

Changing Paideia throughout History

The Hellenic Greeks

Getting an Advantage

Around 1150 BC, the ancient Greek civilization of the Mycenaeans collapsed as a result of barbarian invasions. Their agrarian economy fell into dramatic decline, and the Greeks were forced to rely on a more pastoral existence. Greek culture quickly slipped into a period known as the “Greek Dark Ages.” This benighted episode of Greek history lasted about four hundred years.

After agriculture and settled farming began to reappear, family farms started to replace communal and tribal enterprises in Greece and in other areas of the Mediterranean. Over a period of time, families banded together into confederations to defend themselves and their lands against outside threats. Ancient Greek families of this period coalesced together in what they called a *polis*, or city-state, to gain an “advantage” over adversaries. They needed a means of defense from other tribes, or an “advantage” over predatory brigands and enemy clans. These original land-owning families formed the aristocratic foundations of the earlier Hellenic Period.

Ancient Greeks united for security and to protect their prosperity. Their city-states were fortified and usually located on a high place. This “high city” or *acropolis* gave the people of the *polis* an “advantage” over those whom would attack from a lower vantage point. Once Greeks had established an advantage, the *polis* looked to justify its actions for establishing a means of defense. Humans needed to explain their actions as “right and proper.” These justifications and explanations became the *polis*’ view of “justice.” What is the “good” soon followed what was determined to be “just.” When those in a confederation could agree on what is “good” and what is “just,” the alliance or the confederation could begin to evolve into a coherent society and culture.

Decline of the Aristocrats

At the dawn of the Hellenic Age, *circa* 750 BC, aristocrats held privileged positions in the Greek society because they were the warriors who defended the cities from despoilers. Once small landowners began to participate in the defense of the city, the power of the aristocrats quickly ebbed. Soon, all those who fought in the army on behalf of the *polis* attained the rights of the privileged. Greeks soon viewed “the good life” as self-government and participation in the *polis*.

Most scholars believe that the Greeks were the first people to form republican governments. Interestingly, some scholars now advance the notion that the Phoenicians, located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, had republican city-states dating earlier than the Greeks. The small maritime Phoenician city-states, like the Greek *poleis* were conducive to republican forms of government. The Phoenicians, a sea-faring people, had many contacts with the early Greek settlements. We do not know a lot about the Phoenicians because much of their culture was destroyed by the invading Assyrian hordes during the eighth century BC. Nonetheless, we do know that one of their

colonies, Carthage in North Africa, rose to prominence as a mighty Mediterranean Empire during the third and second centuries BC. The city of Carthage operated under a republican regime.

Another way the Phoenicians may have helped ignite the Greeks to form republican governments was through their “phonetic” alphabet. The Phoenicians had developed an alphabet based on the letters’ sounds, or “phonics.” This alphabet made it possible for ordinary people to understand law codes. Regular citizens could vote on and understand the issues. Consequently, they could also easily follow the publicly enacted laws. The ability to record easily understandable laws would become one of the greatest strengths of the later developing Roman Republic.

The Warlike Greeks

As Greek society evolved, they revolutionized the military with the invention of the phalanx formation. The phalanx stood soldiers, known as the hoplites, side-by-side. The hoplites held shields that offered more protection for their comrade next to them in line, than they did for the individual holding that particular shield. This formation forced the soldiers to closely operate in unison. Hoplites formed a phalanx wall that cavalry charges could not penetrate. Horses refused to run through a wall and would stop dead in their tracks, allowing the hoplites to impale the riders on their extended pikes and spears. The hoplites formed walls eight lines deep, with the young men in the front and the grizzled veterans in the rear. All of these soldiers were citizens of the *polis*; all had the responsibility to participate in the Assembly and on juries. Since these men defended the city with their blood, they were given an equal say in the affairs of the city. All male citizens were the “ruling order” or *politeuma* in the ancient Greek *polis*. Aristocrats held no special privileges, since the cavalry became obsolete and offered no special protection for the *polis*.

Logos

To the Greeks, *logos* or reasoned speech, was the center of human activity. Reasoned speech separates humans from the animals. The Greeks gave primacy to public things in order to engage in *logos*. Private things, in contrast, the Greeks considered aspects of the human condition closest to animals. Humans sleep, engage in sexual relations for procreation, give birth, and maintain their provisions of wealth in private, just as animals do. They conducted these activities within their homes. The private realm lacked what the public realm nurtured. Men could share reasoned speech, unlike they shared other things. All men could share the words of an orator or share a discussion; dissimilarly, they could not share the same piece of food or the same space. Greek men valued the shared elements of their lives. During his famous funeral oration for Athenian soldiers, who had died during Athen’s Peloponnesian War with Sparta, the great Athenian general, Pericles said:

Our public men have, besides politics, their private affairs to attend to, and our ordinary citizens, though occupied with pursuits of industry, are still fair judges of public matters; for, unlike any other nation, **regarding him who takes no part in these duties not as unambitious, but as useless**, we Athenians are able to judge at all events if we cannot

originate, and instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of actions, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all.

In his *Politics*, Aristotle takes Pericles' explanation of how Athenians cherish *logos* and their public lives in the *polis*, and he applies it to all of mankind as a universal.

So it is manifest that the city is among the things that exist by nature, that **a human being is by nature a political animal** and anyone who is cityless by nature and not by chance is either a depraved sort or better than a human being.

Modern English still reflects that ancient abhorrence of the private man in the word deprivation.

The Greeks valued *logos*, so much so that every free Greek male had the obligation to speak in the Assembly, to judge on juries, and to soldier in the military. In Athens, citizens would be chosen by lot to serve in the executive, so that leadership was spread out amongst the free male citizens of the city. Greek *poleis* were ruled under a democratic "regime" or *politeia*.

Citizens based their collective rights on their willingness to fight for the *polis*. They developed a strong martial culture, where military prowess became one of their most cherished virtues. Competition, or *agon*, drove many of the *poleis'* policies. The ideal of the contest stood paramount whether it was in committees, in the Olympics, in athletics, in the Assembly, or in war.

Christianity, later, changed the focus from public to private. In Christianity men and women gained salvation through their own conscience. Salvation was a private matter between the individual and God. Following that tradition, the modern American culture, like ancient Christians, gives primacy to the private.

Decline

Greek cities were always on the verge of blowing up. Factions fought factions, often to the detriment of the *polis*. Have-nots competed against the haves, personality cults vied for influence, and the Greeks endlessly quarreled about opinions. More importantly, the poor often could not meet their needs, let alone their wants. Famine and food shortages regularly plagued the people, so the poor continuously voted to go to war. Economic advancement could come through war, conquest, and rapine.

Greeks in many of the city-states had a tremendous amount of say in their governments. They believed that they gained advantage through a martial culture and a martial economy, and justified their actions in the name of defense. Ironically, the good life that came from self government decayed because all citizens did have an equitable say in the government. The citizens constantly sent the *polis* to war. The internecine Greek warfare finally weakened the city states after they had established a maritime empire, stretching from Iberia to past the Crimea in the Black Sea. Philip of Macedonia conquered the Greek cities in 338 BC, and ended the era of the independent Greek republican polis.

The Romans

The Roman Republic

The city of Rome, like most ancient polities, began as a monarchy. Outside influences, however, had dramatic effects on the central Italian metropolis. For its first two-hundred fifty years, the Etruscans in the north and the Greeks, who controlled the southern Italian colonies of *Magna Graecia* and Sicily in the south, greatly influenced the developing Latin kingdom. Rome adopted much of the Greek culture; it assimilated Greek religion into its own, and Rome incorporated much of Greek republicanism into its particular governmental structure. A great distinction between Greek and Roman culture, though, was that Greek society revolved around fraternity; whereas, at the center of Roman culture, stood the family. Family connections were much more important in Rome. Additionally, women had a more prominent role in Roman culture than they had in Greece. Roman women participated in the public realm, unlike Greek women who were relegated to the private sphere.

Rome changes Greek Republicanism

By 500 BC, Rome had adopted a republican form of government. Nevertheless, they developed some salient distinctions from their Greek mentors. Like most Greek *poleis*, all male citizens could vote. Rome, however, was not a direct democracy like Athens, nor was it an oligarchy. The Roman poor did vote, though they had fewer votes than those Romans in superior social stations. Graduated social strata existed in Rome and the strata were evident in the voting structure. The Romans organized society in a complex manner to avoid the problems the Greeks had faced, with the Greek poor constantly voting for war.

In Rome, all major decisions were made by the *Comitia Centuriata*, which was separated into 193 *centuries* that were organized by class and wealth. The upper levels contained many *centuries*; yet, each of these upper level *centuries* held very little members. The majority of all Romans fell into the last five *centuries*. Even the *centuries* were further divided according to age. Ninety-four *centuries* of the upper classes were populated by *seniors*, or old goats. Ninety-four others were manned by *iuniores*, or young goats. The aim of this division was to bring together “consent and wisdom.” The Greek city-states usually had the consent of the citizens, but seldom did they display wisdom.

There were also other major elements of the Roman government. Each year Romans elected two *Consuls*, or magistrates, who shared executive power. Other Romans served as *Praetors*, or judges, and others served as *Censors*. Censors were important because they held censuses and could expel a reprobate from a century and kick an individual out of his class. Another significant element of Roman government was the esteemed Senate, the Republic’s governing council. The Roman Senate had grown out of the royal Privy Council and brought prudence to Rome. They were a council of elders who were former *Consuls*. The Senate was made up of men from the *patrician* social order, then eventually included those from the lower ranking *plebeians*. Later, many of the senators came from a new order of nobles. Family pride followed service to the republic.

Roman Social Justice

There was a strong element of justice in the Roman method of governance. Only the landholders fought in wars. Roman armies were armies of seasonal soldiers, who also had to tend fields and family holdings. The poor were excluded from the military. The Romans only used stakeholders in the military. Martial valor became Rome's highest virtue. The stakeholders had privileges in the republic, but they also had duties. Landholding soldiers avoided the Greek problem of too many poor soldiers just looking for booty.

Also in the name of justice (and prudence,) Rome did not ignore their poor citizens. Leaders realized that the poor had to be given some hope for a better life. When Roman armies initially conquered surrounding cities to gain advantage, Rome took one-third of the conquered territory to set up colonies of poor Romans. At the next census, the colonists would move up in status and as a landholder, they would have to fight in the army to fulfill their duty.

Those who were conquered could also benefit. The Romans swallowed cities and regions and allowed many of the conquered people to become citizens. The Romans also allowed freed slaves the opportunity to become citizens. Freed slaves could move up in status, or be sent to a new colony to attain land.

The chance of upward social mobility gave the Roman Republic an element of order and justice. It also kept lower classes and orders in line with the hope of advancing in the future. Romans placed great honor in moving up and becoming a new man, or *Novus Homo*. The famous Marcus Tullius Cicero was a *Novus Homo*, who had ascended from a modestly socially-connected station to become one of the most important men in the last years of the Republic. Rome was ruled by a ruling order, or *Politeuma*, that was trained to rule, and that order remained open to lower stationed men.

The End of the Republic

The Republic was destroyed because some of the leading families became too powerful and fought major wars for their own aggrandizement. The system had broken down when the Republic had stopped wars of conquest and began using troops for garrison work. Small landholders lost their farms; there was no more booty. They became impoverished. Marius let the *Capata Dinta* (the poor who are counted in the census by their head because they own no land) join the army. By the middle of the first century BC, soldiers were no longer landholders with a stake in the health of the Republic. They owed their allegiance to a particular general like, Sullus, Marius, Pompey or Caesar. Civil wars commenced and eventually took their toll. What had made Rome successful, destroyed the Republic. The *politeia* changed. Despite all of the trappings of a republic, Rome reverted to a monarchy—the rule of one man. Julius Caesar, in 48 BC, took the title of First Consul, or dictator, of Rome for life. Republicans assassinated Caesar in 44 BC, and instead of resurrecting the Republic, Rome was ruled by three leading generals and then descended into more civil war. By 27 BC, Caesar's nephew and adopted son Octavius took the title Caesar Augustus as the first Roman Emperor.

CHRISTENDOM

Late Antiquity

A Universal Empire and a Universal Faith

Romans proudly boasted that Rome ruled as the universal (or catholic) empire. It was called the eternal city. One man, the emperor, ruled the universal empire, and Roman law carried universal weight from the Middle East all the way west to the Atlantic coast of Iberia. It stretched from Hadrian's Wall in Britain to the Egyptian border with Ethiopia in Africa. Citizens and subjects practiced Roman culture throughout the empire. All those outside the empire were considered to live in the uncivilized darkness of the barbarians. Despite Rome's attempt to make the city of Rome the universal model for the entire known world, there was one realm where Rome had no unity. That was in its religion. The Roman religion contained a pantheon of gods and goddesses, and with each conquest Rome brought a new pantheon of deities to commingle with its own. There was no unity of religion until 313 when Emperor Constantine the Great allowed Christianity to be practiced and eventually made it the religion of the Empire. In 325, Constantine called the Council of Nicea to root out Christian heresies and codify orthodox doctrine so that the universal empire would have a united universal religion.

The "one universal (or catholic) God" of Christianity fit well with the Roman need for universality and order. Christianity also fit well with the Greek practice of *logos*. The Greeks believed that the *polis* had brought order out of chaos, through *logos*, or reasoned speech. Their philosophers, always a subculture on the margins of society, universalized the belief that *logos* brings order out of chaos. They pronounced a need to universalize that belief and apply it to the world. Through *logos*, men could bring order to the world out of chaos. The Greek philosophers changed the *paideia*. They left the politics of the city and applied *logos* to the greater world. They became cosmopolitan. For example, Socrates had loved wisdom more than he loved the *polis*, and for that they killed him.

Athens meets Jerusalem in Rome

Christianity had taken the Greek virtue of *logos* and melded it to the Hebrew belief in Divine revelation. They had merged both Athens and Jerusalem in the universal Roman Empire. Christians easily understood the Greek influence on their faith. In the Gospel of John (*circa* 95-100 AD,) the author did not open with an infancy narrative, detailing the birth of Jesus. Instead he opens in verse one:

In the beginning was the Word (in Greek, *Logos*), and the *Logos*/Word was with God, and the *Logos*/Word was God.

In melding Athens with Jerusalem, Christianity had dramatically changed the Roman world, its *paideia*. Whereas in Rome the highest virtues were duty, martial valor, and family honor, in Christianity, the focus moved to the next world, the afterlife. The new virtue that emerged was holiness. This new virtue was a great equalizer of people. Anyone could become holy, not just the nobility or warriors. Also, "in the eyes of God

all were equal,” as recorded in a letter from the early Christian leader, Paul of Tarsus, (*circa* 48 AD:)

For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendant, heirs according to the promise.

Although during the third century AD, Roman jurist Domitius Ulpian, had written that “By law of nature all men are equal,” Paul's first century ideas of male and female equality were considered outrageous throughout much of the ancient world. Also, the idea of master-slave equality was considered radical, as was his notion that Jews and Greeks were equals, especially when Paul's fellow Jews had looked upon themselves as God's chosen people. Paul's concept of equality did not transcend into official Roman society when Christianity became the religion of the Empire during the fourth century. Nevertheless, women, slaves, and non-citizens enjoyed many more rights than they had previously, and changes in the Roman sense of person had to be considered in light of Paul's teachings.

Christianity also brought the concept of theology to the Empire. Theology tries to understand revelation through reason. This is very different from the ancient Hebrew practice of teaching the law, or from the *Shrai* taught later in Islamic schools. Both the Hebrew *Torah* and Islamic *Shrai* come directly from Divine revelation. Christian law comes from revelation, as seen through reason. This theological tradition can be traced directly to the Greeks.

The ancient Greek Assembly, or *Ekklesia*, survives in the English word ecclesiastical, an adjective for church. The church was a debating society, much like the Greek Assembly. Christians continuously argued over doctrine. When Constantine called the Council of Nicea in 325 AD, the Church decided what was orthodox and what was heretical. These types of decisions were made in many subsequent councils and are still made today in the churches.

The tradition of participating in *logos* at the Assembly continued in the Church for centuries. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 AD, the Church carried on the Greek and Roman traditions in a Western Europe that was under the control of the barbarian Germanic tribes. Particularly, Christianity needed politics to operate because of the clerical practice of celibacy. Celibate bishops, monks, and nuns had no heirs, so the Church needed to participate in new elections for offices such as bishop, archbishop, abbots, abbottess, and popes.

Another major change that took place with the Empire's acceptance of Christianity, was the emphasis on the private, as opposed to the public. Salvation was a private matter between the Christian and God. The Christian had to accept the free gift of grace from God, Who judged the individual's conscience. This change allowed the person to be

considered as an individual. The person had individual duties to God and also had certain reciprocal individual rights as a Christian.

Medieval Politics

In Eastern Christianity, later Byzantine, the church and the state were one. Although the Patriarch of Constantinople was the “first of equals” in the Eastern Church’s hierarchy, he was subordinate to the Emperor. The Eastern doctrine of Caesaropapism allowed that the state, the Eastern Roman (later called Byzantine) Emperor, is supreme over the church in ecclesiastical matters. In the West, however, power (*politeia*) was divided between two *politeumas*, the pope and the Church in the spiritual realm, and the Germanic kings and emperors in the temporal realm. This doctrine of separation between church and state began a tradition in the West not experienced in many cultures.

After the Western Roman Empire fell in 476, the only law common throughout all of Europe was Canon Law, or Church Law. Power was stratified between many institutions. People could appeal a verdict from the ecclesiastical court to a county court. They had many options. Since there were many types of courts, such as county courts, imperial courts, manorial courts, royal courts, diocesan courts, *inter alia*, they competed with each other for authority. From this competition came the convention that people had certain historical, traditional rights. From competition between the spiritual and temporal authorities, people were able to cut out a body of traditional rights and privileges. When kings went “beyond the Pale,” bishops and popes would intervene. When the clergy overextended their realm, secular authorities would protest.

Medieval kings had very limited power from the Germanic tradition. They operated locked in feudal relationships of oaths and duties. Vassals swore their allegiance to kings, and kings had responsibilities to the vassals. Besides holiness, the highest virtue amongst the nobility was fidelity. Vassals must be loyal to lords, and lords must be loyal to vassals and their feudal arrangements. Consequently, kings could not control the church, and they had to ask the vassals for services. Also, they could not just impose taxes or take money from their subjects. Kings would have to call parleys (a French word for *logos*) to get consensus. They would have to summon representative assemblies and sometimes appeal to Canon Law to get their way.

During the Medieval period, the Church served as part of a divided *Politeuma*. They had great authority, but they had little power. They monopolized the definition of “justice” and of the “good.” The power lay with the Germanic kings and emperors who could call armies together for battle. The kings monopolized the “advantage.” Although the Church worked in partnership with the kings as part of the *Politeuma*, as definers of justice and of the good, *they* controlled much of the *Paideia*. The Church educated the children, and they bestowed the highest offices and honors. Also, the highest virtue of the period was holiness, which undoubtedly lay in the spiritual realm. Fidelity, martial valor, and honor remained important virtues. Nonetheless, they were clearly subordinate to holiness, as the highest moral excellence of the society.

THE MODERN ERA

Europe Turns Upside-Down

Three major events took place during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries to make dramatic changes in the *Paideia* and destroyed the Church's shared role as a superior member of the *Politeuma*. Since the *Paideia* affects the ideology, politics, and philosophy of the regime, and the *Politeuma* represents the material ruling order of the society, these major changes gradually changed the *Politeia* over time and in different ways, and in different places throughout the Western World.

In 1476 Swiss pikemen defeated the highly renowned mounted cavalry of Charles the Bold of Burgundy. Charles possessed holdings throughout Europe, where adversaries considered him an extremely formidable foe. Amazingly, when his knights went against Swiss peasants holding pikes at Grandson and Morat, they were routed. Furthermore, the Swiss again routed Charles at Nancy in early 1477. There they even killed the venerated Charles, the last Duke of Burgundy. Since an army of commoners could defeat an army of specially trained aristocratic knights, the practical need for greatly specialized knights drastically diminished. Like the effects of the hoplite phalanx against cavalry in ancient Greece, the defeat of the knights in 1476 changed the world forever.

In 1517, Niccolò Machiavelli wrote the *Discourses of Livy*, and redefined classical republicanism. From this work and from other innovations, Machiavelli became the father of modern liberal democracy and the founder of viewing institutions as the necessary foundation of good government. Most of the great luminaries of the Renaissance had looked back to the glories of Greek and Rome. Machiavelli, however, looked forward to the changing world, while pretending to report on ancient Rome through the writings of Livy. He foresaw what his new-type of politics would bring. He also comprehended that a new type of warfare had supplanted the tactics of the knighted cavalry. Machiavelli recommended using peasant stakeholders in the army, instead of foreign mercenary knights and soldiers, which had been a long standing practice in Europe. He wanted to merge the city's politics with its defense and military. The Florentine political thinker advanced that the common view of a separation between civil and military affairs was incorrect and dangerous. The ancient Greeks and Romans had seen no such separation and had used citizen soldiers in their armies. Machiavelli saw a close interrelationship between the two. Even the best civil ordinances require the support from the military to be effective. Military power provides the foundation for both internal and external civil order.

The following year, Martin Luther tacked his ninety-five thesis onto the door of the Church at Wittenberg, thus launching the Protestant Reformation. The Reformation had devastating effects on the European *Paideia*. The Catholic Church would no longer command the great authority it had during the Medieval period. Authority would move to join power within the structure of the state. Monarchs like Henry VIII of England and many of the German Lutheran princes adopted the Byzantine doctrine of *Caesaropapism*. Monarchs took direct control of their particular national church, as well as holding control of the state. Even in Catholic countries like Spain and France, kings gained much power from popes, who were fearful that the Catholic kings would leave the Catholic Church. Since kings then controlled both the spiritual and temporal realms, they had

more unlimited powers. Many monarchs quickly adopted the doctrine of “Divine Right of Kings,” where they believed that God had predestined them to rule their kingdoms. To question the King was to question God. Monarchs of the early modern period had powers Medieval kings could have only dreamed of.

Another effect of the Reformation was that it more thoroughly promoted individualism. The Catholic Church was communitarian. The individual was responsible for his or her own salvation, but they needed the aid of the entire Church and the sacraments of the Church to attain redemption. Protestants, however, could affect their own salvation through faith (some denominations teach that only God makes the decision about salvation. The individual is chosen or predestined for salvation. He or she had no choice.) Since Protestants could gain salvation through faith alone, they needed to read the Bible for instruction. This responsibility promoted a type of individualism that had been rediscovered during the Renaissance in art, music, architecture, and writing, *inter alia*. Luther said that every man was a priest; thus, they no longer needed the Magisterium of the Catholic Church (the teaching body.) He also said that every man could interpret Scripture for himself, through the Holy Spirit; thus, there was no longer a need for the Church’s tutelage. The Reformation changed the direction of Western Europe dramatically.

The victory of the Swiss pikemen, the writings of Machiavelli, and the beginning of the Protestant Reformation changed Western traditions forever. Although Europe had been modernizing well before the Italian Renaissance, these three events, or movements, greatly changed the direction of the greater society. Governments became much more authoritarian than in the past. Kings gained absolute control in many cases, but at the same time, the ideas of individual liberty and individual rights began to grow. Aristocrats no longer had a monopoly on the elite military and cavalry; the pursuit of individual interests would be available in Machiavelli’s institutions, and Protestantism necessitated that individuals learn to read and become responsible for their own salvation. The antipodal directions that originated during this period would put great strains on society, resulting in numerous revolutions and civil wars over the next several centuries. Juxtaposing twentieth-century regimes such as the Nazis, Fascists, and Communists with liberal democracies like the United States and the United Kingdom, reveals that the tension was not yet resolved during the twentieth century. Interestingly, the trajectories of descendant societies during the twenty-first century seem to be again moving in opposite directions.

Niccolo Machiavelli

Luther and his followers looked earnestly to overthrow the Catholic Church. Machiavelli looked just as sincerely to overthrow Christianity in its entirety. Machiavelli wrote that a republic needs strong, ruthless leaders like the founding fathers of great civilizations, *e.g.*, Moses, Romulus, Philip, or Cyrus (of Persia.) He wrote that it was impossible for the unnamed prophet (Jesus) to ever win in the end. Italy needed a real redeemer, not a redeemer that offered salvation in the after world. Rather, the ancient peninsula needed a martial redeemer to save it from greater powers in France, Spain, and Germany. The problem plaguing Europe was that it was ruled by the Prince of Peace. Machiavelli said

that the only successful princes in Europe were the bishops because they were the ones who held real authority. Ironically, they had authority, but did not have power. Very few bishops controlled mighty armies to enforce their will. This, Machiavelli found detestable.

Machiavelli believed that in antiquity, victors slaughtered, enslaved, or left the losers in abject misery. Nonetheless, in the sixteenth century Christians did not treat Christian adversaries in a like manner. He wanted to go back to pre-313 AD Rome, before the Christian Church was accepted into the Empire. Machiavelli yearned for the times when the *Paideia* required Romans to name their sons Caesar, Tiberius, and Pompey, not Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, and Paul.

The author of *The Discourses of Livy* and of *The Prince* claimed that Christianity made men esteem military honor, civil honor, and glory less. By holding up holiness as the greatest moral excellence, Christianity left its people prey to wicked men. Machiavelli believed that all men were wicked and evil. Unlike Christianity, which also believed that all of fallen humanity was wicked, Machiavelli offered no grace or redemption. Because of his firm belief in man's depravity, Machiavelli wrote that all governments need checks on the evil men who run them. Here marks the beginning of modern liberal politics. Institutions showed the way to good government, not the reliance on and hope for good leaders. Machiavelli believed that a society could have a good leader from time to time, but not every society could have a good leader every time. Thus, society must have institutions where the virtue lay. Virtue lies in the institutions, not dependent on the individual. The institutions would force men to act in a certain way that were beneficial to society, or the institution would cast them aside.

Machiavelli showed why tensions and conflicts were necessary for good government. Tensions stopped evil men from consolidating too much power. He wrote that the *Popolo* (the bourgeois commoners) and the *Grandi* (the nobility) must cooperate to enslave others (foreigners). Their focus must not be on exploiting one another; rather, they should look for success in conquering foes together. By cooperating together, the *Popolo* and *Grandi* would check each other's ambitions and the society would prosper.

The first book in *Discourses* explains that a good government lasts only one generation. In a monarchy, a good king will have a bad son. In an oligarchy, the aristocracy will eventually have bad offspring, and in a democracy, the mob will definitely steal property, as soon as it realizes it can. Machiavelli suggests that a good republican government, however, can survive past one generation, if it is structured to institutionalize fear that will control ambitious men. Those who act out of line would be punished and removed by the institution, or the institution, by its very nature, would not allow men to act in any manner detrimental to the government or society.

Aristotle believed that societies engage in *logos* concerning advantage, justice, and the good. He believed that man could find the good through reason. Machiavelli, on the other hand, believed that reason is the slave of passion, and he never gets past advantage. He says that our appetites tell us what to do; our desires focus our attention. He also

differs from Aristotle, who suggests that friendship between morally virtuous men is paramount to a successful career. In contrast, Machiavelli believes that one should avoid friendships because in friendships someone owns someone else. Only big, independent men rule.

In the *Discourses on Livy*, Machiavelli pretended he was writing about the Roman historian Livy. In reality, he endeavored to use Livy's history and antiquity itself to destroy Christianity. Machiavelli asserted that Christianity stopped Europeans from imitating. He believed the world moves from order to disorder to order again and so on; to him history is usually cyclical. Unfortunately, Machiavelli explained, men do not learn when they are suffocated by an extraordinary force. He then labels Christianity as the suffocating force destroying Europe. Machiavelli believed that Christianity caused weakness and would not let Europeans imitate the glorious ancients' efficient brutality.

The Christian Church preaches that there was a fundamental change in history—the sacrifice of Christ. To Christians, this event was the one changing event of history. All subsequent events pale in comparison and had to be viewed through Christ's death and resurrection. This is why Christians, prior to the Renaissance, did not try to improve society or imitate the ancients. They looked at the world as a creation of an eternal and unchanging God. This view was consistent with Aristotelian philosophy that said all things came from an unchanging and immovable Prime Cause, or Prime Mover. Their worldview was consistent with Divine revelation and with reason, as explained by Aristotle, and later scholastic philosophers, such as Thomas Aquinas.

Machiavelli's vision of republicanism was new. He offers a radical departure from both Thomas Aquinas and from Aristotle. Machiavelli sees Plato's and Aristotle's imaginary, ideal republics as fictitious polities, far from what has ever actually existed. None of these philosophical models ever emerged after the Greek philosophers had presented them in their writings. Machiavelli also has criticism for the ancient republics that relied so heavily on having virtuous men in order to have good government.

Florence's controversial sage lists virtues as important to a republic, but to him, they are not personal virtues or values. They are just tools. He subverts moral distinctions. His principle objection to the ancient republics is that they thought they could inculcate public virtue to the ruling class. Machiavelli believed that this is not possible and ridiculous to even try. He strongly contends that men are vicious and wicked by nature.

Machiavelli's Influence

Machiavelli's covert influence on Western Europe and on England in particular, is nearly immeasurable. Many scholars and intellectuals read his works, though they had been banned by the Church and by governments alike. There are over four hundred mentions of Machiavelli in Shakespeare. Shakespeare's contemporary playwright, Christopher Marlow, even has Machiavelli appear in his play, "Jew of Malta." He used the Machiavelli character to utter the then condemnable words, "I count religion as a childish toy." Another contemporary, Sir Edmund Spenser, writes a Machiavellian treatise against wild Gaelic Irish in his *Faerie Queene*—a tribute to Queen Elizabeth I. Scholars

and literary artists alike begin to use Machiavelli's works and reputation to publicly voice opinions subversive to Christianity and the government.

Political actors were also greatly influenced by Machiavelli. During the reign of Henry VIII in the late sixteenth century, Thomas Cromwell, the man who had arranged Henry's break with Rome in 1534, had voraciously read Machiavelli's *Prince*. He later offered it to Henry's cousin, Reginald Poole, as an antidote to bad ideas, when Poole had asked him how to advise the King. Cromwell also used Machiavellian techniques in other areas of his career, such as when he arranged for Henry to marry Anne Boleyn, and when he had helped Henry confiscate all of the Catholic monasteries and their treasures. The confiscations violated the former sanctity of the Church, but in Machiavellian style, Cromwell and Henry had reasoned that a raw exhortation of power would solidify Henry's role as head of the Church of England. The confiscations strengthened the nobles' support for Henry's ecclesiastical rebellion, since they were the recipients of monastery lands and buildings. The *Prince* knew how to garner support and reward himself with riches at the same time. By giving land to the nobles, Henry had ensured the Catholic Church would never reign again in England, unless in the unlikely event that the Church gave up all claims to its former property.

Bacon & Hobbes

When King James VI of Scotland ascended to the throne of England in 1603 as James I, Sir Francis Bacon was able to rehabilitate a sullied reputation that had been tarnished in his opposition to Elizabeth I's tax program in 1584. James made him knight the first year of his reign, promoted him to attorney general in 1613, and then made him Lord Chancellor of England in 1618. Bacon, an avid reader of Machiavelli, had meticulously studied *The Prince*. He had furtively rejected Christianity, and he assiduously worked to subvert and undermine the Anglican Church. As a natural philosopher, or scientist, Bacon introduced and popularized inductive reasoning into scientific investigations of nature. Bacon believed humanity, through science, would conquer nature, so there was no need for God. He wanted to overthrow nature and earnestly believed that science would conquer death within his lifetime. Bacon reasoned that humanity could torture nature to get all of its secrets and conquer the world. Science would provide material benefits to man that would produce a heaven on earth, instead of an illusory, spiritual heaven after death.

Bacon set a goal to get priests out of the universities and then replace them with scientists. He believed that Christianity was a simple superstitious fantasy. If Christianity could be eliminated, government and science could work together to better life on earth.

The political thinker, Thomas Hobbes served ably as Bacon's personal secretary and learned well from his mentor. Hobbes adopted Bacon's distrust of the Church. He also believed that science, industry, and commerce would provide material benefits to humanity. Like Bacon, Hobbes had read Machiavelli enthusiastically. He agreed with the Florentine that reason was the slave of human passion. Unlike Machiavelli, however, Hobbes wanted to move past advantage, and he restored the need for justice to his

political system. Hobbesian justice, however, was only instrumental; it was not an absolute and could be used to fit the situation. For Hobbes, there were a lot of little goods in life, but no common, universal good. He believed that no person would ever get full satisfaction in life; however, people could experience a lot of little pleasures. Science and technological advancement would supply ample pleasures and conveniences, and people should be satisfied with each enjoyment and not pursue an unattainable complete satisfaction. Justice for Hobbes means that humans can get their small (material) satisfactions through mutual cooperation. Baconian materialism allowed Hobbes to push the great moral issues aside. Issues such as nineteenth century American slavery or modern-day abortion can not be compromised. An abolitionist could not accept partial or temporary slavery, nor could a pro-life advocate randomly accept some abortions and not others. Hobbes would have just ignored these types of moral dilemmas. He ignored moral issues that could not be satisfied through mutual cooperation and compromise.

Hobbes saw a strong monarch as necessary to keep order. Without order a society could not prosper. Like Machiavelli, Hobbes advocated a rule through fear of a violent death. Unlike Machiavelli though, Hobbes thought that only a king could provide the needed stability necessary to impose order in a society. Peace is paramount to Hobbes. A strong king would maintain peace and order, allowing the tranquil atmosphere conducive to engaging in prosperous commerce. Bacon's protégé took on Aristotle and Machiavelli and advocated monarchy over a republic. One law from one man is safer and easier and provides greater justice. Republics were too unstable and too influenced by popular opinion or elite interests.

Bacon had written that humanity was alone in a hostile world. Humans were competitors for scarce resources, including honor. Hobbes seemed to echo Bacon by explaining life in the state of nature as one that was nasty, brutish, and short. He believed that a strong king brought order to the state of nature, so that humankind could participate in the tranquil occupation of commerce.

John Locke

In his discourses, the political thinker John Locke effectively used rhetoric, or the art of changing minds without people even knowing that their minds had been changed. He wrote in this manner because he stealthily attempted to subvert the Christian world view and the legitimacy of the then King of England, James II. When he wrote his "Two Treatises on Government" in 1680 and 1681, they were published in 1690 after the Glorious Revolution, King James II was still on the throne. The text would easily be considered subversive, if he had explained his true thesis openly. Locke builds his vision for society off of Hobbes' ideas of a state of nature and tries to show why it was allowable for man to subdue the earth. He wrote that God had given man the earth. God also had given man reason; thus, natural providence is a reflection of Divine providence. For the ancients and the Christians, humans only had use of things on earth. They were stewards of what the gods or God had provided for them. For centuries, Jews and Christians had emphasized the first clause of Genesis Chapter 1, verse 28, which says: "God blessed them (Adam and Eve) saying: "Be fruitful and multiply." Locke emphasized the second clause: "fill the earth and subdue it." Locke's focus caused a

major paradigm shift. At first, Locke agrees with the steward model and says all comes from God. He then gently explains that every man has property in his own person, meaning that he at least owns himself. Eventually, Locke diminished God's role in man's creation of things, and he asserts that man owns all of that to which he had applied his own labor. Under the steward model all comes from God. Under Locke's model the labor or work of the man's hands are his property alone.

This philosophy gave colonists a cogent argument when they took lands from the native American Indians. The colonists worked the land and produced a harvest on lands that Indians had used for hunting and gathering. Locke's ideas fit the eighteenth century American experience well. Americans cleared much land and produced bountiful harvests. Working the land made the land the worker's possession and excluded common ownership. Locke asserted that the only value a thing had came from the labor that is mixed with the raw material. He argued that the appropriation of common land does not lessen production. He advanced that the enclosure of common lands in England had increased production and provision. If one person owns the land, he will work to make it profitable. If everyone owns the land, no one will work to improve it. To many English contemporaries, the American colonies were proving Locke's thesis.

Locke's Politics

Republics had come and they had gone. Ancient Greek city-states had failed because of factions. The Greeks believed that they were rational beings and they fought over *logos*--ideas. Christians believed they were rational beings, and they fought over *logos* also. They tied *logos* to their theology. Locke, on the other hand, does not advocate arguing over *logos*. He, like Bacon, believed man must use reason to conquer nature. The *logos* is tied to technology. Machiavelli had said that reason is the slave to passion. Bacon had believed that the proper sphere for reason is useful science. Ben Franklin echoed Bacon and also believed man should use reason to make tools. In fact he changed Aristotle's dictum, "Man is a political animal," to "Man is a tool-making animal."

Modern thought had revolutionized productivity. Many thought that science would fill all of humanity's appetites and desires. Technology would then give people desires they did not know they had. It would change wants into needs and give people new wants. Science was the way to salvation and heaven on earth. Many believed that all aspects of life should reflect that notion.

As Hobbes tried to use Machiavelli to defeat Machiavellian thought, Locke used Hobbes to try to defeat Hobbes. Hobbes had written that the king has one mind to keep order. It's in the king's interest to protect the people: his sheep. Locke counters that Hobbes argument presupposes the king's sanity, and that the king possessed no vainglory. Unfortunately, most kings possess vainglory, and this often brings them into foolish wars, not the peaceful reigns that Hobbes found necessary for order and prosperous commerce. Locke looks to republicanism because the peoples' aggregate interests are the public interests. Locke's thoughts become the basis for much of the radical Whig thought of the eighteenth century British Empire, both in England and in America. The Whigs want to keep power as close to the people as possible.

Not only do Whigs follow Locke, they comprehend the English political philosopher, Joseph Harrington's vision in his 1656 work, *Oceania*. Harrington proposed that the political institution would dictate character. No one can ever have interest or the power to disturb the institution. Government is a machine that will produce good government, even though the people really do not want good government. There is no need for the *paideia* to produce good men. The government machine, or institutions, would produce good government. People only want to satisfy their particular desires and appetites. Nonetheless, they cooperate within the government to get what they can. For Harrington, society can get justice for all out of unjust desires.

Throughout the ages, human society has offered offices and honors to certain individuals according to what virtues the society held sacred. The society's *paideia* taught people the ways and manners needed to attain those offices. In ancient Rome, the successful fearless warrior was held up for admiration. The victorious general would often become Caesar. During the Medieval period, the Church would hold up saints who had achieved holiness as the model to emulate. By the eighteenth century, the English could hold up Ben Franklin as their ideal. He was the practical inventor who had created items to better the lives of citizens. The center of life was pleasure from new technical devices.

By the 1770's, the machine was in place to allow the American colonies to call for independence based on John Locke's explication of man's natural rights of life, liberty, and property. The Americans went on to form a government anchored in strong institutions that require separate branches of government and checks and balances. They had adopted Machiavelli's belief that man could not be trusted, especially since it was so consistent to the Christian belief in a fallen human race. Nevertheless, they also pursued the ancient virtues of *logos*, honor, fortitude, trustworthiness and rectitude. Many also wished to pursue holiness, like their Christian forefathers had. The Americans constructed institutions because they did not trust human nature; yet, they pursued the ancient and Christian virtues because, unlike Machiavelli, they believed man was redeemable and people could pursue virtuous lives and help provide good government.