heroic biography overshadows these important arguments, which remain underdeveloped. Too often in the Companion, vindicating Aron against Jean-Paul Sartre and other long-dead sparring partners takes precedence over situating his thought in the present.

The main articles of the Companion are divided into three sections, and it is the first, devoted to Aron’s international sociology, that most explicitly takes up the task of establishing the contemporary relevance of Aron’s thought, specifically in the field of international relations. Early on in this section, the tendency towards laudatory biography once again obscures otherwise insightful presentations of the substance of Aron’s writing. Jean-Vincent Holeindre’s article gives an application of Aronian analysis to contemporary terrorism, for example; less than half the space he spends repeating the biographical heroics that appear countless times throughout the book. The contributions by Holeindre and others in this section, despite some of this occasionally excessive praise, do nonetheless provide powerful insights into Aron’s contemporary relevance to geopolitical thought, while also sketching the evolution of his work over the course of his career, as an intellectual companion of this sort ought to do.

The best article in this section, however, is Joël Mouric’s take on Aron’s career-long engagement with the thought of the Prussian military strategist Carl von Clausewitz. Mouric is the most successful in resisting the temptation towards hagiography. For example, it is often repeated in this collection that Aron ‘put politics first,’ a term of praise that is rarely given a clear definition. Mouric shows us precisely what this means, reading Aron and Clausewitz together to criticize a common (and particularly American) distinction between purely ‘technical’ military means and their political or strategic ends. By the end of his piece, Aron’s insistence on the ‘political’ dimension of warfare appears as a powerful tool to criticize, for example, the American strategy in Iraq that put the military defeat of Hussein’s forces ahead of a broader political approach to the region.

The second and third sections of the Companion are less concerned with situating Aron in the present political context than with examining the merits of his approach as a political philosopher. A clear highlight here is the indirect discussion on the question of pluralism and social unity in democratic societies that arises in the second section, devoted to Aron’s philosophy of history. Giulio de Ligio, emphasizing Aron’s use of the classical concept of the political regime, interprets his writing on liberal democracy as a conservative project:
to restore a sense of public unity through a renewed articulation of the democratic political regime. In contrast, Serge Audier counters this rather conservative take on Aron by calling attention to Aron’s ‘Machiavellian’ conception of democracy, in which conflict between groups, which presupposes a robust social pluralism and disunity, plays an essential role. The discussions of pluralism and democracy in this section, supplemented as well by interesting articles by Perrine Simon-Nahum and Iain Stewart, represent this Companion at its best, revealing the diversity of paths that lead from Aron’s political thought.

The third section of the book, devoted to Aron’s engagement with the ‘Great Men of the Past,’ raises a number of questions regarding the Companion’s organization. Since both the section on international relations and the philosophy of history contain articles on Aron’s relationship with major figures in the history of philosophy, a third section on this aspect of Aron’s intellectual career seems redundant. Furthermore, despite the praise one finds throughout the book for Aron’s engagement in the major events and ideas of his time, there is almost no mention throughout the book of Aron’s relationships with the ‘great men,’ so to speak, of his own time, even though his correspondences and friendships with thinkers such as Leo Strauss, Alexandre Kojève, and Carl Schmitt are well known. Finally, the main structure of the book suggests a division between Aron the political sociologist and Aron the philosopher, while one of the most important insights the collection presents on his work concerns the ways in which Aron combined lucid political analysis with an engagement with the philosophical tradition.

The Companion to Raymond Aron ends much in the same way it begins, its epilogue by Christian Bachelier echoing the heroic style of biographical narration found in the book’s introduction. The tendency towards hagiography that leads to this bookend effect, though the product of a sincere aim to overcome past mistreatments of Aron’s work, ends up distracting from the important insights and innovative presentations found throughout the book’s pages. This shortcoming, alongside some questionable organizational choices, results in a volume whose whole is much less than the sum of its many formidable parts.

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Kate Wilkinson, Women and Modesty in Late Antiquity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, ix + 174 pp., $95.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-107-03027-5

Kate Wilkinson, assistant professor and director of the graduate program in Women and Gender Studies at Towson University, explores how the virtue of modesty expresses women’s agency, in her book Women and Modesty in Late Antiquity. Wilkinson’s monograph – a revision of her 2009 dissertation at Emory University – draws on historical theology, feminist historiography, and ethnography to examine the subject. Her thesis is clearly stated in the introduction: modesty, though a conventional Roman virtue, was a creative and above all performative demonstration of women’s agency and subjectivity.

Chapter 1 locates Women and Modesty within feminist historiography, offers a definition of modesty, introduces Wilkinson’s primary sources, and provides the reader with an overview of her method. Her deft review of feminist historiography balances attention to individual voices while providing a coherent overview of the discipline and her project’s place