WESTERN CIVILIZATION-AN OPEN SOURCE BOOK

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Chapter 1: Archaic Age Greece 2000-479 BCE

Our story of Western Civilization begins with the earliest days of ancient Greece. The first Greek civilization was the Minoan based on the island of Crete, which was established by 2800 BCE and flourished from roughly 2000-1450 BCE. The sudden collapse of this civilization in the mid 15th century BCE is still a mystery, with some historians claiming a massive tsunami destroyed Crete while others argue that the Minoans were invaded and conquered by the next Greek civilization, the Mycenaean. This culture lasted between 1600 and 1100 BCE and was based on warfare, with evidence showing conquests of various islands in the Aegean Sea and possibly Crete. We have also found Mycenaean pottery from Italy to Egypt to Syria, indicating a wide ranging trade network. By 1100 BCE, however, Mycenaean civilization was on the brink of collapse, throwing Greece into a dark period of roughly four hundred years before we see the development of the Greek city-state, or polis. A polis served as a region’s political, economic, and social hub, and for a period of roughly two hundred years various city-states began sending explorers and colonists to other parts...
of the Mediterranean and Black Seas to set up colonies that would be tied to the mother city, or metropolis, and spread Greek culture across the Mediterranean Basin. Also during this period changes in warfare reflected larger changes in Greek society. The primary soldiers of Greek armies were now foot soldiers, ordinary citizens who needed to provide themselves with basic armor and weapons. This reliance on non-nobles to defend the city-state meant a de-emphasis on aristocratic cavalry, with an accompanying decrease in the political power nobles held in some city-states, especially Athens. With a more open, inclusive and less martial society, Athens became one of the most powerful of Greek city-states, and it is here where the form of government known as democracy will begin evolving during the Archaic Age and flourish later on. Sparta, the other main Greek power, was quite the opposite of Athens: closed off, xenophobic, warrior driven, and based off values such as order and stability. The differing paths these two will take during the Archaic Age will set the stage for conflict later in Greek history, conflict that will effectively bring Greek civilization to its knees.

Here in Chapter 1 the documents begin with a look at one of the greatest of Archaic Age poets, Hesiod, and an excerpt from his work *Theogony*. Specifically, we begin to see the attitude towards women during this period of Greek history. Likewise, the next document, Semonides of Amargos’ *The Types of Women*, also gives us a window into gender relations and the way women were viewed by men in the earliest centuries of Greek civilization. Following those two are excerpts from the poetry of Sappho, one of the most well regarded poets in Western civilization. Her writings are prime examples of lyric poetry, which developed during the Archaic Age, was meant to be accompanied by music from a lyre, and was much more emotionally charged than poetry that came before. Moving into
the political realm we see fragments from the poetry of Solon, the first of three Athenian leaders who would reform the city-state’s political and economic life, giving an increasing amount of power to an increasing number of people, thus building Athenian democracy. His poetry discusses his views on order and his solutions to Athens’ most serious dilemmas. Lastly is an excerpt from the philosopher Aristotle’s work *The Athenian Constitution*, wherein he examines not only the deeds of Solon but also of the second reformer, Cleisthenes, and how the changes implemented by these two men impacted Athenian government and political culture.

**1. Hesiod-Theogony**

*Hesiod is one of the two best known Archaic Age poets, Homer being the other. Only two of Hesiod’s works have survived intact down to today: Works and Days and Theogony, from which the excerpt below is taken. Theogony recounts the creation of the world, the birth of the titans, and the war between them and the Greek gods, led by Zeus. In the selection below we see a discussion of women and the way they were seen in the Archaic Age of Greek history. As you read the selection keep in mind the larger context of this phase of the Greek past and think of how this document fits into that larger narrative.*

Pernicious is the race; the woman tribe
Dwells upon earth, a mighty bane to men;
No mates for wasting want but luxury;
And as within the close-roofed hive, the drones,
 Helpers of sloth, are pampered by the bees;
These all the day, till sinks the ruddy sun,
Haste on the wing, ‘their murmuring labors ply,’
And still cement the white and waxen comb;
Those lurk within the covered hive, and reap
With glutted maw the fruits of others’ toil;
Such evil did the Thunderer send to man
In woman’s form, and so he gave the sex,  
Ill helpmates of intolerable toils.  
Yet more of ill instead of good he gave:  
The man who shunning wedlock thinks to shun  
The vexing cares that haunt the woman-state,  
And lonely waxes old, shall feel the want  
Of one to foster his declining years;  
Though not his life be needy, yet his death  
Shall scatter his possessions to strange heirs,  
And aliens from his blood. Or if his lot  
Be marriage and his spouse of modest fame  
Congenial to his heart, e’en then shall ill  
Forever struggle with the partial good,  
And cling to his condition. But the man  
Who gains the woman of injurious kind  
Lives bearing in his secret soul and heart  
Inevitable sorrow: ills so deep  
As all the balms of medicine cannot cure.  

Take to your house a woman for your bride  
When in the ripeness of your manhood’s pride;  
Thrice ten your sum of years, the nuptial prime;  
Nor fall far short nor far exceed the time.  
Four years the ripening virgin shall consume,  
And wed the fifth of her expanding bloom.  
A virgin choose: and mould her manners chaste;  
Chief be some neighboring maid by you embraced;  
Look circumspect and long; lest you be found  
The merry mock of all the dwellers round.  
No better lot has Providence assigned  
Than a fair woman with a virtuous mind;  
Nor can a worse befall than when your fate  
Allots a worthless, feast-contriving mate.
She with no torch of mere material flame
Shall burn to tinder your care-wasted frame;
Shall send a fire your vigorous bones within
And age unripe in bloom of years begin.

Carroll Mitchell, *Greek Women In all ages and in all countries* (Philadelphia: The Rittenhouse Press, 1907-1908), 96-98. Located on the Internet Archive:

2. Semonides of Amargos-The Types of Women

Very little is definitively known about Semonides of Amargos other than that he was a poet. Only fragments of Semonides’ poetry exist, with the longest, *The Types of Women*, excerpted below. Other fragments of Semonides’ poetry make references to Hesiod, leading some to believe that the Types of Women and other examples of Semonides’ work were influenced by Hesiod. In the selection below Semonides writes of women as wives in Archaic Age Greece, comparing them to various types of animals. Keep in mind Hesiod’s *Theogony* excerpt as well as the larger narrative of Greek history as you read this source.

God made the mind of woman in the beginning of different qualities; for one he fashioned like a bristly hog, in whose house everything tumbles about in disorder, bespattered with mud, and rolls upon the ground; she, dirty, with unwashed clothes, sits and grows fat on a dung heap. *The woman like mud* is ignorant of everything, both good and bad; her only accomplishment is eating: cold though the winters be, she is too stupid to draw near the fire. *The woman made like the sea* has two minds; when she laughs and is glad, the stranger seeing her at home will give her praise—there is nothing better than this on the earth, no, nor fairer; but another day she is unbearable, not to be looked at or approached, for she is raging mad. To
friend and foe she is alike implacable and odious. Thus, as the sea is often calm and innocent, a great delight to sailors in summertime, and oftentimes again is frantic, tearing along with roaring billows, so is this woman in her temper.

_The woman who resembles a mare_ is delicate and long-haired, unfit for drudgery or toil; she would not touch the mill, or lift the sieve, or clean the house out! She bathes twice or thrice a day, and anoints herself with myrrh; then she wears her hair combed out long and wavy, dressed with flowers. It follows that this woman is a rare sight to one’s guests; but to her husband she is a curse, unless he be a tyrant who prides himself on such expensive luxuries. _The ape-like wife_ has Zeus given as the greatest evil to men. Her face is most hateful. Such a woman goes through the city a laughing-stock to all the men. Short of neck, with narrow hips, withered of limb, she moves about with difficulty. O! wretched man, who weds such a woman! She knows every cunning art, just like an ape, nor is ridicule a concern to her. To no one would she do a kindness, but every day she schemes to this end—how she may work someone the greatest injury.

_The man who gets the woman like a bee_ is lucky; to her alone belongs no censure; one’s household goods thrive and increase under her management; loving, with a loving spouse, she grows old, the mother of a fair and famous race. She is preeminent among all women, and a heavenly grace attends her. She cares not to sit among the women when they indulge in lascivious chatter. Such wives are the best and wisest mates Zeus grants to men. Zeus made this supreme evil—woman: even though she seem to be a blessing, when a man has wedded one she becomes a plague.

Carroll Mitchell, _Greek Women In all ages and in all_

3. Sappho—Poetry Excerpts

The poet Sappho was born on the island of Lesbos in the Aegean Sea, where she would grow up to have a family and run a school for unmarried women. Her brilliance as a poet was recognized even in the ancient world, and though her reputation became sullied during the Middle Ages, she is still considered one of the West’s greatest poets. Only fragments of her work survive, but those that do focus more on human love than on gods. Her poetry is personal, emotional, and intense, making it relatable even today.

Poem A

“Sweet Nereids, grant to me
That home unscathed my brother may return,
And every end for which his soul shall yearn,
Accomplished see!

“And thou, immortal Queen,
Blot out the past, that thus his friends may know
Joy, shame his foes—nay, rather, let no one
By us be seen!

“And may he have the will
To me his sister some regard to show,
To assuage the pain he brought, whose cruel blow
My soul did kill,

“Yea, mine, for that ill name
Whose biting edge, to shun the festal throng
Compelling, ceased a while; yet back ere long
To goad us came!”

Poem B

“Splendor-throned Queen, immortal Aphrodite,
Daughter of Jove, Enchantress, I implore thee
Vex not my soul with agonies and anguish;
Slay me not, Goddess!

Come in thy pity—come, if I have prayed thee;
Come at the cry of my sorrow; in the old times
Oft thou hast heard, and left thy father’s heaven,
Left the gold houses,

Yoking thy chariot. Swiftly did the doves fly,
Swiftly they brought thee, waving plumes of wonder—
Waving their dark plumes all across the æther.
All down the azure.

Very soon they lighted. Then didst thou, Divine one,
Laugh a bright laugh from lips and eyes immortal,
Ask me ‘What ailed me—wherefore out of heaven,
Thus I had called thee?

What was it made me madden in my heart so?’
Question me smiling—say to me, ‘My Sappho,
Who is it wrongs thee? Tell me who refuses
Thee, vainly sighing.

Be it who it may be, he that flies shall follow;
He that rejects gifts, he shall bring thee many;
He that hates now shall love thee dearly, madly—
Aye, though thou wouldst not.’

So once again come, Mistress; and, releasing
Me from my sadness, give me what I sue for,
Grant me my prayer, and be as heretofore now
Friend and protectress.”

Poem C

“Peer of gods he seemeth to me, the blissful
Man who sits and gazes at thee before him,
Close beside thee sits, and in silence hears thee
Silverly speaking,
Laughing love’s low laughter. Oh this, this only
Stirs the troubled heart in my breast to tremble!
For should I but see thee a little moment,
Straight is my voice hushed;
Yea, my tongue is broken, and through and through me
‘Neath the flesh impalpable fire runs tingling;
Nothing see mine eyes, and a noise of roaring
Waves in my ear sounds;
Sweat runs down in rivers, a tremor seizes
All my limbs, and paler than grass in autumn.
Caught by pains of menacing death, I falter,
Lost in the love-trance.”

Carroll Mitchell, *Greek Women In all ages and in all countries* (Philadelphia: The Rittenhouse Press, 1907-1908), 116, 121-122. Located on the Internet Archive:

4. Solon-Poetry Fragments

Solon was an important Athenian statesman given full powers in the early sixth century BCE to reform Athens’ economy and government to avert serious crises. Many notable reforms, while not immediately establishing democracy in and of themselves, nonetheless put Athens on the path to democracy. In the poetry fragments excerpted below Solon explains why he felt Athens was in such dire straits and summarizes the steps he took to solve the city-state’s problems.

Fragment 13

“Out of the cloud come snow and hail in their fury, and the thunderbolt springeth from the lightning’s flash: so from great men ruin issueth upon the state, and the people through their own folly sink into slavery under a single lord. Having raised a man to too high a place, it is not easy later to hold him back: now is the time to be observant of all things.”
“If ye have suffered the melancholy consequences of your own incompetence, do not attribute this evil fortune to the gods. Ye have yourselves raised these men to power over you, and have reduced yourselves by this course to a wretched state of servitude. Each man among you, individually, walketh with the tread of a fox, but collectively ye are a set of simpletons. For ye look to the tongue and the play of a man’s speech and regard not the deed which is done before your eyes.”

Fragment 12

“The ruin of our state will never come by the doom of Zeus or through the will of the blessed and immortal gods; for Pallas Athena, valiant daughter of a valiant sire, is our stout-hearted guardian, and she holdeth over us her protecting arms. It is the townsfolk themselves and their false-hearted leaders who would fain destroy our great city through wantonness and love of money. But they are destined to suffer sorely for their outrageous behavior. They know not how to hold in check their full-fed lust, or, content with the merriment the banquet affords, to take their pleasure soberly and in order. . . . They are rich because they yield to the temptation of dishonest courses. . . . They spare neither the treasures of the gods nor the property of the state, and steal like brigands one from another. They pay no heed to the unshaken rock of holy Justice, who, though she be silent, is aware of all that happeneth now or hath happened in the past, and, in course of time, surely cometh to demand retribution. Lo, even now there cometh upon the whole city a plague which none may escape. The people have come quickly into degrading bondage; bondage rouseth from their sleep war and civil strife; and war destroyeth many in the beauty of their youth. As if she were the prey of foreign foes, our beloved city is rapidly wasted and consumed in those secret conspiracies which are the delight of dishonest men.”
“These are the evils which stalk at home. Meanwhile the poor and needy in great numbers, are loaded with shameful bonds and sold into slavery in foreign lands. . . . Thus public calamity cometh to the house of every individual, and a man is no longer safe within the gates of his own court, which refuse him their protection. It leapeth over the garden wall, however high it be, and surely findeth him out, though he run and hide himself in the inmost corner of his chamber.”

“These things my heart prompteth me to teach the Athenians, and to make them understand that lawlessness worketh more harm to the state than any other cause. But a law-abiding spirit createth order and harmony, and at the same time putteth chains upon evil-doers; it maketh rough things smooth, it checketh inordinate desires, it dimmeth the glare of wanton pride and withereth the budding bloom of wild delusion; it maketh crooked judgments straight and softeneth arrogant behavior; it stoppeth acts of sedition and stoppeth the anger of bitter strife. Under the reign of law, sanity and wisdom prevail ever among men.”

**Fragment 9**

“I removed the stones of her bondage which had been planted everywhere, and she who was a slave before is now free. I brought back to their own divinely founded home many Athenians who justly or unjustly had been sold into slavery in foreign lands, and I brought back those whom destitution had driven into exile, and who, through wandering long abroad, no longer spoke the Attic tongue; and I restored to liberty those who had been degraded to slavery here in their own land and trembled at their masters’ whims. These things I accomplished through arbitrary action, bringing force to the support of the dictates of justice, and I followed through to the end the course which I promised. On the other hand, I drafted laws, which
show equal consideration for the upper and lower classes, and provide a fair administration of justice for every individual. An unscrupulous and avaricious man, if he had got the whip hand of the city as I had, would not have held the people back. If I had adopted the policy which was advocated by my opponents then, or if thereafter I had consented to the treatment which their opponents were always planning for them, this city would have lost many of her sons. This was the reason why I stood out like a wolf at bay amidst a pack of hounds, defending myself against attacks from every side.”

Fragment 10

“The common people (if I must give public utterance to my rebuke) would never have beheld even in their dreams the blessings which they now enjoy. . . . All the stronger and more powerful men in the city would sing my praises and seek to make me their friend.”

Fragment 6

“To the common people I have given such a measure of privilege as sufficeth them, neither robbing them of the rights they had, nor holding out the hope of greater ones; and I have taken equal thought for those who were possessed of power and who were looked up to because of their wealth, careful that they, too, should suffer no indignity. I have taken a stand which enables me to hold a stout shield over both groups, and I have allowed neither to triumph unjustly over the other.”

Fragment 7

“The populace will follow its leaders best if it is neither left too free nor subjected to too much restraint. For excess giveth birth to arrogance, when great prosperity attendeth upon men whose minds lack sober judgment.”

Ivan M. Linforth, Solon the Athenian (Berkeley, University of
Aristotle is one of the most well-known philosophers of ancient Greece. A prolific thinker and writer, he produced works on a range of topics including ethics, metaphysics, the parts of the soul, and politics, in addition to numerous others. So broad was the array of subjects Aristotle discussed that during the Middle Ages thinkers referred to him as “The Philosopher.” The excerpt included here comes from The Athenian Constitution, in which Aristotle discusses the changes made to Athens’ politics and political culture by Solon and later by Cleisthenes, who established important democratic features that would aid in his city-state’s rise to prominence in Greece.

Next Solon drew up a constitution and enacted new laws; and the statutes of Draco ceased to be used with the exception of those relating to murder. The laws were inscribed on the pillars, and set up in the King’s Porch, and all swore to obey them; and the nine Archons made oath upon the stone and declared that they would dedicate a golden statue if they should transgress any of them. This is the origin of the oath to that effect which they take to the present day. Solon ratified his laws for a hundred years; and the following was the fashion of his organization of the constitution. He made a division of all rateable property into four classes, just as it had been divided before, namely, Pentacosiomedimni, Knights, Zeugitae, and Thete. The various magistracies, namely, the nine Archons, the Treasurers, the Commissioners for Public Contracts, the Eleven, and the Exchequer Clerks he assigned to the Pentacosiomedimni, the Knights, and the Zeugitae, giving offices to each class in proportion to the value of their rateable...
property. To those who ranked among the Thetes he gave nothing but a place in the Assembly and in the juries. A man had to rank as a Pentacosimiomedinmi if he made, from his own land, five hundred measures, whether liquid or solid. Those ranked as Knights who made three hundred measures, or, as some say, those who were able to maintain a horse. In support of the latter definition they adduce the name of the class, which may be supposed to be derived from this fact, and also some votive offerings of early times; for in the Acropolis there is a votive offering, a statue of Diphilus, bearing this inscription:

The son of Diphilus, Anthemion hight,
Raised from the Thetes and become a Knight,
Did to the gods this sculptured charger bring,
For his promotion a thank-offering.

And a horse stands beside the man, which seems to show that this was what was meant by belonging to the rank of Knight. At the same time it seems more reasonable to suppose that this class, like the Pentacosimiomedinmi, was defined by the possession of an income of a certain number of measures. Those ranked as Zeugitae who made two hundred measures, liquid or solid; and the rest ranked as Thetes, and were not eligible for any office. Hence it is that even at the present day, when a candidate for any office is asked to what rank he belongs, no one would think of saying that he belonged to the Thetes.

The elections to the various offices Solon enacted should be by lot, out of candidates selected by each of the tribes. Each tribe selected ten candidates for the nine archonships, and among these the lot was cast. Hence it is still the custom for each tribe to choose ten candidates by lot, and then the lot is again cast among these. A proof that Solon regulated the elections to office according to the property classes may be
found in the law which is still in force for the election of the Treasurers, which enacts that they shall be chosen from the Pentacosiomedimni. Such was Solon's legislation with respect to the nine Archons; whereas in early times the Council of Areopagus summoned suitable persons according to its own judgment and appointed them for the year to the several offices.

Solon also appointed a Council of four hundred, a hundred from each tribe; but he still assigned to the Areopagus the duty of superintending the laws. It continued, as before, to be the guardian of the constitution in general; it kept watch over the citizens in all the most important matters, and corrected offenders, having full powers to inflict either fines or personal punishment. The money received in fines it brought up into the Acropolis, without assigning the reason for the punishment; and Solon also gave it the power to try those who conspired for the overthrow of the state.

Such, then, was his legislation concerning the magistrates of the state. There are three points in the constitution of Solon which appear to be its most democratic features: first and most important, the prohibition of loans on the security of the debtor's person; secondly, the right of every person who so willed to bring an action on behalf of anyone to whom wrong was being done; thirdly, the institution of the appeal to the law-courts; and it is by means of this last, they say, that the masses have gained strength most of all, since, when the democracy is master of the voting-power, it is master of the constitution.

Moreover, since the laws were not drawn up in simple and explicit terms (but like the one concerning inheritances and wards of state), disputes inevitably occurred, and the courts had to decide in every matter, whether public or private. Some persons in fact believe that Solon deliberately made the laws
indefinite, in order that the people might have something left to its final decision. This, however, is not at all probable, and the reason no doubt was that it was impossible to attain ideal perfection when framing a law in general terms; for we must judge of his intentions, not from the actual results in the present day, but from the general tenor of the rest of his legislation.

The people, therefore, had good reason to place confidence in Cleisthenes. Accordingly when, at this time, he found himself at the head of the masses, three years after the expulsion of the tyrants, in the archonship of Isagoras, his first step was to distribute the whole population into ten tribes in place of the existing four, with the object of intermixing the members of the different tribes, so that more persons might have a share in the franchise.

Next he made the Council to consist of five hundred members instead of four hundred, each tribe now contributing fifty, whereas formerly each had sent a hundred.

Further, he divided the country by demes into thirty parts, ten from the districts about the city, ten from the coast, and ten from the interior. These he called Trittyes; and he assigned three of them by lot to each tribe, in such a way that each should have one portion in each of these three divisions. All who lived in any given deme he declared fellow-demesmen, to the end that the new citizens might not be exposed by the habitual use of family names, but that men might be known by the names of their demes; and accordingly it is by the names of their demes that the Athenians still speak of one another. He also instituted Demarchs, who had the same duties as the previously existing Naucrari,—the demes being made to take the place of the naucraries. He gave names to the demes, some from the localities to which they belonged, some from the persons who
founded them, since some of them no longer corresponded to localities possessing names. On the other hand he allowed everyone to retain his family and clan and religious rites according to ancestral custom. The names given to the tribes were the ten which the Pythia appointed out of the hundred selected national heroes.

https://archive.org/stream/aristoleonatheno00arisrich#page/10/mode/2up
Chapter 2: Classical Age Greece 479-334 BCE

The Classical Age of ancient Greece kicks off with a major conflict against the Persian Empire, which tried to invade and conquer the Greek city-states in both 490 and 480 BCE, but is beaten each time, first at the Battle of Marathon then later at the Battles of Salamis and Plataea. The victories against the largest empire in the world at the time led to an eruption of confidence on the part of the Greek city-states, especially Athens, which led the fight during both invasions. However, confidence became arrogance and the league of city-states dedicated to protecting Greece from further attack became the agent of Athenian imperialism, much to the chagrin of the Spartans, who became increasingly concerned about Athenian domination. This concern was realized when Athens tried to absorb Sparta’s allies, leading to the devastating Peloponnesian War between the two strongest Greek peoples. The war was one of contrasts—the Spartans and their order, discipline, and martial orientation against the Athenians and their flowering democracy, their openness to new cultures, and their own cultural development. Eventually Sparta, with Persian money
and ships, would get an advantage and defeat Athens in 404 BCE. The damage to both city-states, however, would leave lesser powers to try and organize the Greek peninsula and protect it from outside foes, a task in which they failed as the Macedonians from the north came calling. This period of Greek history is known not just for the wars that bookended it, but also for the tremendous outpouring of Greek culture and democracy. The drama of Sophocles, Euripides, and others; the Greek ideals of moderation, balance, and symmetry; the love of wisdom from Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle; and the continual expansion of political power in Athens are all hallmarks of this period.

The documents in this chapter begin with a look at the most famous Athenian statesman of his time, Pericles. Leader of Athens through its golden era, historians have even named this time the Age of Pericles. The selection here is from a funeral speech he gave after the initial battles of the Peloponnesian War, and it says quite a bit about Athenian life and government. Next up are two documents from playwrights Aristophanes and Euripides that tackle gender relations in the Greek world and contain a message quite a bit different from those in the previous chapter. Also included is the complete text of Sophocles’ Oedipus Rex, one of the preeminent Greek tragedies that explores the role of fate in human affairs. The three documents from Plato paint for us a picture of some of his thoughts concerning human learning and knowledge as well as how his mentor Socrates engaged people in philosophical discussion. The first excerpt is from the Euthyphro, in which the character Socrates is having a discussion with another man about the nature of piety and impiety. The second excerpt is one of the most well-known parts of Plato’s Republic, the allegory of the cave, which begins to set up his theory of the Realm
of the Forms. Lastly from Plato is part of a dialogue from the Meno, in which Plato reveals to us his belief about the nature of knowledge and human learning. This chapter ends with four documents from Plato’s student Aristotle. First up is an excerpt from his work Metaphysics, a discussion of essence and substance and whether or not the two things can really be separated. The next excerpts all come from a work called On the Soul, and discuss sensation, thought, and “appetite,” or desire, and how the three work together to help humans learn about and understand the external world around them. Fair warning—these texts can be dense and may require more than one read through, but they are also enlightening in their exploration of fundamental things we tend to take for granted.

1. Pericles-Funeral Oration

Pericles is one of the most famous Athenian statesmen, leading the city-state in the late fifth century BCE. Under his leadership democracy continued to expand, and Athens enjoyed such military, political, and economic power that many historians have since labeled this phase of Athenian history as “The Age of Pericles.” However, he also saw Athens enter into the devastating war against the other power in Greece, Sparta. The excerpt below is from a funeral speech Pericles gave honoring the Athenian soldiers killed in the initial battles of that war, and explaining what he believed were the characteristics that made Athens the preeminent city-state in Greece.

Our constitution does not copy the laws of neighbouring states; we are rather a pattern to others than imitators ourselves. Its administration favours the many instead of the few; this is why it is called a democracy. If we look to the laws, they afford equal justice to all in their private differences; if no social standing, advancement in public life falls to reputation for capacity, class considerations not being allowed to interfere with merit; nor again does poverty bar the way, if a man is
able to serve the state, he is not hindered by the obscurity of his condition. The freedom which we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life. There, far from exercising a jealous surveillance over each other, we do not feel called upon to be angry with our neighbour for doing what he likes, or even to indulge in those injurious looks which cannot fail to be offensive, although they inflict no positive penalty. But all this ease in our private relations does not make us lawless as citizens. Against this fear is our chief safeguard, teaching us to obey the magistrates and the laws, particularly such as regard the protection of the injured, whether they are actually on the statute book, or belong to that code which, although unwritten, yet cannot be broken without acknowledged disgrace.

Further, we provide plenty of means for the mind to refresh itself from business. We celebrate games and sacrifices all the year round, and the elegance of our private establishments forms a daily source of pleasure and helps to banish the spleen; while the magnitude of our city draws the produce of the world into our harbour, so that to the Athenian the fruits of other countries are as familiar a luxury as those of his own.

If we turn to our military policy, there also we differ from our antagonists. We throw open our city to the world, and never by alien acts exclude foreigners from any opportunity of learning or observing, although the eyes of an enemy may occasionally profit by our liberality; trusting less in system and policy than to the native spirit of our citizens; while in education, where our rivals from their very cradles by a painful discipline seek after manliness, at Athens we live exactly as we please, and yet are just as ready to encounter every legitimate danger. In proof of this it may be noticed that the Lacedaemonians do not invade our country alone, but bring with them all their confederates; while we Athenians advance unsupported into the territory of
a neighbour, and fighting upon a foreign soil usually vanquish with ease men who are defending their homes. Our united force was never yet encountered by any enemy, because we have at once to attend to our marine and to dispatch our citizens by land upon a hundred different services; so that, wherever they engage with some such fraction of our strength, a success against a detachment is magnified into a victory over the nation, and a defeat into a reverse suffered at the hands of our entire people. And yet if with habits not of labour but of ease, and courage not of art but of nature, we are still willing to encounter danger, we have the double advantage of escaping the experience of hardships in anticipation and of facing them in the hour of need as fearlessly as those who are never free from them.

Nor are these the only points in which our city is worthy of admiration. We cultivate refinement without extravagance and knowledge without effeminacy; wealth we employ more for use than for show, and place the real disgrace of poverty not in owning to the fact but in declining the struggle against it. Our public men have, besides politics, their private affairs to attend to, and our ordinary citizens, though occupied with the 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 action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all. Again, in our enterprises we present the singular spectacle of daring and deliberation, each carried to its highest point, and both united in the same persons; although usually decision is the fruit of ignorance, hesitation of reflection. But the palm of courage will surely be adjudged most
justly to those, who best know the difference between hardship and pleasure and yet are never tempted to shrink from danger. In generosity we are equally singular, acquiring our friends by conferring, not by receiving, favours. Yet, of course, the doer of the favour is the firmer friend of the two, in order by continued kindness to keep the recipient in his debt; while the debtor feels less keenly from the very consciousness that the return he makes will be a payment, not a free gift. And it is only the Athenians, who, fearless of consequences, confer their benefits not from calculations of expediency, but in the confidence of liberality.

In short, I say that as a city we are the school of Hellas, while I doubt if the world can produce a man who, where he has only himself to depend upon, is equal to so many emergencies, and graced by so happy a versatility, as the Athenian. And that this is no mere boast thrown out for the occasion, but plain matter of fact, the power of the state acquired by these habits proves. For Athens alone of her contemporaries is found when tested to be greater than her reputation, and alone gives no occasion to her assailants to blush at the antagonist by whom they have been worsted, or to her subjects to question her title by merit to rule. Rather, the admiration of the present and succeeding ages will be ours, since we have not left our power without witness, but have shown it by mighty proofs; and far from needing a Homer for our panegyrist, or other of his craft whose verses might charm for the moment only for the impression which they gave to melt at the touch of fact, we have forced every sea and land to be the highway of our daring, and everywhere, whether for evil or for good, have left imperishable monuments behind us. Such is the Athens for which these men, in the assertion of their resolve not to lose her, nobly fought and died; and well may every one of their survivors be ready to suffer in her cause.
Indeed if I have dwelt at some length upon the character of our country, it has been to show that our stake in the struggle is not the same as theirs who have no such blessings to lose, and also that the panegyric of the men over whom I am now speaking might be by definite proofs established. That panegyric is now in a great measure complete; for the Athens that I have celebrated is only what the heroism of these and their like have made her, men whose fame, unlike that of most Hellenes, will be found to be only commensurate with their deserts. And if a test of worth be wanted, it is to be found in their closing scene, and this not only in cases in which it set the final seal upon their merit, but also in those in which it gave the first intimation of their having any. For there is justice in the claim that steadfastness in his country's battles should be as a cloak to cover a man's other imperfections; since the good action has blotted out the bad, and his merit as a citizen more than outweighed his demerits as an individual. But none of these allowed either wealth with its prospect of future enjoyment to unnerve his spirit, or poverty with its hope of a day of freedom and riches to tempt him to shrink from danger. No, holding that vengeance upon their enemies was more to be desired than any personal blessings, and reckoning this to be the most glorious of hazards, they joyfully determined to accept the risk, to make sure of their vengeance, and to let their wishes wait; and while committing to hope the uncertainty of final success, in the business before them they thought fit to act boldly and trust in themselves. Thus choosing to die resisting, rather than to live submitting, they fled only from dishonour, but met danger face to face, and after one brief moment, while at the summit of their fortune, escaped, not from their fear, but from their glory.”

Richard Crawley, trans., *The History of the Peloponnesian War*
The works of Aristophanes are the only remaining examples of what is known as Old Comedy, a type of play performed on stages during celebrations in ancient Greece. The playwright is considered the “Father of Comedy” by some, and his plays are known for their biting satire, skewering politicians, philosophers, and other artists. In the excerpt below a chorus of women is used to mock the traditional gender roles in Greek society, pointing out the absurd way men treat their wives. Although this piece does empathize with the plight of women in Greek society, it’s important to note that satires such as this often reinforced stereotypes more than they overturned them.

Come now, if we are an evil, why do you marry us, if indeed we are really an evil, and forbid any of us either to go out, or to be caught peeping out, but wish to guard the evil thing with so great diligence? And if the wife should go out anywhere, and you then discover her to be out of doors, you rage with madness, who ought to offer libations and rejoice, if indeed you really find the evil thing to be gone away from the house and do not find it at home. And if we sleep in other peoples’ houses, when we play and when we are tired, everyone searches for this evil thing, going round about the beds. And if we peep out of a window, everyone seeks to get a sight of the evil thing. And if we retire again, being ashamed, so much the more does everyone desire to see the evil thing peep out again. So manifestly are we much better than you.

Carroll Mitchell, Greek Women In all ages and all countries (Philadelphia: The Rittenhouse Press, 1907-1908), 256-257. Located on the Internet Archive:
3. Euripides—The Condition of Women

Working during the fifth century BCE, the playwright Euripides is the last of the great tragic dramatists of ancient Greece, following Aeschylus and Sophocles. Nineteen of his plays survive today, with many reflecting an attitude of doubt about the Greek gods. For Euripides, the gods were merely characters in stories, not real authorities to be feared, leading him to style everyday people as his heroes. In plays such as The Women of Troy those protagonists are women, who illustrate the disregard with which women are treated and the ways in which they are often oppressed in Greek society. In the excerpt below we see an example of impossible choices women must make as well as the double standards to which they are held. As you read this excerpt, think about those from Hesiod, Semonides, and Aristophanes and how the later two differ from the former, and how that indicates a difference between Archaic and Classical Greece.

But of all things that have life and sense, we women are the most miserable race: we, who must first with an exceeding sum purchase us a husband, and receive a lord over our persons, (for this is even a more grievous evil than the former): and in this, too, there is the greatest risk, whether we shall receive a bad master or a good one: for divorces are not honourable to women, nor is it possible to repudiate a husband; and she who has arrived among new customs and new laws must needs be a prophetess (not having learned it of oneself) as to what kind of husband she is most likely to meet with. Then, should our husband dwell happily with us having laboured so far with success, not violently imposing the yoke, ’tis an enviable life: but if not, ’twere better to die. For when a man is disgusted with associating with those of his own home, going out he relieves his heart of its loathing, betaking himself to some friend or to
his comrades: but we are compelled to look to one person alone. And they say of us, how we live a life of security at home while they do battle with the spear, thinking unwisely: for rather would I stand thrice beside the shield than be a mother once.

The Hecuba, Medea, Phoenissae, and Orestes of Euripides (London: Henry Washbourne, 1846), 13. Located on the Internet Archive:
https://archive.org/stream/hecubamedeaphniooeurigoog#page/n72

4. Sophocles-Oedipus Rex

The poet Sophocles is the author of such well-known tragedies as Antigone, Oedipus at Colonnus, and Oedipus Rex, presented here. Of over a hundred plays only seven have survived down to us today. Sophocles was well respected in his day, winning numerous competitions with his plays, which featured deeper and richer character development than many other contemporary dramas. The current selection is the full text of the famous tragedy Oedipus Rex, centering on Oedipus, King of Thebes, and the tragic developments leading him to that lofty position. As you read the play keep in mind the larger themes of Greek drama and how this particular play exemplifies those themes.

Copy and past the link below into your web browser to access this text:
http://johnstoniatexts.x10host.com/sophocles/oedipusthekinghtml.html

5. Plato-Euthyphro

Plato was a student of Socrates and like his teacher became one of the most notable scholars of the Western world. Unlike his teacher, though, Plato produced a number of works that are still with us today, including Republic, Meno, and Euthyphro, from which the selection below is taken. Here, the character Socrates is engaging in a dialogue, an excellent example of what has become known as the Socratic Method.
of question and answer, with the title character about the nature of piety. Pay close attention to the back-and-forth between the two men, as Euthyphro will make numerous attempts to define what piety is, and Socrates will respond to each attempt with a number of questions that lead to another try at a definition. Especially important to note is the way in which Socrates picks apart Euthyphro’s arguments, using patient questioning to point out flaws and elicit a better understanding of the topic.

Euthyphro. Why have you left the Lyceum, Socrates? and what are you doing in the Porch of the King Archon? Surely you cannot be concerned in a suit before the King, like myself?

Socrates. Not in a suit, Euthyphro; impeachment is the word which the Athenians use.

Euth. What! I suppose that some one has been prosecuting you, for I cannot believe that you are the prosecutor of another.

Soc. Certainly not.

Euth. Then some one else has been prosecuting you?

Soc. Yes.

Euth. And who is he?

Soc. A young man who is little known, Euthyphro; and I hardly know him: his name is Meletus, and he is of the deme of Pitthis. Perhaps you may remember his appearance; he has a beak, and long straight hair, and a beard which is ill grown.

Euth. No, I do not remember him, Socrates. But what is the charge which he brings against you?

Soc. What is the charge? Well, a very serious charge, which shows a good deal of character in the young man, and for which he is certainly not to be despised. He says he knows how the youth are corrupted and who are their corruptors. I fancy that he must be a wise man, and seeing that I am the reverse of a wise man, he has found me out, and is going to accuse me of
corrupting his young friends. And of this our mother the state
is to be the judge. Of all our political men he is the only one who
seems to me to begin in the right way, with the cultivation of
virtue in youth; like a good husbandman, he makes the young
shoots his first care, and clears away us who are the destroyers
of them. This is only the first step; he will afterwards attend to
the elder branches; and if he goes on as he has begun, he will be
a very great public benefactor.

**Euth.** I hope that he may; but I rather fear, Socrates, that the
opposite will turn out to be the truth. My opinion is that in
attacking you he is simply aiming a blow at the foundation of
the state. But in what way does he say that you corrupt the
young?

**Soc.** He brings a wonderful accusation against me, which at
first hearing excites surprise: he says that I am a poet or maker
of gods, and that I invent new gods and deny the existence of
old ones; this is the ground of his indictment.

**Euth.** I understand, Socrates; he means to attack you
about the familiar sign which occasionally, as you say, comes to
you. He thinks that you are a neologian, and he is going to have
you up before the court for this. He knows that such a charge
is readily received by the world, as I myself know too well; for
when I speak in the assembly about divine things, and foretell
the future to them, they laugh at me and think me madman. Yet
every word that I say is true. But they are jealous of us all; and
we must be brave and go at them.

**Soc.** Their laughter, friend Euthyphro, is not a matter
of much consequence. For a man may be thought wise; but the
Athenians, I suspect, do not much trouble themselves about
him until he begins to impart his wisdom to others, and then
for some reason or other, perhaps, as you say, from jealousy,
they are angry.
Euth. I am never likely to try their temper in this way.

Soc. I dare say not, for you are reserved in your behaviour, and seldom impart your wisdom. But I have a benevolent habit of pouring out myself to everybody, and would even pay for a listener, and I am afraid that the Athenians may think me too talkative. Now if, as I was saying, they would only laugh at me, as you say that they laugh at you, the time might pass gaily enough in the court; but perhaps they may be in earnest, and then what the end will be you soothsayers only can predict.

Euth. I dare say that the affair will end in nothing, Socrates, and that you will win your cause; and I think that I shall win my own.

Soc. And what is your suit, Euthyphro? are you the pursuer or the defendant?

Euth. I am the pursuer.

Soc. Of whom?

Euth. You will think me mad when I tell you.

Soc. Why, has the fugitive wings?

Euth. Nay, he is not very volatile at his time of life.

Soc. Who is he?

Euth. My father.

Soc. Your father! my good man?

Euth. Yes.

Soc. And of what is he accused?

Euth. Of murder, Socrates.

Soc. By the powers, Euthyphro! how little does the common herd know of the nature of right and truth. A man must be an extraordinary man, and have made great strides in wisdom, before he could have seen his way to bring such an action.

Euth. Indeed, Socrates, he must.
Soc. I suppose that the man whom your father murdered was one of your relatives—clearly he was; for if he had been a stranger you would never have thought of prosecuting him.

Euth. I am amused, Socrates, at your making a distinction between one who is a relation and one who is not a relation; for surely the pollution is the same in either case, if you knowingly associate with the murderer when you ought to clear yourself and him by proceeding against him. The real question is whether the murdered man has been justly slain. If justly, then your duty is to let the matter alone; but if unjustly, then even if the murderer lives under the same roof with you and eats at the same table, proceed against him. Now the man who is dead was a poor dependent of mine who worked for us as a field labourer on our farm in Naxos, and one day in a fit of drunken passion he got into a quarrel with one of our domestic servants and slew him. My father bound him hand and foot and threw him into a ditch, and then sent to Athens to ask of a diviner what he should do with him. Meanwhile he never attended to him and took no care about him, for he regarded him as a murderer; and thought that no great harm would be done even if he did die. Now this was just what happened. For such was the effect of cold and hunger and chains upon him, that before the messenger returned from the diviner, he was dead. And my father and family are angry with me for taking the part of the murderer and prosecuting my father. They say that he did not kill him, and that if he did, dead man was but a murderer, and I ought not to take any notice, for that a son is impious who prosecutes a father. Which shows, Socrates, how little they know what the gods think about piety and impiety.

Soc. Good heavens, Euthyphro! and is your knowledge of religion and of things pious and impious so very exact, that,
supposing the circumstances to be as you state them, you are not afraid lest you too may be doing an impious thing in bringing an action against your father?

**Euth.** The best of Euthyphro, and that which distinguishes him, Socrates, from other men, is his exact knowledge of all such matters. What should I be good for without it?

**Soc.** Rare friend! I think that I cannot do better than be your disciple. Then before the trial with Meletus comes on I shall challenge him, and say that I have always had a great interest in religious questions, and now, as he charges me with rash imaginations and innovations in religion, I have become your disciple. You, Meletus, as I shall say to him, acknowledge Euthyphro to be a great theologian, and sound in his opinions; and if you approve of him you ought to approve of me, and not have me into court; but if you disapprove, you should begin by indicting him who is my teacher, and who will be the ruin, not of the young, but of the old; that is to say, of myself whom he instructs, and of his old father whom he admonishes and chastises. And if Meletus refuses to listen to me, but will go on, and will not shift the indictment from me to you, I cannot do better than repeat this challenge in the court.

**Euth.** Yes, indeed, Socrates; and if he attempts to indict me I am mistaken if I do not find a flaw in him; the court shall have a great deal more to say to him than to me.

**Soc.** And I, my dear friend, knowing this, am desirous of becoming your disciple. For I observe that no one appears to notice you— not even this Meletus; but his sharp eyes have found me out at once, and he has indicted me for impiety. And therefore, I adjure you to tell me the nature of piety and impiety, which you said that you knew so well, and of murder, and of other offences against the gods. What are they? Is not
piety in every action always the same? and impiety, again- is it not always the opposite of piety, and also the same with itself, having, as impiety, one notion which includes whatever is impious?

Euth. To be sure, Socrates.

Soc. And what is piety, and what is impiety?

Euth. Piety is doing as I am doing; that is to say, prosecuting any one who is guilty of murder, sacrilege, or of any similar crime-whether he be your father or mother, or whoever he may be-that makes no difference; and not to prosecute them is impiety. And please to consider, Socrates, what a notable proof I will give you of the truth of my words, a proof which I have already given to others:-of the principle, I mean, that the impious, whoever he may be, ought not to go unpunished. For do not men regard Zeus as the best and most righteous of the gods?-and yet they admit that he bound his father (Cronos) because he wickedly devoured his sons, and that he too had punished his own father (Uranus) for a similar reason, in a nameless manner. And yet when I proceed against my father, they are angry with me. So inconsistent are they in their way of talking when the gods are concerned, and when I am concerned.

Soc. May not this be the reason, Euthyphro, why I am charged with impiety-that I cannot away with these stories about the gods? and therefore I suppose that people think me wrong. But, as you who are well informed about them approve of them, I cannot do better than assent to your superior wisdom. What else can I say, confessing as I do, that I know nothing about them? Tell me, for the love of Zeus, whether you really believe that they are true.

Euth. Yes, Socrates; and things more wonderful still, of which the world is in ignorance.
Soc. And do you really believe that the gods, fought with one another, and had dire quarrels, battles, and the like, as the poets say, and as you may see represented in the works of great artists? The temples are full of them; and notably the robe of Athena, which is carried up to the Acropolis at the great Panathenaea, is embroidered with them. Are all these tales of the gods true, Euthyphro?

Euth. Yes, Socrates; and, as I was saying, I can tell you, if you would like to hear them, many other things about the gods which would quite amaze you.

Soc. I dare say; and you shall tell me them at some other time when I have leisure. But just at present I would rather hear from you a more precise answer, which you have not as yet given, my friend, to the question, What is “piety”? When asked, you only replied, Doing as you do, charging your father with murder.

Euth. And what I said was true, Socrates.

Soc. No doubt, Euthyphro; but you would admit that there are many other pious acts?

Euth. There are.

Soc. Remember that I did not ask you to give me two or three examples of piety, but to explain the general idea which makes all pious things to be pious. Do you not recollect that there was one idea which made the impious impious, and the pious pious?

Euth. I remember.

Soc. Tell me what is the nature of this idea, and then I shall have a standard to which I may look, and by which I may measure actions, whether yours or those of any one else, and then I shall be able to say that such and such an action is pious, such another impious.

Euth. I will tell you, if you like.
Soc. I should very much like.

Euth. Piety, then, is that which is dear to the gods, and impiety is that which is not dear to them.

Soc. Very good, Euthyphro; you have now given me the sort of answer which I wanted. But whether what you say is true or not I cannot as yet tell, although I make no doubt that you will prove the truth of your words.

Euth. Of course.

Soc. Come, then, and let us examine what we are saying. That thing or person which is dear to the gods is pious, and that thing or person which is hateful to the gods is impious, these two being the extreme opposites of one another. Was not that said?

Euth. It was.

Soc. And well said?

Euth. Yes, Socrates, I thought so; it was certainly said.

Soc. And further, Euthyphro, the gods were admitted to have enmities and hatreds and differences?

Euth. Yes, that was also said.

Soc. And what sort of difference creates enmity and anger? Suppose for example that you and I, my good friend, differ about a number; do differences of this sort make us enemies and set us at variance with one another? Do we not go at once to arithmetic, and put an end to them by a sum?

Euth. True.

Soc. Or suppose that we differ about magnitudes, do we not quickly end the differences by measuring?

Euth. Very true.

Soc. And we end a controversy about heavy and light by resorting to a weighing machine?

Euth. To be sure.

Soc. But what differences are there which cannot be
thus decided, and which therefore make us angry and set us at enmity with one another? I dare say the answer does not occur to you at the moment, and therefore I will suggest that these enmities arise when the matters of difference are the just and unjust, good and evil, honourable and dishonourable. Are not these the points about which men differ, and about which when we are unable satisfactorily to decide our differences, you and I and all of us quarrel, when we do quarrel?

_Euth._ Yes, Socrates, the nature of the differences about which we quarrel is such as you describe.

_Soc._ And the quarrels of the gods, noble Euthyphro, when they occur, are of a like nature?

_Euth._ Certainly they are.

_Soc._ They have differences of opinion, as you say, about good and evil, just and unjust, honourable and dishonourable: there would have been no quarrels among them, if there had been no such differences—would there now?

_Euth._ You are quite right.

_Soc._ Does not every man love that which he deems noble and just and good, and hate the opposite of them?

_Euth._ Very true.

_Soc._ But, as you say, people regard the same things, some as just and others as unjust,—about these they dispute; and so there arise wars and fightings among them.

_Euth._ Very true.

_Soc._ Then the same things are hated by the gods and loved by the gods, and are both hateful and dear to them?

_Euth._ True.

_Soc._ And upon this view the same things, Euthyphro, will be pious and also impious?

_Euth._ So I should suppose.

_Soc._ Then, my friend, I remark with surprise that you
have not answered the question which I asked. For I certainly did not ask you to tell me what action is both pious and impious: but now it would seem that what is loved by the gods is also hated by them. And therefore, Euthyphro, in thus chastising your father you may very likely be doing what is agreeable to Zeus but disagreeable to Cronos or Uranus, and what is acceptable to Hephaestus but unacceptable to Here, and there may be other gods who have similar differences of opinion.

Euth. But I believe, Socrates, that all the gods would be agreed as to the propriety of punishing a murderer: there would be no difference of opinion about that.

Soc. Well, but speaking of men, Euthyphro, did you ever hear any one arguing that a murderer or any sort of evil-doer ought to be let off?

Euth. I should rather say that these are the questions which they are always arguing, especially in courts of law: they commit all sorts of crimes, and there is nothing which they will not do or say in their own defence.

Soc. But do they admit their guilt, Euthyphro, and yet say that they ought not to be punished?

Euth. No; they do not.

Soc. Then there are some things which they do not venture to say and do: for they do not venture to argue that the guilty are to be unpunished, but they deny their guilt, do they not?

Euth. Yes.

Soc. Then they do not argue that the evil-doer should not be punished, but they argue about the fact of who the evil-doer is, and what he did and when?

Euth. True.

Soc. And the gods are in the same case, if as you assert they quarrel about just and unjust, and some of them say while
others deny that injustice is done among them. For surely neither God nor man will ever venture to say that the doer of injustice is not to be punished?

**Euth.** That is true, Socrates, in the main.

**Soc.** But they join issue about the particulars—gods and men alike; and, if they dispute at all, they dispute about some act which is called in question, and which by some is affirmed to be just, by others to be unjust. Is not that true?

**Euth.** Quite true.

**Soc.** Well then, my dear friend Euthyphro, do tell me, for my better instruction and information, what proof have you that in the opinion of all the gods a servant who is guilty of murder, and is put in chains by the master of the dead man, and dies because he is put in chains before he who bound him can learn from the interpreters of the gods what he ought to do with him, dies unjustly; and that on behalf of such an one a son ought to proceed against his father and accuse him of murder. How would you show that all the gods absolutely agree in approving of his act? Prove to me that they do, and I will applaud your wisdom as long as I live.

**Euth.** It will be a difficult task; but I could make the matter very dear indeed to you.

**Soc.** I understand; you mean to say that I am not so quick of apprehension as the judges: for to them you will be sure to prove that the act is unjust, and hateful to the gods.

**Euth.** Yes indeed, Socrates; at least if they will listen to me.

**Soc.** But they will be sure to listen if they find that you are a good speaker. There was a notion that came into my mind while you were speaking; I said to myself: “Well, and what if Euthyphro does prove to me that all the gods regarded the death of the serf as unjust, how do I know anything more of the nature of piety and impiety? for granting that this action may
be hateful to the gods, still piety and impiety are not adequately defined by these distinctions, for that which is hateful to the gods has been shown to be also pleasing and dear to them.” And therefore, Euthyphro, I do not ask you to prove this; I will suppose, if you like, that all the gods condemn and abominate such an action. But I will amend the definition so far as to say that what all the gods hate is impious, and what they love pious or holy; and what some of them love and others hate is both or neither. Shall this be our definition of piety and impiety?

**Euth.** Why not, Socrates?

**Soc.** Why not! certainly, as far as I am concerned, Euthyphro, there is no reason why not. But whether this admission will greatly assist you in the task of instructing me as you promised, is a matter for you to consider.

**Euth.** Yes, I should say that what all the gods love is pious and holy, and the opposite which they all hate, impious.

**Soc.** Ought we to enquire into the truth of this, Euthyphro, or simply to accept the mere statement on our own authority and that of others? What do you say?

**Euth.** We should enquire; and I believe that the statement will stand the test of enquiry.

**Soc.** We shall know better, my good friend, in a little while. The point which I should first wish to understand is whether the pious or holy is beloved by the gods because it is holy, or holy because it is beloved of the gods.

**Euth.** I do not understand your meaning, Socrates.

**Soc.** I will endeavour to explain: we, speak of carrying and we speak of being carried, of leading and being led, seeing and being seen. You know that in all such cases there is a difference, and you know also in what the difference lies?

**Euth.** I think that I understand.
Soc. And is not that which is beloved distinct from that which loves?

Euth. Certainly.

Soc. Well; and now tell me, is that which is carried in this state of carrying because it is carried, or for some other reason?

Euth. No; that is the reason.

Soc. And the same is true of what is led and of what is seen?

Euth. True.

Soc. And a thing is not seen because it is visible, but conversely, visible because it is seen; nor is a thing led because it is in the state of being led, or carried because it is in the state of being carried, but the converse of this. And now I think, Euthyphro, that my meaning will be intelligible; and my meaning is, that any state of action or passion implies previous action or passion. It does not become because it is becoming, but it is in a state of becoming because it becomes; neither does it suffer because it is in a state of suffering, but it is in a state of suffering because it suffers. Do you not agree?

Euth. Yes.

Soc. Is not that which is loved in some state either of becoming or suffering?

Euth. Yes.

Soc. And the same holds as in the previous instances; the state of being loved follows the act of being loved, and not the act the state.

Euth. Certainly.

Soc. And what do you say of piety, Euthyphro: is not piety, according to your definition, loved by all the gods?

Euth. Yes.

Soc. Because it is pious or holy, or for some other reason?

Euth. No, that is the reason.

Soc. It is loved because it is holy, not holy because it is loved?
Euth. Yes.
Soc. And that which is dear to the gods is loved by them, and is in a state to be loved of them because it is loved of them?
Euth. Certainly.
Soc. Then that which is dear to the gods, Euthyphro, is not holy, nor is that which is holy loved of God, as you affirm; but they are two different things.
Euth. How do you mean, Socrates?
Soc. I mean to say that the holy has been acknowledge by us to be loved of God because it is holy, not to be holy because it is loved.
Euth. Yes.
Soc. But that which is dear to the gods is dear to them because it is loved by them, not loved by them because it is dear to them.
Euth. True.
Soc. But, friend Euthyphro, if that which is holy is the same with that which is dear to God, and is loved because it is holy, then that which is dear to God would have been loved as being dear to God; but if that which dear to God is dear to him because loved by him, then that which is holy would have been holy because loved by him. But now you see that the reverse is the case, and that they are quite different from one another. For one (theophiles) is of a kind to be loved cause it is loved, and the other (osion) is loved because it is of a kind to be loved. Thus you appear to me, Euthyphro, when I ask you what is the essence of holiness, to offer an attribute only, and not the essence-the attribute of being loved by all the gods. But you still refuse to explain to me the nature of holiness. And therefore, if you please, I will ask you not to hide your treasure, but to tell me once more what holiness or piety really is, whether dear to
the gods or not (for that is a matter about which we will not quarrel) and what is impiety?

**Euth.** I really do not know, Socrates, how to express what I mean. For somehow or other our arguments, on whatever ground we rest them, seem to turn round and walk away from us.

**Soc.** Your words, Euthyphro, are like the handiwork of my ancestor Daedalus; and if I were the sayer or propounder of them, you might say that my arguments walk away and will not remain fixed where they are placed because I am a descendant of his. But now, since these notions are your own, you must find some other gibe, for they certainly, as you yourself allow, show an inclination to be on the move.

**Euth.** Nay, Socrates, I shall still say that you are the Daedalus who sets arguments in motion; not I, certainly, but you make them move or go round, for they would never have stirred, as far as I am concerned.

**Soc.** Then I must be a greater than Daedalus: for whereas he only made his own inventions to move, I move those of other people as well. And the beauty of it is, that I would rather not. For I would give the wisdom of Daedalus, and the wealth of Tantalus, to be able to detain them and keep them fixed. But enough of this. As I perceive that you are lazy, I will myself endeavor to show you how you might instruct me in the nature of piety; and I hope that you will not grudge your labour. Tell me, then-Is not that which is pious necessarily just?

**Euth.** Yes.

**Soc.** And is, then, all which is just pious? or, is that which is pious all just, but that which is just, only in part and not all, pious?

**Euth.** I do not understand you, Socrates.

**Soc.** And yet I know that you are as much wiser than I am, as
you are younger. But, as I was saying, revered friend, the abundance of your wisdom makes you lazy. Please to exert yourself, for there is no real difficulty in understanding me. What I mean I may explain by an illustration of what I do not mean. The poet (Stasinus) sings-

Of Zeus, the author and creator of all these things,
You will not tell: for where there is fear there is also reverence. Now I disagree with this poet. Shall I tell you in what respect?

Euth. By all means.

Soc. I should not say that where there is fear there is also reverence; for I am sure that many persons fear poverty and disease, and the like evils, but I do not perceive that they reverence the objects of their fear.

Euth. Very true.

Soc. But where reverence is, there is fear; for he who has a feeling of reverence and shame about the commission of any action, fears and is afraid of an ill reputation.

Euth. No doubt.

Soc. Then we are wrong in saying that where there is fear there is also reverence; and we should say, where there is reverence there is also fear. But there is not always reverence where there is fear; for fear is a more extended notion, and reverence is a part of fear, just as the odd is a part of number, and number is a more extended notion than the odd. I suppose that you follow me now?

Euth. Quite well.

Soc. That was the sort of question which I meant to raise when I asked whether the just is always the pious, or the pious always the just; and whether there may not be justice where there is not piety; for justice is the more extended notion of which piety is only a part. Do you dissent?
Euth. No, I think that you are quite right.

Soc. Then, if piety is a part of justice, I suppose that we should enquire what part? If you had pursued the enquiry in the previous cases; for instance, if you had asked me what is an even number, and what part of number the even is, I should have had no difficulty in replying, a number which represents a figure having two equal sides. Do you not agree?

Euth. Yes, I quite agree.

Soc. In like manner, I want you to tell me what part of justice is piety or holiness, that I may be able to tell Meletus not to do me injustice, or indict me for impiety, as I am now adequately instructed by you in the nature of piety or holiness, and their opposites.

https://archive.org/stream/plato_euthyphro#page/n1

6. Plato-Allegory of the Cave

Perhaps his most notable work, Plato’s Republic is concerned with justice and which form of government would be the most just. We once again see the character of Socrates engaging in a dialogue with other characters, posing questions and critiquing ideas, as a means of getting them to understand the weaknesses of their suggestions and the strengths of his. A well-known section of the Republic, excerpted below, is the allegory of the cave, in which Socrates and the others discuss a fictional situation of people being trapped in, and then removed from, a large cavern. The purpose of this document is to show not just how Socratic dialogue works, as the Euthyphro did, but to highlight Plato’s own ideals about education and knowledge, specifically the famous realm of the Forms.

Copy and paste the link below into your web browser to access this document:
7. Plato-The Meno

Excerpted below, Plato’s Meno is another dialogue that helps us to unlock Plato’s views about reality, how truth is constructed, and how people know information. The work deals with the idea of virtue and what it is, much like the Euthyphro dealt with the definition of piety. In the specific selection below the dialogue begins with the title character Meno asking an important question about learning, a question that will become known as Meno’s paradox. Socrates makes yet another appearance as Plato’s main character, and he employs the help of a slave boy and a series of geometry questions to try and solve the paradox, thus illuminating Plato’s ideas about knowledge and its relation to the soul. While reading this excerpt keep in mind the previous selection, the allegory of the cave, and think about how the two can be combined to give us a fuller picture of Plato’s views.

Meno- And how will you enquire, Socrates, into that which you do not know? What will you put forth as the subject of enquiry? And if you find what you want, how will you ever know that this is the thing which you did not know?

Socrates- I know, Meno, what you mean; but just see what a tiresome dispute you are introducing. You argue that a man cannot enquire either about that which he knows, or about that which he does not know; for if he knows, he has no need to enquire; and if not, he cannot ; for he does not know the very subject about which he is to enquire.

Meno- Well, Socrates, and is not the argument sound?

Socrates- I think not.

Meno- Why not?

Socrates- I will tell you why: I have heard from certain wise men and women who spoke of things divine that —
Meno- What did they say?
Socrates-They spoke of a glorious truth, as I conceive.
Meno-What was it? And who were they?
Socrates-Some of them were priests and priestesses, who had studied how they might be able to give a reason of their profession: there have been poets also, who spoke of these things by inspiration, like Pindar, and many others who were inspired. And they say —mark, now, and see whether their words are true —they say that the soul of man is immortal, and at one time has an end, which is termed dying, and at another time is born again, but is never destroyed. And the moral is, that a man ought to live always in perfect holiness. ‘For in the ninth year Persephone sends the souls of those from whom she has received the penalty of ancient crime back again from beneath into the light of the sun above, and these are they who become noble kings and mighty men and great in wisdom and are called saintly heroes in after ages.’ The soul, then, as being immortal, and having been born again many times, and having seen all things that exist, whether in this world or in the world below, has knowledge of them all; and it is no wonder that she should be able to call to remembrance all that she ever knew about virtue, and about everything; for as all nature is akin, and the soul has learned all things, there is no difficulty in her eliciting or as men say learning, out of a single recollection all the rest, if a man is strenuous and does not faint; for all enquiry and all learning is but recollection. And therefore we ought not to listen to this sophistical argument about the impossibility of enquiry: for it will make us idle, and is sweet only to the sluggard; but the other saying will make us active and inquisitive. In that confiding, I will gladly enquire with you into the nature of virtue.

Meno-Yes, Socrates; but what do you mean by saying that we
do not learn, and that what we call learning is only a process of recollection? Can you teach me how this is?

Socrates-I told you, Meno, just now that you were a rogue, and now you ask whether I can teach you, when I am saying that there is no teaching, but only recollection; and thus you imagine that you will involve me in a contradiction.

Meno-Indeed, Socrates, I protest that I had no such intention. I only asked the question from habit; but if you can prove to me that what you say is true, I wish that you would.

Socrates- It will be no easy matter, but I will try to please a Greek you to the utmost of my power. Suppose that you call one of your numerous attendants, that I may demonstrate on him.

Meno-Certainly. Come hither, boy.

Socrates- He is Greek, and speaks Greek, does he not?

Meno-Yes, indeed; he was born in the house.

Socrates- Attend now to the questions which I ask him, and observe whether he learns of me or only remembers.

Meno-I will.

Socrates- Tell me, boy, do you know that a figure like this is a square?

Boy- I do.

Socrates- And you know that a square figure has these four lines equal?

Boy- Certainly.

Socrates- And these lines which I have drawn through the middle of the square are also equal?

Boy-Yes.

Socrates- A square may be of any size?

Boy- Certainly.

Socrates- And if one side of the figure be of two feet, and the other side be of two feet, how much will the whole be? Let me explain: if in one direction the space was of two feet, and in the
other direction of one foot, the whole would be of two feet taken once?

Boy- Yes.

Socrates- But since this side is also of two feet, there are twice two feet?

Boy- There are. Socrates- Then the square is of twice two feet?

Boy- Yes.

Socrates- And how many are twice two feet? count and tell me.

Boy- Four, Socrates.

Socrates- And might there not be another square twice as large as this, and having like this the lines equal?

Boy- Yes.

Socrates- And of how many feet will that be?

Boy- Of eight feet.

Socrates- And now try and tell me the length of the line which forms the side of that double square: this is two feet – what will that be?

Boy- Clearly, Socrates, it will be double.

Socrates- Do you observe, Meno, that I am not teaching the boy anything, but only asking him questions; and now he fancies that he knows how long a line is necessary in order to produce a figure of eight square feet; does he not?

Meno- Yes.

Socrates- And does he really know?

Meno- Certainly not.

Socrates- He only guesses that because the square is double, the line is double.

Meno- True.

Socrates- Observe him while he recalls the steps in regular order. [To the Boy.) Tell me, boy, do you assert that a double
space comes from a double line? Remember that I am not speaking of an oblong, but of a figure equal every way, and twice the size of this – that is to say of eight feet; and I want to know whether you still say that a double square comes from a double line?

Boy- Yes.

Socrates- But does not this line become doubled if we add another such line here?

Boy- Certainly.

Socrates- And four such lines will make a space containing eight feet?

Boy- Yes.

Socrates- Let us describe such a figure: Would you not say that this is the figure of eight feet?

Boy- Yes.

Socrates- And are there not these four divisions in the figure, each of which is equal to the figure of four feet?

Boy- True.

Socrates- And is not that four times four?

Boy- Certainly.

Socrates- And four times is not double?

Boy- No, indeed.

Socrates- But how much?

Boy- Four times as much.

Socrates- Therefore the double line, boy, has given a space, not twice, but four times as much.

Boy- True.

Socrates- Four times four are sixteen – are they not?

Boy- Yes.

Socrates- What line would give you a space of eight feet, as this gives one of sixteen feet; – do you see?

Boy- Yes.
Socrates- And the space of four feet is made from this half line?
Boy- Yes.
Socrates- Good; and is not a space of eight feet twice the size of this, and half the size of the other?
Boy- Certainly.
Socrates- Such a space, then, will be made out of a line greater than this one, and less than that one?
Boy- Yes; I think so.
Socrates- Very good; I like to hear you say what you think. And now tell me, is not this a line of two feet and that of four?
Boy- Yes.
Socrates- Then the line which forms the side of eight feet ought to be more than this line of two feet, and less than the other of four feet?
Boy- It ought.
Socrates- Try and see if you can tell me how much it will be.
Boy- Three feet.
Socrates- Then if we add a half to this line of two, that will be the line of three. Here are two and there is one; and on the other side, here are two also and there is one: and that makes the figure of which you speak?
Boy- Yes.
Socrates- But if there are three feet this way and three feet that way, the whole space will be three times three feet?
Boy- That is evident.
Socrates- And how much are three times three feet?
Boy- Nine.
Socrates- And how much is the double of four?
Boy- Eight.
Socrates- Then the figure of eight is not made out of a line of three?
Boy- No.
Socrates- But from what line? – tell me exactly; and if you would rather not reckon, try and show me the line.
Boy- Indeed, Socrates, I do not know.
Socrates- Do you see, Meno, what advances he has made in his power of recollection? He did not know at first, and he does not know now, what is the side of a figure of eight feet: but then he thought that he knew, and answered confidently as if he knew, and had no difficulty; now he has a difficulty, and neither knows nor fancies that he knows.
Meno- True.
Socrates- Is he not better off in knowing his ignorance?
Meno- I think that he is.
Socrates- If we have made him doubt, and given him the ‘torpedo’s shock,’ have we done him any harm?
Meno- I think not.
Socrates- We have certainly, as would seem, assisted him in some degree to the discovery of the truth; and now he will wish to remedy his ignorance, but then he would have been ready to tell all the world again and again that the double space should have a double side.
Meno- True.
Socrates- But do you suppose that he would ever have enquired into or learned what he fancied that he knew, though he was really ignorant of it, until he had fallen into perplexity under the idea that he did not know, and had desired to know?
Meno- I think not, Socrates.
Socrates- Then he was the better for the torpedo’s touch?
Meno- I think so.
Socrates- Mark now the farther development. I shall only ask him, and not teach him, and he shall share the enquiry with me: and do you watch and see if you find me telling or explaining
anything to him, instead of eliciting his opinion. Tell me, boy, is not this a square of four feet which I have drawn?

Boy- Yes.

Socrates- And now I add another square equal to the former one?

Boy- Yes.

Socrates- And a third, which is equal to either of them?

Boy- Yes.

Socrates- Suppose that we fill up the vacant corner?

Boy- Very good.

Socrates- Here, then, there are four equal spaces?

Boy- Yes.

Socrates- And how many times larger is this space than this other?

Boy- Four times.

Socrates- But it ought to have been twice only, as you will remember.

Boy- True.

Socrates- And does not this line, reaching from corner to corner, bisect each of these spaces?

Boy- Yes.

Socrates- And are there not here four equal lines which contain this space?

Boy- There are.

Socrates- Look and see how much this space is.

Boy- I do not understand.

Socrates- Has not each interior line cut off half of the four spaces?

Boy- Yes.

Socrates- And how many such spaces are there in this section?

Boy- Four.
Socrates- And how many in this?
Boy- Two.
Socrates- And four is how many times two?
Boy- Twice.
Socrates- And this space is of how many feet?
Boy- Of eight feet.
Socrates- And from what line do you get this figure?
Boy- From this.
Socrates- That is, from the line which extends from corner to corner of the figure of four feet?
Boy- Yes.
Socrates- And that is the line which the learned call the diagonal. And if this is the proper name, then you, Meno’s slave, are prepared to affirm that the double space is the square of the diagonal?
Boy- Certainly, Socrates.
Socrates- What do you say of him, Meno? Were not all these answers given out of his own head?
Meno- Yes, they were all his own.
Socrates- And yet, as we were just now saying, he did not know?
Meno- True.
Socrates- But still he had in him those notions of his – had he not?
Meno- Yes.
Socrates- Then he who does not know may still have true notions of that which he does not know?
Meno- He has.
Socrates- And at present these notions have just been stirred up in him, as in a dream; but if he were frequently asked the same questions, in different forms, he would know as well as any one at last?
Meno- I dare say.
Socrates- Without any one teaching him he will recover his knowledge for himself, if he is only asked questions?
Meno- Yes.
Socrates- And this spontaneous recovery of knowledge in him is recollection?
Meno- True.
Socrates- And this knowledge which he now has must he not either have acquired or always possessed?
Meno- Yes.
Socrates- But if he always possessed this knowledge he would always have known; or if he has acquired the knowledge he could not have acquired it in this life, unless he has been taught geometry; for he may be made to do the same with all geometry and every other branch of knowledge. Now, was acquired has anyone ever taught him all this? You must know about him, if, as you say, he was born and bred in your house.
Meno- And I am certain that no one ever did teach him.
Socrates- And yet he has the knowledge?
Meno- The fact, Socrates, is undeniable.
Socrates- But if he did not acquire the knowledge in this life, then he must have had and learned it at some other time?
Meno- Clearly he must.
Socrates- Which must have been the time when he was not a man?
Meno- Yes.
Socrates- And if there have been always true thoughts in him, both at the time when he was and was not a man, which only need to be awakened into knowledge by putting questions to him, his soul must have always possessed this knowledge, for he always either was or was not a man?
Meno- Obviously.
Socrates- And if the truth of all things always existed in the soul, then the soul is immortal. Wherefore be of good cheer, and try to recollect what you do not know, or rather what you do not remember.

Meno- I feel, somehow, that I like what you are saying.

Socrates- And I, Meno, like what I am saying. Some things I have said of which I am not altogether confident. But that we shall be better and braver and less helpless if we think that we ought to enquire, than we should have been if we indulged in the idle fancy that there was no knowing and no use in seeking to know what we do not know; – that is a theme upon which I am ready to fight, in word and deed, to the utmost of my power.


8. Aristotle-Metaphysics Book 7 Part 6

We’ve already seen the philosopher Aristotle discussing politics in The Athenian Constitution; now it’s time to delve into some of his philosophical writings. Aristotle was Plato’s most well-known student, and as previously mentioned, became perhaps the most famous philosopher in Western history. The selection included here comes from his Metaphysics, an influential work dealing with the nature of existence and how things in the world can exist but also change. The specific section presented is from book 7 and investigates whether “substance” and “essence” are two different things, or if they’re one and the same. Pay close attention to the references Aristotle makes to Plato’s thoughts and what he thinks about them, as one of the main goals of the Metaphysics is to examine Platonic ideas in connection to Aristotle’s own views and observations.

We must inquire whether each thing and its essence are the same or different. This is of some use for the inquiry concerning substance; for each thing is thought to be not
different from its substance, and the essence is said to be the substance of each thing.

Now in the case of accidental unities the two would be generally thought to be different, e.g. white man would be thought to be different from the essence of white man. For if they are the same, the essence of man and that of white man are also the same; for a man and a white man are the same thing, as people say, so that the essence of white man and that of man would be also the same. But perhaps it does not follow that the essence of accidental unities should be the same as that of the simple terms. For the extreme terms are not in the same way identical with the middle term. But perhaps this might be thought to follow, that the extreme terms, the accidents, should turn out to be the same, e.g. the essence of white and that of musical; but this is not actually thought to be the case.

But in the case of so-called self-subsistent things, is a thing necessarily the same as its essence? E.g. if there are some substances which have no other substances nor entities prior to them—substances such as some assert the Ideas to be?—If the essence of good is to be different from good-itself, and the essence of animal from animal-itself, and the essence of being from being-itself, there will, firstly, be other substances and entities and Ideas besides those which are asserted, and, secondly, these others will be prior substances, if essence is substance. And if the posterior substances and the prior are severed from each other, (a) there will be no knowledge of the former, and (b) the latter will have no being. (By ‘severed’ I mean, if the good-itself has not the essence of good, and the latter has not the property of being good.) For (a) there is knowledge of each thing only when we know its essence. And (b) the case is the same for other things as for the good; so that if the essence of good is not good, neither is the essence of
reality real, nor the essence of unity one. And all essences alike exist or none of them does; so that if the essence of reality is not real, neither is any of the others. Again, that to which the essence of good does not belong is not good. The good, then, must be one with the essence of good, and the beautiful with the essence of beauty, and so with all things which do not depend on something else but are self-subsistent and primary. For it is enough if they are this, even if they are not Forms; or rather, perhaps, even if they are Forms. (At the same time it is clear that if there are Ideas such as some people say there are, it will not be substratum that is substance; for these must be substances, but not predicable of a substratum; for if they were they would exist only by being participated in.)

Each thing itself, then, and its essence are one and the same in no merely accidental way, as is evident both from the preceding arguments and because to know each thing, at least, is just to know its essence, so that even by the exhibition of instances it becomes clear that both must be one.

(But of an accidental term, e.g. ‘the musical’ or ‘the white’, since it has two meanings, it is not true to say that it itself is identical with its essence; for both that to which the accidental quality belongs, and the accidental quality, are white, so that in a sense the accident and its essence are the same, and in a sense they are not; for the essence of white is not the same as the man or the white man, but it is the same as the attribute white.)

The absurdity of the separation would appear also if one were to assign a name to each of the essences; for there would be yet another essence besides the original one, e.g. to the essence of horse there will belong a second essence. Yet why should not some things be their essences from the start, since essence is substance? But indeed not only are a thing and its essence one, but the formula of them is also the same, as is
clear even from what has been said; for it is not by accident that the essence of one, and the one, are one. Further, if they are to be different, the process will go on to infinity; for we shall have (1) the essence of one, and (2) the one, so that to terms of the former kind the same argument will be applicable.

Clearly, then, each primary and self-subsistent thing is one and the same as its essence. The sophistical objections to this position, and the question whether Socrates and to be Socrates are the same thing, are obviously answered by the same solution; for there is no difference either in the standpoint from which the question would be asked, or in that from which one could answer it successfully. We have explained, then, in what sense each thing is the same as its essence and in what sense it is not.


https://archive.org/stream/worksaristotle08arisoog#page/n150


The excerpt below comes from another of Aristotle’s works- On the Soul. The treatise has nothing to do with spirituality, but rather is an exploration of the different kinds of soul possessed by different kinds of creatures. Plants, animals, and humans all have different kinds of souls which allow each group different abilities. The excerpt here is from a section of book 2, in which Aristotle discusses the senses, or “sensation,” and how they work to get information to a person’s mind.

Having made these distinctions let us now speak of sensation in the widest sense. Sensation depends, as we have said, on a process of movement or affection from without, for it is held to be some sort of change of quality. Now some thinkers assert that like is affected only by like; in what sense this is
possible and in what sense impossible, we have explained in our general discussion of acting and being acted upon.

Here arises a problem: why do we not perceive the senses themselves as well as the external objects of sense, or why without the stimulation of external objects do they not produce sensation, seeing that they contain in themselves fire, earth, and all the other elements, which are the direct or indirect objects is so of sense? It is clear that what is sensitive is only potentially, not actually. The power of sense is parallel to what is combustible, for that never ignites itself spontaneously, but requires an agent which has the power of starting ignition; otherwise it could have set itself on fire, and would not have needed actual fire to set it ablaze.

In reply we must recall that we use the word ‘perceive’ in two ways, for we say (a) that what has the power to hear or see, ‘sees’ or ‘hears’, even though it is at the moment asleep, and also (b) that what is actually seeing or hearing, ‘sees’ or ‘hears’. Hence ‘sense’ too must have two meanings, sense potential, and sense actual. Similarly ‘to be a sentient’ means either (a) to have a certain power or (b) to manifest a certain activity. To begin with, for a time, let us speak as if there were no difference between (i) being moved or affected, and (ii) being active, for movement is a kind of activity—an imperfect kind, as has elsewhere been explained. Everything that is acted upon or moved is acted upon by an agent which is actually at work. Hence it is that in one sense, as has already been stated, what acts and what is acted upon are like, in another unlike, i.e. prior to and during the change the two factors are unlike, after it like.

But we must now distinguish not only between what is potential and what is actual but also different senses in which things can be said to be potential or actual; up to now we have been speaking as if each of these phrases had only one sense.
We can speak of something as ‘a knower’ either (a) as when we say that man is a knower, meaning that man falls within the class of beings that know or have knowledge, or (b) as when we are speaking of a man who possesses a knowledge of grammar; each of these is so called as having in him a certain potentiality, but there is a difference between their respective potentialities, the one (a) being a potential knower, because his kind or matter is such and such, the other (b), because he can in the absence of any external counteracting cause realize his knowledge in actual knowing at will. This implies a third meaning of ‘a knower’ (c), one who is already realizing his knowledge—he is a knower in actuality and in the most proper sense is knowing, e.g. this A. Both the former are potential knowers, who realize their respective potentialities, the one (a) by change of quality, i.e. repeated transitions from one state to its opposite under instruction, the other (b) by the transition from the inactive possession of sense or grammar to their active exercise. The two kinds of transition are distinct.

Also the expression ‘to be acted upon’ has more than one meaning; it may mean either (a) the extinction of one of two contraries by the other, or (b) the maintenance of what is potential by the agency of what is actual and already like what is acted upon, with such likeness as is compatible with one’s being actual and the other potential. For what possesses knowledge becomes an actual knower by a transition which is either not an alteration of it at all (being in reality a development into its true self or actuality) or at least an alteration in a quite different sense from the usual meaning.

Hence it is wrong to speak of a wise man as being ‘altered’ when he uses his wisdom, just as it would be absurd to speak of a builder as being altered when he is using his skill in building a house.
What in the case of knowing or understanding leads from potentiality to actuality ought not to be called teaching but something else. That which starting with the power to know learns or acquires knowledge through the agency of one who actually knows and has the power of teaching either (a) ought not to be said ‘to be acted upon’ at all or (b) we must recognize two senses of alteration, viz. (i) the substitution of one quality for another, the first being the contrary of the second, or (ii) the development of an existent quality from potentiality in the direction of fixity or nature.

In the case of what is to possess sense, the first transition is due to the action of the male parent and takes place before birth so that at birth the living thing is, in respect of sensation, at the stage which corresponds to the possession of knowledge. Actual sensation corresponds to the stage of the exercise of knowledge. But between the two cases compared there is a difference; the objects that excite the sensory powers to activity, the seen, the heard, &c., are outside. The ground of this difference is that what actual sensation apprehends is individuals, while what knowledge apprehends is universals, and these are in a sense within the soul. That is why a man can exercise his knowledge when he wishes, but his sensation does not depend upon himself a sensible object must be there. A similar statement must be made about our knowledge of what is sensible-on the same ground, viz. that the sensible objects are individual and external.

A later more appropriate occasion may be found thoroughly to clear up all this. At present it must be enough to recognize the distinctions already drawn; a thing may be said to be potential in either of two senses, (a) in the sense in which we might say of a boy that he may become a general or (b) in the sense in which we might say the same of an adult, and there are
two corresponding senses of the term ‘a potential sentient’. There are no separate names for the two stages of potentiality; we have pointed out that they are different and how they are different. We cannot help using the incorrect terms ‘being acted upon or altered’ of the two transitions involved. As we have said, has the power of sensation is potentially like what the perceived object is actually; that is, while at the beginning of the process of its being acted upon the two interacting factors are dissimilar, at the end the one acted upon is assimilated to the other and is identical in quality with it.


10. Aristotle-On the Soul Book 3 Part 4

The following excerpt comes from Aristotle’s On the Soul book 3, in which he discusses the part of the soul that thinks. Specifically Aristotle wants to know how the part of the soul which thinks is different from other parts of the soul and how exactly it goes about the process of thinking. As you read this selection keep in mind the previous document, also from On the Soul, and think for a moment about how the two parts of the soul Aristotle has discussed work together to create knowledge.

Turning now to the part of the soul with which the soul knows and thinks (whether this is separable from the others in definition only, or spatially as well) we have to inquire (1) what differentiates this part, and (2) how thinking can take place.

If thinking is like perceiving, it must be either a process in which the soul is acted upon by what is capable of being thought, or a process different from but analogous to that. The thinking part of the soul must therefore be, while impassible,
capable of receiving the form of an object; that is, must be potentially identical in character with its object without being the object. Mind must be related to what is thinkable, as sense is to what is sensible.

Therefore, since everything is a possible object of thought, mind in order, as Anaxagoras says, to dominate, that is, to know, must be pure from all admixture; for the co-presence of what is alien to its nature is a hindrance and a block: it follows that it too, like the sensitive part, can have no nature of its own, other than that of having a certain capacity. Thus that in the soul which is called mind (by mind I mean that whereby the soul thinks and judges) is, before it thinks, not actually any real thing. For this reason it cannot reasonably be regarded as blended with the body: if so, it would acquire some quality, e.g. warmth or cold, or even have an organ like the sensitive faculty: as it is, it has none. It was a good idea to call the soul ‘the place of forms’, though (1) this description holds only of the intellective soul, and (2) even this is the forms only potentially, not actually.

Observation of the sense-organs and their employment reveals a distinction between the impassibility of the sensitive and that of the intellective faculty. After strong stimulation of a sense we are less able to exercise it than before, as e.g. in the case of a loud sound we cannot hear easily immediately after, or in the case of a bright colour or a powerful odour we cannot see or smell, but in the case of mind thought about an object that is highly intelligible renders it more and not less able afterwards to think objects that are less intelligible: the reason is that while the faculty of sensation is dependent upon the body, mind is separable from it.

Once the mind has become each set of its possible objects, as a man of science has, when this phrase is used of one who
is actually a man of science (this happens when he is now able to exercise the power on his own initiative), its condition is still one of potentiality, but in a different sense from the potentiality which preceded the acquisition of knowledge by learning or discovery: the mind too is then able to think itself.

Since we can distinguish between a spatial magnitude and what it is to be such, and between water and what it is to be water, and so in many other cases (though not in all; for in certain cases the thing and its form are identical), flesh and what it is to be flesh are discriminated either by different faculties, or by the same faculty in two different states: for flesh necessarily involves matter and is like what is snub-nosed, a this in a this. Now it is by means of the sensitive faculty that we discriminate the hot and the cold, i.e. the factors which combined in a certain ratio constitute flesh: the essential character of flesh is apprehended by something different either wholly separate from the sensitive faculty or related to it as a bent line to the same line when it has been straightened out.

Again in the case of abstract objects what is straight is analogous to what is snub-nosed; for it necessarily implies a continuum as its matter: its constitutive essence is different, if we may distinguish between straightness and what is straight: let us take it to be two-ness. It must be apprehended, therefore, by a different power or by the same power in a different state. To sum up, in so far as the realities it knows are capable of being separated from their matter, so it is also with the powers of mind.

The problem might be suggested: if thinking is a passive affection, then if mind is simple and impassible and has nothing in common with anything else, as Anaxagoras says, how can it come to think at all? For interaction between two factors is held to require a precedent community of
nature between the factors. Again it might be asked, is mind a possible object of thought to itself? For if mind is thinkable per se and what is thinkable is in kind one and the same, then either (a) mind will belong to everything, or (b) mind will contain some element common to it with all other realities which makes them all thinkable.

(1) Have not we already disposed of the difficulty about interaction involving a common element, when we said that mind is in a sense potentially whatever is thinkable, though actually it is nothing until it has thought? What it thinks must be in it just as characters may be said to be on a writing tablet on which as yet nothing actually stands written: this is exactly what happens with mind.

(2) Mind is itself thinkable in exactly the same way as its objects are. For (a) in the case of objects which involve no matter, what thinks and what is thought are identical; for speculative knowledge and its object are identical. (Why mind is not always thinking we must consider later.) (b) In the case of those which contain matter each of the objects of thought is only potentially present. It follows that while they will not have mind in them (for mind is a potentiality of them only in so far as they are capable of being disengaged from matter) mind may yet be thinkable.


11. Aristotle-On the Soul Book 3 Part 10

This excerpt also comes from Aristotle’s On the Soul, more specifically on what he refers to as the “appetitive” part of the soul. Here Aristotle is exploring the relationship between “appetite” and
mind and how the two work together to drive humans forward. As you read this selection think about the previous two from On the Soul and how all three parts discussed by Aristotle function together.

These two at all events appear to be sources of movement: appetite and mind (if one may venture to regard imagination as a kind of thinking; for many men follow their imaginations contrary to knowledge, and in all animals other than man there is no thinking or calculation but only imagination).

Both of these then are capable of originating local movement, mind and appetite: (1) mind, that is, which calculates means to an end, i.e. mind practical (it differs from mind speculative in the character of its end); while (2) appetite is in every form of it relative to an end: for that which is the object of appetite is the stimulant of mind practical; and that which is last in the process of thinking is the beginning of the action. It follows that there is a justification for regarding these two as the sources of movement, i.e. appetite and practical thought; for the object of appetite starts a movement and as a result of that thought gives rise to movement, the object of appetite being it a source of stimulation. So too when imagination originates movement, it necessarily involves appetite.

That which moves therefore is a single faculty and the faculty of appetite; for if there had been two sources of movement—mind and appetite—they would have produced movement in virtue of some common character. As it is, mind is never found producing movement without appetite (for wish is a form of appetite; and when movement is produced according to calculation it is also according to wish), but appetite can originate movement contrary to calculation, for desire is a form of appetite. Now mind is always right, but appetite and imagination may be either right or wrong. That
is why, though in any case it is the object of appetite which originates movement, this object may be either the real or the apparent good. To produce movement the object must be more than this: it must be good that can be brought into being by action; and only what can be otherwise than as it is can thus be brought into being. That then such a power in the soul as has been described, i.e. that called appetite, originates movement is clear. Those who distinguish parts in the soul, if they distinguish and divide in accordance with differences of power, find themselves with a very large number of parts, a nutritive, a sensitive, an intellective, a deliberative, and now an appetitive part; for these are more different from one another than the faculties of desire and passion.

Since appetites run counter to one another, which happens when a principle of reason and a desire are contrary and is possible only in beings with a sense of time (for while mind bids us hold back because of what is future, desire is influenced by what is just at hand: a pleasant object which is just at hand presents itself as both pleasant and good, without condition in either case, because of want of foresight into what is farther away in time), it follows that while that which originates movement must be specifically one, viz. the faculty of appetite as such (or rather farthest back of all the object of that faculty; for it is it that itself remaining unmoved originates the movement by being apprehended in thought or imagination), the things that originate movement are numerically many.

All movement involves three factors, (1) that which originates the movement, (2) that by means of which it originates it, and (3) that which is moved. The expression ‘that which originates the movement’ is ambiguous: it may mean either (a) something which itself is unmoved or (b) that which at once moves and is moved. Here that which moves
without itself being moved is the realizable good, that which at once moves and is moved is the faculty of appetite (for that which is influenced by appetite so far as it is actually so influenced is set in movement, and appetite in the sense of actual appetite is a kind of movement), while that which is in motion is the animal. The instrument which appetite employs to produce movement is no longer psychical but bodily: hence the examination of it falls within the province of the functions common to body and soul. To state the matter summarily at present, that which is the instrument in the production of movement is to be found where a beginning and an end coincide as e.g. in a ball and socket joint; for there the convex and the concave sides are respectively an end and a beginning (that is why while the one remains at rest, the other is moved): they are separate in definition but not separable spatially. For everything is moved by pushing and pulling. Hence just as in the case of a wheel, so here there must be a point which remains at rest, and from that point the movement must originate.

To sum up, then, and repeat what I have said, inasmuch as an animal is capable of appetite it is capable of self-movement; it is not capable of appetite without possessing imagination; and all imagination is either (1) calculative or (2) sensitive. In the latter an animals, and not only man, partake.


Chapter 3: The Hellenistic Age 334-30 BCE

The Hellenistic Age was ushered in by one of the most famous figures in Western history, Alexander the Great. The son of Philip of Macedon, Alexander was determined to carry on his father’s plan of attacking the Persian Empire once he became ruler in 336 BCE. Two years later Alexander launched his invasion, and scored important victories at the Granicus River, Issus, Tyre, and Gaugamela, where he defeated forces led directly by Darius, Emperor of the Persians. Alexander went on to conquer the Persian Empire, although he kept much of its infrastructure in place and relied on Persians as advisors. He led his army all the way into India, before a potential revolt by his soldiers forced him to begin the long journey home. Alexander never made it back to Macedon, however, dying at the age of 32, likely from a combination of accumulated wounds and illness. His empire was then split into four kingdoms, each based on strongly fortified cities that were hubs of Greek culture in foreign lands. The cities were laid out in the same way Greek cities were and used Greek architecture, although since the cities were part of kingdoms, Greek ideas like
democracy were limited, as the cities relied heavily on monarchs for their patronage. In terms of society, slavery was present in the Hellenistic world just as it had been in earlier eras, and men were still dominant, although upper class women did enjoy greater opportunities to own slaves, sell property, and get actively involved in politics. Philosophical development continued during this time, with the two most notable ideas being Epicureanism and Stoicism. Each dealt with how human beings could live happy lives, though they took different paths toward that same goal. For the Epicureans, the pursuit of simplicity and a pleasurable life free from pain led to happiness, while for the Stoics it was living virtuously and community involvement that made people happy.

In this chapter you’ll find two documents and a short video. The first document comes from the Stoic philosopher Epictetus, who lays out a concise expression of some of the primary themes of Stoicism. Following that is a letter written by Epicurus, who lent his name to the philosophy he developed, to a friend in which he explains what Epicureanism is and why some of its detractors are wrong. Finally is a short video examining Epicurus and his simple steps to making people happy as well as why so many people aren’t happy.

1. **Epictetus-The Enchiridion**

Originally founded by the Greek philosopher Zeno, Stoic philosophy is centered on ethics and how people can live happy lives. The selection below comes from the Enchiridion by the Greek Stoic philosopher Epictetus, who lived during the era of the Roman Republic. He believed that philosophy was an actual guide by which to live one’s life rather than simply a subject for abstract discussion. The Enchiridion excerpts here identify some of the primary themes of Stoic philosophy.

1 Some things are in our control and others not. Things in our control are opinion, pursuit, desire, aversion, and, in a
word, whatever are our own actions. Things not in our control are body, property, reputation, command, and, in one word, whatever are not our own actions.

The things in our control are by nature free, unrestrained, unhindered; but those not in our control are weak, slavish, restrained, belonging to others. Remember, then, that if you suppose that things which are slavish by nature are also free, and that what belongs to others is your own, then you will be hindered. You will lament, you will be disturbed, and you will find fault both with gods and men. But if you suppose that only to be your own which is your own, and what belongs to others such as it really is, then no one will ever compel you or restrain you. Further, you will find fault with no one or accuse no one. You will do nothing against your will. No one will hurt you, you will have no enemies, and you not be harmed.

Aiming therefore at such great things, remember that you must not allow yourself to be carried, even with a slight tendency, towards the attainment of lesser things. Instead, you must entirely quit some things and for the present postpone the rest. But if you would both have these great things, along with power and riches, then you will not gain even the latter, because you aim at the former too: but you will absolutely fail of the former, by which alone happiness and freedom are achieved.

Work, therefore to be able to say to every harsh appearance, “You are but an appearance, and not absolutely the thing you appear to be.” And then examine it by those rules which you have, and first, and chiefly, by this: whether it concerns the things which are in our own control, or those which are not; and, if it concerns anything not in our control, be prepared to say that it is nothing to you.

5. Men are disturbed, not by things, but by the principles and
notions which they form concerning things. Death, for instance, is not terrible, else it would have appeared so to Socrates. But the terror consists in our notion of death that it is terrible. When therefore we are hindered, or disturbed, or grieved, let us never attribute it to others, but to ourselves; that is, to our own principles. An uninstructed person will lay the fault of his own bad condition upon others. Someone just starting instruction will lay the fault on himself. Some who is perfectly instructed will place blame neither on others nor on himself.

16. When you see anyone weeping in grief because his son has gone abroad, or is dead, or because he has suffered in his affairs, be careful that the appearance may not misdirect you. Instead, distinguish within your own mind, and be prepared to say, “It’s not the accident that distresses this person, because it doesn’t distress another person; it is the judgment which he makes about it.” As far as words go, however, don’t reduce yourself to his level, and certainly do not moan with him. Do not moan inwardly either.

18. When a raven happens to croak unluckily, don’t allow the appearance hurry you away with it, but immediately make the distinction to yourself, and say, “None of these things are foretold to me; but either to my paltry body, or property, or reputation, or children, or wife. But to me all omens are lucky, if I will. For whichever of these things happens, it is in my control to derive advantage from it.”

20. Remember, that not he who gives ill language or a blow insults, but the principle which represents these things as insulting. When, therefore, anyone provokes you, be assured that it is your own opinion which provokes you. Try, therefore, in the first place, not to be hurried away with the appearance.
For if you once gain time and respite, you will more easily command yourself.

34. If you are struck by the appearance of any promised pleasure, guard yourself against being hurried away by it; but let the affair wait your leisure, and procure yourself some delay. Then bring to your mind both points of time: that in which you will enjoy the pleasure, and that in which you will repent and reproach yourself after you have enjoyed it; and set before you, in opposition to these, how you will be glad and applaud yourself if you abstain. And even though it should appear to you a seasonable gratification, take heed that its enticing, and agreeable and attractive force may not subdue you; but set in opposition to this how much better it is to be conscious of having gained so great a victory.

6. Don’t be prideful with any excellence that is not your own. If a horse should be prideful and say, “I am handsome,” it would be supportable. But when you are prideful, and say, I have a handsome horse,” know that you are proud of what is, in fact, only the good of the horse. What, then, is your own? Only your reaction to the appearances of things. Thus, when you behave conformably to nature in reaction to how things appear, you will be proud with reason; for you will take pride in some good of your own.

13. If you want to improve, be content to be thought foolish and stupid with regard to external things. Don’t wish to be thought to know anything; and even if you appear to be somebody important to others, distrust yourself. For, it is difficult to both keep your faculty of choice in a state conformable to nature, and at the same time acquire external things. But while you are careful about the one, you must of necessity neglect the other.

26. The will of nature may be learned from those things in
which we don’t distinguish from each other. For example, when our neighbor’s boy breaks a cup, or the like, we are presently ready to say, “These things will happen.” Be assured, then, that when your own cup likewise is broken, you ought to be affected just as when another’s cup was broken. Apply this in like manner to greater things. Is the child or wife of another dead? There is no one who would not say, “This is a human accident.” but if anyone’s own child happens to die, it is presently, “Alas I how wretched am I!” But it should be remembered how we are affected in hearing the same thing concerning others.

30. Duties are universally measured by relations. Is anyone a father? If so, it is implied that the children should take care of him, submit to him in everything, patiently listen to his reproaches, his correction. But he is a bad father. Is you naturally entitled, then, to a good father? No, only to a father. Is a brother unjust? Well, keep your own situation towards him. Consider not what he does, but what you are to do to keep your own faculty of choice in a state conformable to nature. For another will not hurt you unless you please. You will then be hurt when you think you are hurt. In this manner, therefore, you will find, from the idea of a neighbor, a citizen, a general, the corresponding duties if you accustom yourself to contemplate the several relations.

7. Consider when, on a voyage, your ship is anchored; if you go on shore to get water you may along the way amuse yourself with picking up a shellfish, or an onion. However, your thoughts and continual attention ought to be bent towards the ship, waiting for the captain to call on board; you must then immediately leave all these things, otherwise you will be thrown into the ship, bound neck and feet like a sheep. So it is with life. If, instead of an onion or a shellfish, you are given a wife or
child, that is fine. But if the captain calls, you must run to the
ship, leaving them, and regarding none of them. But if you are
old, never go far from the ship: lest, when you are called, you
should be unable to come in time.

11. Never say of anything, “I have lost it”; but, “I have returned
it.” Is your child dead? It is returned. Is your wife dead? She is
returned. Is your estate taken away? Well, and is not that
likewise returned? “But he who took it away is a bad man.”
What difference is it to you who the giver assigns to take it
back? While he gives it to you to possess, take care of it; but
don’t view it as your own, just as travelers view a hotel.

17. Remember that you are an actor in a drama, of such a kind
as the author pleases to make it. If short, of a short one; if
long, of a long one. If it is his pleasure you should act a poor
man, a cripple, a governor, or a private person, see that you act
it naturally. For this is your business, to act well the character
assigned you; to choose it is another’s.

31. Be assured that the essential property of piety towards the
gods is to form right opinions concerning them, as existing
“I and as governing the universe with goodness and justice.
And fix yourself in this resolution, to obey them, and yield to
them, and willingly follow them in all events, as produced by
the most perfect understanding. For thus you will never find
fault with the gods, nor accuse them as neglecting you. And
it is not possible for this to be effected any other way than by
withdrawing yourself from things not in our own control, and
placing good or evil in those only which are. For if you suppose
any of the things not in our own control to be either good or
evil, when you are disappointed of what you wish, or incur what
you would avoid, you must necessarily find fault with and
blame the authors. For every animal is naturally formed to fly
and abhor things that appear hurtful, and the causes of them;
and to pursue and admire those which appear beneficial, and the causes of them. It is impractical, then, that one who supposes himself to be hurt should be happy about the person who, he thinks, hurts him, just as it is impossible to be happy about the hurt itself. Hence, also, a father is reviled by a son, when he does not impart to him the things which he takes to be good; and the supposing empire to be a good made Polynices and Eteocles mutually enemies. On this account the husbandman, the sailor, the merchant, on this account those who lose wives and children, revile the gods. For where interest is, there too is piety placed. So that, whoever is careful to regulate his desires and aversions as he ought, is, by the very same means, careful of piety likewise. But it is also incumbent on everyone to offer libations and sacrifices and first fruits, conformably to the customs of his country, with purity, and not in a slovenly manner, nor negligently, nor sparingly, nor beyond his ability.

52. Upon all occasions we ought to have these maxims ready at hand:

“Conduct me, Jove, and you, 0 Destiny,
Wherever your decrees have fixed my station.”
Cleanthes

“I follow cheerfully; and, did I not,
Wicked and wretched, I must follow still
Whoever yields properly to Fate, is deemed
Wise among men, and knows the laws of heaven.”
Euripides, Frag. 965

And this third:

“ɔ Crito, if it thus pleases the gods, thus let it be. Anytus and Melitus may kill me indeed, but hurt me they cannot.”
Plato's Crito and Apology

21. Let death and exile, and all other things which
appear terrible be daily before your eyes, but chiefly death, and you win never entertain any abject thought, nor too eagerly covet anything.

29. In every affair consider what precedes and follows, and then undertake it. Otherwise you will begin with spirit; but not having thought of the consequences, when some of them appear you will shamefully desist. “I would conquer at the Olympic games.” But consider what precedes and follows, and then, if it is for your advantage, engage in the affair. You must conform to rules, submit to a diet, refrain from dainties; exercise your body, whether you choose it or not, at a stated hour, in heat and cold; you must drink no cold water, nor sometimes even wine. In a word, you must give yourself up to your master, as to a physician. Then, in the combat, you may be thrown into a ditch, dislocate your arm, turn your ankle, swallow dust, be whipped, and, after all, lose the victory. When you have evaluated all this, if your inclination still holds, then go to war. Otherwise, take notice, you will behave like children who sometimes play like wrestlers, sometimes gladiators, sometimes blow a trumpet, and sometimes act a tragedy when they have seen and admired these shows. Thus you too will be at one time a wrestler, at another a gladiator, now a philosopher, then an orator; but with your whole soul, nothing at all. Like an ape, you mimic all you see, and one thing after another is sure to please you, but is out of favor as soon as it becomes familiar. For you have never entered upon anything considerately, nor after having viewed the whole matter on all sides, or made any scrutiny into it, but rashly, and with a cold inclination. Thus some, when they have seen a philosopher and heard a man speaking like Euphrates (though, indeed, who can speak like him?), have a mind to be philosophers too. Consider first, man, what the matter is, and what your own nature is able to bear.
If you would be a wrestler, consider your shoulders, your back, your thighs; for different persons are made for different things. Do you think that you can act as you do, and be a philosopher? That you can eat and drink, and be angry and discontented as you are now? You must watch, you must labor, you must get the better of certain appetites, must quit your acquaintance, be despised by your servant, be laughed at by those you meet; come off worse than others in everything, in magistracies, in honors, in courts of judicature. When you have considered all these things round, approach, if you please; if, by parting with them, you have a mind to purchase apathy, freedom, and tranquility. If not, don't come here; don't, like children, be one while a philosopher, then a publican, then an orator, and then one of Caesar's officers. These things are not consistent. You must be one man, either good or bad. You must cultivate either your own ruling faculty or externals, and apply yourself either to things within or without you; that is, be either a philosopher, or one of the vulgar.

35. When you do anything from a clear judgment that it ought to be done, never shun the being seen to do it, even though the world should make a wrong supposition about it; for, if you don’t act right, shun the action itself; but, if you do, why are you afraid of those who censure you wrongly?


2. Epicurus-Letter to Menoeceus

The second primary philosophy of the Hellenistic world was
Epicureanism, named after its founder Epicurus, who produced over 300 written works, with only a few fragments surviving until today. Epicurus’ main belief was that philosophy should help people to live rich, fulfilling lives free from both physical pain and mental anguish. The text below is a letter Epicurus wrote to a friend that contains advice on how one can have a pleasant existence. As you read this note that there are some similarities between Epicurean and Stoic philosophy.

Let no one when young delay to study philosophy, nor when he is old grow weary of his study. For no one can come too early or too late to secure the health of his soul. And the man who says that the age for philosophy has either not yet come or has gone by is like the man who says that the age for happiness is not yet come to him, or has passed away. Wherefore both when young and old a man must study philosophy, that as he grows old he may be young in blessings through the grateful recollection of what has been, and that in youth he may be old as well, since he will know no fear of what is to come. We must then meditate on the things that make our happiness, seeing that when that is with us we have all, but when it is absent we do all to win it.

The things which I used unceasingly to commend to you, these do and practice, considering them to be the first principles of the good life. First of all believe that god is a being immortal and blessed, even as the common idea of a god is engraved on men’s minds, and do not assign to him anything alien to his immortality or ill-suited to his blessedness: but believe about him everything that can uphold his blessedness and immortality. For gods there are, since the knowledge of them is by clear vision. But they are not such as the many believe them to be: for indeed they do not consistently represent them as they believe them to be. And the impious man is not he who denies the gods of the many, but he who attaches to the gods the beliefs of the many. For the statements
of the many about the gods are not conceptions derived from sensation, but false suppositions, according to which the greatest misfortunes befall the wicked and the greatest blessings the good by the gift of the gods. For men being accustomed always to their own virtues welcome those like themselves, but regard all that is not of their nature as alien.

Become accustomed to the belief that death is nothing to us. For all good and evil consists in sensation, but death is deprivation of sensation. And therefore a right understanding that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life enjoyable, not because it adds to it an infinite span of time, but because it takes away the craving for immortality. For there is nothing terrible in life for the man who has truly comprehended that there is nothing terrible in not living. So that the man speaks but idly who says that he fears death not because it will be painful when it comes, but because it is painful in anticipation. For that which gives no trouble when it comes, is but an empty pain in anticipation. So death, the most terrifying of ills, is nothing to us, since so long as we exist, death is not with us; but when death comes, then we do not exist. It does not then concern either the living or the dead, since for the former it is not, and the latter are no more.

But the many at one moment shun death as the greatest of evils, at another yearn for it as a respite from the evils in life. But the wise man neither seeks to escape life nor fears the cessation of life, for neither does life offend him nor does the absence of life seem to be any evil, And just as with food he does not seek simply the larger share and nothing else, but rather the most pleasant, so he seeks to enjoy not the longest period of time, but the most pleasant.

And he who counsels the young man to live well, but the old man to make a good end, is foolish, not merely because of the
desirability of life, but also because it is the same training which teaches to live well and to die well. Yet much worse still is the man who says it is good not to be born, but

“once born make haste to pass the gates of Death” [Theognis, 427]

For if he says this from conviction why does he not pass away out of life? For it is open to him to do so, if he had firmly made up his mind to this. But if he speaks in jest, his words are idle among men who cannot receive them.

We must then bear in mind that the future is neither ours, nor yet wholly not ours, so that we may not altogether expect it as sure to come, nor abandon hope of it, as if it will certainly not come.

We must consider that of desires some are natural, others vain, and of the natural some are necessary and others merely natural; and of the necessary some are necessary for happiness, others for the repose of the body, and others for very life. The right understanding of these facts enables us to refer all choice and avoidance to the health of the body and the soul’s freedom from disturbance, since this is the aim of the life of blessedness. For it is to obtain this end that we always act, namely, to avoid pain and fear. And when this is once secured for us, all the tempest of the soul is dispersed, since the living creature has not to wander as though in search of something that is missing, and to look for some other thing by which he can fulfill the good of the soul and the good of the body. For it is then that we have need of pleasure, when we feel pain owing to the absence of pleasure; but when we do not feel pain, we no longer need pleasure. And for this cause we call pleasure the beginning and end of the blessed life. For we recognize pleasure as the first good innate in us, and from pleasure we begin every act of
choice and avoidance, and to pleasure we return again, using the feeling as the standard by which we judge every good.

And since pleasure is the first good and natural to us, for this very reason we do not choose every pleasure, but sometimes we pass over many pleasures, when greater discomfort accrues to us as the result of them: and similarly we think many pains better than pleasures, since a greater pleasure comes to us when we have endured pains for a long time. Every pleasure then because of its natural kinship to us is good, yet not every pleasure is to be chosen: even as every pain also is an evil, yet not all are always of a nature to be avoided. Yet by a scale of comparison and by the consideration of advantages and disadvantages we must form our judgment on all these matters. For the good on certain occasions we treat as bad, and conversely the bad as good.

And again independence of desire we think a great good – not that we may at all times enjoy but a few things, but that, if we do not possess many, we may enjoy the few in the genuine persuasion that those have the sweetest pleasure in luxury who least need it, and that all that is natural is easy to be obtained, but that which is superfluous is hard. And so plain savors bring us a pleasure equal to a luxurious diet, when all the pain due to want is removed; and bread and water produce the highest pleasure, when one who needs them puts them to his lips. To grow accustomed therefore to simple and not luxurious diet gives us health to the full, and makes a man alert for the needful employments of life, and when after long intervals we approach luxuries, disposes us better towards them, and fits us to be fearless of fortune.

When, therefore, we maintain that pleasure is the end, we do not mean the pleasures of profligates and those that consist in sensuality, as is supposed by some who are either ignorant
or disagree with us or do not understand, but freedom from pain in the body and from trouble in the mind. For it is not continuous drinking and reveling, nor the satisfaction of lusts, nor the enjoyment of fish and other luxuries of the wealthy table, which produce a pleasant life, but sober reasoning, searching out the motives for all choice and avoidance, and banishing mere opinions, to which are due the greatest disturbance of the spirit.

Of all this the beginning and the greatest good is prudence. Wherefore prudence is a more precious thing even than philosophy: for from prudence are sprung all the other virtues, and it teaches us that it is not possible to live pleasantly without living prudently and honorably and justly, nor, again, to live a life of prudence, honor, and justice without living pleasantly. I For the virtues are by nature bound up with the pleasant life, and the pleasant life is inseparable from them. For indeed who, think you, is a better man than he who holds reverent opinions concerning the gods, and is at all times free from fear of death, and has reasoned out the end ordained by nature? He understands that the limit of good things is easy to fulfill and easy to attain, whereas the course of ills is either short in time or slight in pain: he laughs at destiny, whom some have introduced as the mistress of all things. He thinks that with us lies the chief power in determining events, some of which happen by necessity and some by chance, and some are within our control; for while necessity cannot be called to account, he sees that chance is inconstant, but that which is in our control is subject to no master, and to it are naturally attached praise and blame. For, indeed, it were better to follow the myths about the gods than to become a slave to the destiny of the natural philosophers: for the former suggests a hope of placating the gods by worship, whereas the latter involves a necessity which
knows no placation. As to chance, he does not regard it as a god as most men do (for in a god’s acts there is no disorder), nor as an uncertain cause of all things: for he does not believe that good and evil are given by chance to man for the framing of a blessed life, but that opportunities for great good and great evil are afforded by it. He therefore thinks it better to be unfortunate in reasonable action than to prosper in unreason. For it is better in a man’s actions that what is well chosen should fail, rather than that what is ill chosen should be successful owing to chance.

Meditate therefore on these things and things akin to them night and day by yourself, and with a companion like to yourself, and never shall you be disturbed waking or asleep, but you shall live like a god among men. For a man who lives among immortal blessings is not like to a mortal being.


3. **Alain de Botton-Philosophy-A Guide to Happiness:**

Epicurus on Happiness

In the short documentary below, philosopher Alain de Botton explains some of the basic premises of Epicurean philosophy. De Botton looks at the factors Epicurus felt were needed for people to be truly happy, why people weren’t happy, and an important misconception about Epicurean philosophy.
A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text.
You can view it online here:
https://westerncivsourcebook.pressbooks.com/?p=28
Chapter 4: The Roman Republic 509-31 BCE

The Roman Republic lasted for nearly half a millennium, five hundred years of growth, conquest, and economic, political, and military developments. The Roman state contained numerous positions all meant to balance and check the power of the others—consuls, praetors, censors, the Senate, all working together to run an ever growing territory and population. Not everything ran smoothly; the Struggle of the Orders between the patricians who held all of the political power and the plebeians who held none would last for two hundred years and slowly begin opening the halls of power to more people in Roman society. The story of Rome is the story of an expanding civilization that sought new ways to deal with the responsibilities generated by that expansion. At first Rome allied itself with other city-states in Latium, the region of Italy in which Rome was situated. Soon Rome encountered the Samnites, a people from central Italy, and after defeating them and expanding down the peninsula Rome encountered the Greek city-states already established there. By taking control of southern Italy, however, Rome began encountering other
civilizations outside of Italy, namely Carthage in North Africa. After a series of three wars, all of which were won by Rome, some at very high cost, Carthage was defeated and burned to the ground. Rome’s expansion wasn’t done, however, as it began to turn its attention to the east, to Greece and Macedon. By the end of the second century BCE, Rome was master of the entire Mediterranean Basin. The good times, though, wouldn’t last forever, as Rome became plagued by serious problems in the first century, BCE, from land problems that resulted in fewer citizens, and therefore fewer soldiers, to the assassination of politicians trying to fix those problems. The final dramatic acts dealt with a series of strong personalities who engaged in a series of civil wars that brought the Republic to its knees. First Julius Caesar defeated a former friend, Pompey, to become the sole power in Rome. Caesar was assassinated by senators in 44 BCE, leading to another civil war between one of Caesar’s lieutenants, Mark Antony, and Caesar’s adopted heir, Octavian. Octavian would ultimately prove triumphant, defeating Antony in 31 BCE and thereby becoming the sole ruler of Rome.

The documents in this chapter focus mostly on political developments in Rome. First is Polybius, an historian who details the structure of the Republic’s government and the balance between the various organs. The Twelve Tables was a codification of Roman law at the beginning of the Struggle of the Orders, which showed the plebeians how little power they truly had. The next two documents, both from the Roman historian Livy, detail important events of the political battle between the patricians and the plebeians, namely the plebeians physically leaving the city of Rome to force their opponents’ hands, and how the plebeians won access to the highest position in the Republic. Valerius Maximus and the document
on chastity will move us out of the realm of politics and into that of society, specifically gender relations, during the Roman Republic. These two excerpts give us a window into the privileges men had over women during this era. Finally in this chapter is an excerpt from Julius Caesar discussing the beginning of the civil war with Pompey that would be the beginning of the end of the Republic.

1. Polybius-History

The Greek historian Polybius lived in Rome for a time and traveled around the Mediterranean basin interviewing eye witnesses of the events he would later include in his book The Histories. The main thrust of his work is the emergence of Rome, specifically its rise to prominence on the Italian peninsula and the war against Carthage. In the excerpt below Polybius tells us about the three parts of Rome’s republican system of government-the Consuls, the Senate, and the People—and how each interacts with the other.

As for the Roman constitution it had three elements, each of them possessing sovereign powers, and their respective share of power in the whole state had been regulated with such careful heed to equality and poise, that no one could say surely – not even a native – whether the constitution as a whole were an aristocracy or democracy or despotism. And no wonder; on looking at the power of the Consuls it seems despotic; if on that of the Senate as aristocratic; and if finally one regards the power of the People, it would seem sheer democracy.

The Powers of the Consuls

The Consuls, before leading out the legions, remain in Rome and are chiefs of the [civil] administration. All other magistrates, save the Tribunes, are under them, and take their orders. They introduce foreign ambassadors to the Senate, bring matters requiring deliberation before it, and see to the execution of its decrees. If, again, there are any matters of state
which require the authorization of the People, it is their business to see to them, to summon the popular meetings, to bring the proposals before them, and to carry out the decrees of the majority. In the preparations for war also, and in a word in the entire administration of a campaign, they have almost absolute power. They can impose on the allies such levies as they think good; also appoint the military tribunes, make up the roll for soldiers, and select those that are fit. Besides, they have absolute power of inflicting punishment on all who are under their command while on active service; and they have authority to expend as much of the public money as they choose, being accompanied by a quaestor, who is entirely at their orders. A survey of these powers would in fact justify our describing the constitution as despotic, – a clear case of royal government.

The Powers of the Senate

[But on the other hand] The Senate has first of all the control of the treasury, and regulates the receipts and disbursements alike; for the Quaestors cannot issue any public money for the various departments of the state, without a decree of the Senate, except for the service of the Consuls. The Senate controls, too, what is by far the largest and most important expenditure, – that, namely, which is made by the censor every lustrum [fifth year] for the repair or construction of public buildings; this money cannot be obtained by the censors except by a grant of the Senate. Similarly all crimes committed in Italy, requiring a public investigation, such as treason, conspiracy, poisoning or willful murder, are in the hands of the Senate. Besides, if any individual or state among the Italian allies requires a controversy to be settled, a penalty to be assumed, help or protection to be afforded – all this is in the province of the Senate.

Or again, outside Italy, if it is necessary to send an embassy
to reconcile communities at war, or to remind them of their duty, or sometimes to impose requisitions upon them, or receive their submission, or finally to proclaim war against them – all this is the business of the Senate. In like manner the reception to be given to foreign ambassadors in Rome, and the answers to be returned to them, are decided by the Senate. With such business the People have nothing to do. Consequently, if one were staying at Rome when the Consuls were not in town, one would imagine the constitution to be a complete aristocracy, and this has been the idea held by many Greeks, and by many kings as well, from the fact that nearly all the business they had at Rome was settled by the Senate.

The Powers of the Roman People

[After this one naturally asks what part is left for the People, but] they have a part and that a most important one. For the People are the sole fountain of honor and of punishment; and it is by these two things, and these alone, that dynasties, and constitutions, and, in a word, human society, are held together. The People are the only court to decide matters of life and death; also even cases where the penalty is a fine, if the assessment be a heavy one, and especially where the accused have held high magistracies. . . . Men who are on trial for their lives at Rome, while the sentence is in process of being voted – if even only one of the tribes whose votes are needed to ratify the sentence has not voted, have the privilege at Rome of openly departing and condemning themselves to a voluntary exile. Such men are safe at Naples, or Praeneste, or Tibur, and other towns with whom this arrangement has been duly ratified on oath.

Again the People bestow public offices on the deserving, which are the most honorable rewards of virtue. It [the Popular Assembly] has the absolute power of passing or repealing laws;
and, most important of all, it is the People who deliberate on the question of peace or war. And when provisional terms are made for alliance, suspension of hostilities or treaties, it is the People who ratify or reject them.

These considerations would lead one to say that the chief power in the state was the People’s, – that the constitution was a democracy.

The Relations of Each Part to the Other

I must now show how each of these several parts can, when they choose, oppose or support one another.

The Consul, then, when he has started on an expedition, seems to be absolute, still he needs both the People and the Senate to help him, otherwise he will have no success. Plainly he must have supplies sent his legions occasionally: but without a decree of the Senate they can get neither corn, clothes, nor pay; so that all the plans of a general are futile, if the Senate is resolved either to shrink from danger, or to hamper his plans.

And again, whether a Consul shall bring any undertaking to a conclusion or not, depends entirely on the Senate; for it has absolute authority at the end of the year to send another Consul to supersede him, or to continue the existing one in his command as [proconsul], [Again the Senate controls the matter of the much-prized triumphs] for the generals cannot celebrate them with the proper pomp, nor sometimes celebrate them at all, unless the Senate concurs and grants the necessary money.

As for the People, that body ratifies or rejects treaties, terms of peace and the like; and especially when the Consuls lay down their office they have to give an account of their administration, before it. [Consequently the Consuls are obliged to court popular favor.]

As for the Senate, it is obliged to take the multitude into account and respect the wishes of the People. It cannot execute
[death sentences] unless the People first ratify its decrees. Also in matters directly affecting Senators – e.g. laws diminishing the Senate’s traditional authority, or depriving Senators of certain dignities and office, or even actually cutting down their property, – even in such cases the People have the sole power of passing or rejecting the law. But most important of all is the fact that, if the [Popular] Tribunes interpose their veto, the Senate not merely cannot pass a decree, but cannot even hold a meeting at all, – formal or informal. How the Tribunes are always bound to execute the will of the People, and above things to have regard to the public wishes; therefore for all these reasons the Senate stands in awe of the multitude, and cannot neglect the feelings of the People.

In like manner the People are far from being independent of the Senate. For contracts innumerable are given out by the Censors to all parts of Italy for the repair or construction of public buildings; there is also the collection of revenues from many rivers, harbors, forests, mines, and land, – everything in a word that comes under the control of the Roman government; and in all these the People at large are engaged; so that there is scarcely a man, so to speak, who is not interested either as a contractor or as being employed in the works. For some purchase the contracts from the censors themselves; others go partners with them, while others again go security for these contractors, and actually pledge their property to the treasury for them. Now over all these transactions the Senate has absolute control; it can grant an extension of time, [in emergency it can lighten or release the contract, or enforce it on the contractors with such severity as to ruin all involved.] But most important of all is the fact that the judges are taken from the Senate for most lawsuits, whether criminal or civil, in which the charges are heavy. Consequently all citizens are
at the Senate’s mercy; they do not know when they may need its aid, and are cautious about resisting or actively opposing its will. For a similar reason men do not rashly resist the Consuls, because every one may become subject to their absolute [military] authority on a campaign.

The Excellence of the Roman Constitution

The result of this power of the several estates for mutual help or harm is a union sufficiently firm for all emergencies, and a constitution which it is impossible to find a better. Whenever any foreign danger compels them to unite and work together, the strength which is developed by the State is so extraordinary that everything required is unfailingly carried out by the eager rivalry of all classes, while each individual works, privately and publicly alike, for the accomplishment of the business in hand.


2. The Twelve Tables

The Twelve Tables are an important step both in the evolution of law and the social development known as the Struggle of the Orders during the Roman Republic. In 450 BCE a group of ten men, known as the decemviri, were appointed to codify existing Roman rules into a formal set of laws and rights that would become the first ten tables. The following year a second group of ten men created the final two tables. The tables were published around Rome so that every Roman could either read or have the laws read to them. The tables cover such matters as debt, property, land rights, and laws related to injury. The portions excerpted below give us a window into how the Romans understood justice, fairness, and equality.
Copy and paste the link below into your web browser to access this document:
https://archive.org/stream/TheTwelveTables/The%20Twelve%20Tables#page/n0/mode/2up

3. Livy—Secession of the Plebs

Livy was a Roman historian whose major work, History of Rome, covers the earliest Roman myths up to the reign of Augustus. Since he wrote about many things that happened well before his lifetime the, accuracy of his descriptions is questionable despite many historians' reliance on Livy as a source. The selection included here discusses an extraordinary event in the development of Rome's republic—the secession of the plebeians in their attempt to gain more rights and greater equality.

War with the Volscians was threatening, but the state was also sorely disturbed within itself, the animosity betwixt Senate and people glowing now to white heat, largely on account of the imprisonments for debt. Loud was the complaint that while men were fighting abroad for lands and liberty, they were seized and oppressed at home by their own fellow citizens; and that the “liberty of the people” was more secure in war than in peace. This feeling of discontent increasing of itself was still further aggravated by a case of individual suffering.

A certain aged man thrust himself into the Forum, with all the tokens of his miseries upon him. His clothes were utterly squalid; his very body was shocking, pale and emaciated as it was. His long beard and hair impressed, too, a savage wildness upon his features. Notwithstanding his wretched state he was nevertheless recognized, and it was repeated how he had been a centurion, and, while pitying him, men announced his other distinctions won in the public service, while he displayed the various scars on his breast, witnesses as they were to honorable battles.
[As the multitude gathered and questioned him he told how,] “while serving in the Sabine War, because he had not merely lost the produce of his little farm through the hostile ravagers, but also because his house had been burned, his goods stolen, his cattle driven away, and too because a tax had been imposed [on him at that very distressing time, he had fallen into debt. Then this debt had aggravated. First he had been stripped of his father’s and his grandfather’s farm, then of his other property.] Finally he was seized in person by his creditor, and haled away, not into mere slavery, but into a regular house of correction and punishment. He finally displayed his back, all covered with the marks of the stripes so lately inflicted.

Hearing and seeing this, the people rose in great uproar. No longer was the tumult in the Forum merely; it spread all over the city. Those who had been in bonds for debt and those also at liberty rushed into the streets from all quarters, begging the protection of the multitude. Everywhere there was a spontaneous banding together and sedition. Down all the streets they ran with clamorous shouting, and so into the Forum. Such of the Senators as they met there were hustled by the mob to their no slight peril; nor would the people have stopped short of extreme violence had not the consuls Publius Servilius and Appius Claudius bestirred themselves hastily to quiet the uproar.

Turning on the consuls, the multitude displayed their chains and other tokens of misery, and thus taunted the consuls; then they demanded, with threatenings rather than as petitioners, that they “assemble the Senate”; while they posted themselves around the Senate House in a body, resolved to witness and to control all the public counsels.

At first it was proposed to kill the consuls, in order to discharge the men from their oath of obedience; but when it
was asserted that no religious obligation could be discharged by a mere crime, on the advice of one Sicinius, they retired without any orders from the consuls, to the “Sacred Mount” beyond the river Anio, three miles from Home.

There, without any regular leader, they fortified their camp with a rampart and a trench, and remained quiet, taking nothing but the food they needed. Thus they kept to themselves for some days, neither attacked themselves nor attacking others.

Meantime in the city was panic and mutual fear. The Plebeians, still in Rome, dreaded the violence of the Senators; these in turn dreaded the commons, and were doubtful whether they wished them to stay [as hostages for the rest] or to depart.

Therefore it was determined to send out an ambassador to the Plebeians, Menenius Agrippa, an eloquent man and withal acceptable, because he himself was of humble origin. When he was admitted to the camp, he is said to have related this story. “Once upon a time the parts of the human body did not agree together, but the various members had each their own policy; and it befell that the other parts were indignant that everything was procured for the belly by their care, while the belly did nothing but enjoy the pleasures they afforded it. So they conspired: the hands should no more carry food to the mouth, the mouth would not receive it, nor the teeth chew it. But while they wished to subdue the belly by famine, these parts themselves, and the whole body, were reduced to the last degree of emaciation. Thus it became evident that the service of the belly was by no means a slothful one [but that it had a most important purpose]. By comparing thus how similar was the sedition within the body to the resentment of the people against the Senators, he made an impression on the minds of
the multitude. A commencement was accordingly made toward a reconciliation, and it was allowed that “the Plebeians should have their own magistrates, with inviolable privileges; and these men should have the right of bringing assistance against the Consuls; nor could any Patrician hold these [Plebeian] offices.” Thus two tribunes of the Plebeians were created, Gains Licinius and Lucius Albinus.

William Stearns Davis, *Readings in Ancient History Illustrative Extracts from the Sources*, vol. II Rome and the West (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1913), 20-23. Located on the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/stream/readingsinancien00davi#page/20/mode/2up

4. Livy—How the Plebeians won the Consulship

In this selection, also from Livy's History of Rome, we see recounted the way in which plebeians were first granted access to the top political office in the Roman Republic—the Consulship. As you read this document pay special attention to what Sextius and Licinius are proposing as changes to Rome’s government and the back-and-forth between them and Rome’s patrician class.

The Proposals of Sextius and Licinius

There appeared a favorable opportunity for making innovations on account of the immense load of debt; since the Plebeians could hope for no lightening of the burden unless their own party gained control of the highest magistracies. To this end they realized they must exert themselves. After Gains Licinius and Lucius Sextius had been elected tribunes of the Plebs, they proposed laws aimed directly at the Patricians and for the benefit of the commonalty. The proposal as to debt was that all interest previously paid should be deducted from the principal, the remainder to be paid off in three years by equal installments: the next, touching the limitation of land, was that no one should possess more than five hundred jugera of land:
and the third was that the elections of military tribunes should cease, and that at least one of the consuls should be chosen from the Plebeians. These were all matters of vast importance, and such as could not be obtained without a desperate struggle.

So was opened a contest in which were staked all those objects for which men have ever had the keenest desires, -land, money, and public honors. The Patricians were terrified and dismayed. They could find no other remedy [than their old expedient] of winning over the colleagues [of these two tribunes] to oppose their bill.

[The vetoes of the other tribunes prevented the measures from being put to a vote in the assembly, but Sextius retaliated in kind.]

“Well is it,” spoke he, “that if it is intended that your protests should possess such power, that by this same weapon [of prohibition] we should protect the people. Come, Sir Patricians, call the assembly to select military tribunes. I will take care that the word Veto, which you hear our colleagues chanting with so much pleasure, shall not prove so very pleasant in turn to you.”

Nor were his threats vain. No elections were held, except those of the aediles and tribunes of the Plebs. Licinius and Sextius were reelected tribunes, and they did not allow any curule magistrates to be appointed. For five years this total absence of the [higher] magistrates continued. The Plebeians, however, continued to reelect the two [radical] tribunes of the Plebs, and these in turn prevented the election of military tribunes.

The same tribunes Sextius and Licinius were reelected at length for the tenth time; and they succeeded in passing a law which provided that of “The Board of Ten for attending to Religious Matters” one half should be Plebeians. This step seemed to open the way to the Consulship. [Soon after the
dictator Camillas returned after defeating the Gauls] and by
great struggles his opposition and that of the Senate were
overcome. The elections for consuls were then held in spite of
the resistance of the nobles, and Lucius Sextius was elected—the
first consul of Plebeian rank.

This was not entirely the end of the contest. The Patricians
withheld their consent to the proceedings, and matters were
close to a “Secession of the Plebeians,” and other direful threats
of civic tumult, but through the interference of the dictator
matters were compromised,—the Patricians yielded to the
Plebeians one consul; and the Plebeians in turn granted to the
Patricians that one of the latter should be elected as praetor to
administer justice in the city.

Harmony —being at length restored among the orders, the
Senate [ordered that magnificent games should be held to
celebrate the return of concord.]

William Stearns Davis, *Readings in Ancient History Illustrative
Extracts from the Sources*, vol. II Rome and the West (Boston:
Allyn and Bacon, 1913), 23-27. Located on the Internet Archive:
https://archive.org/stream/readingsinancienooodavi#page/
22/mode/2up

5. Valerius Maximus—Memorable Deeds and Sayings

Very little is known of the Roman writer Valerius Maximus other
than his primary work was the Nine Books of Memorable Deeds
and Sayings and that he wrote early in the first century CE, likely
during the reign of Tiberius (r. CE 14-31). The selection below comes
from the Memorable Deeds and focuses on the way women were
treated during this era of Roman history. As you read through this
excerpt keep in mind other selections on women from Hesiod,
Semonides, Aristophanes, and Euripides and see if you can spot
similarities and differences. Also keep in mind the larger context of
gender and family relations during the Roman Republic.
6. Various Authors-Women and Chastity

The selection below comes from various authors regarding the proper way women should behave during the Roman Republic. According to the website Women’s Life in Greece and Rome these excerpts are supposedly attributable to a woman from southern Italy named Phintys as well as the geometrician Pythagoras’ wife and daughter, among other women although more than likely they were produced by men who disguised them as the writings of women. Compare and contrast this selection with others on women contained in this book.

7. Julius Caesar-Civil War

Julius Caesar is likely the most popularly well-known Roman figure. A general and statesman, Caesar was active in war and politics at the end of the Roman Republic, shortly before it morphed into the Roman Empire, and was indeed a central figure in that transition. For a brief time in 44 BCE Caesar was the single most powerful person in the Roman world, and his assassination only led to more civil war and the emergence of one man rule. The excerpt below comes from Caesar himself, in a work called Civil War, discussing the series of events that led to Caesar launching a war by crossing the Rubicon, a river in northern Italy. A note to the reader-in this text Caesar refers to himself in the third person, so statements such as “Caesar said” or “Caesar did” should be read as “I said” and “I did.”

When Caesar’s letter [with conciliatory proposals] was delivered to the consuls, it was with great difficulty-, and a hard struggle by the tribunes[on Caesar’s side], that they were prevailed upon to suffer it to be read in the Senate; the tribunes,
however, could not prevail that any question should be put to the Senate on the subject of the letter. The consuls put the question on ‘â€¢ The Regulation of the State.’ Lucius Lentulus [one of them] promised that “he would not fail the Senate and the Republic if they declared their sentiments resolutely and boldly, but if they turned their regard to Caesar and courted his favor, as formerly, he would strike out on his own plan, and not truckle to the authority of the Senate; and [added] that he had a way of again getting Caesar’s favor and friendship.” Scipio talked in the same strain, that “it was Pompey’s intention not to abandon the Republic if the Senate would support him; but if they should hesitate and act without energy, they would in vain implore his aid, if ever they should need it later.”

This speech of Scipio’s – as the Senate was convened inside the city, and Pompey was near at hand – seemed to fall from Pompey’s own lips. Some spoke with a certain moderation, as Marcellus first, who said at the outset that the question ought not thus to be put before the Senate until levies had been made through Italy, and armies raised under whose protection the Senate might freely and safely vote what resolutions-seemed proper”; [and two other Senators spoke in like vein]. They were all harshly rebuked by Lentulus, who peremptorily refused to put their motions. Marcellus, overawed by his reproofs, retracted his opinion. Thus most of the Senate, intimidated by the expressions of the consul, by the fears of an army close at hand, and the threats of Pompey’s friends, unwillingly and reluctantly adopted Scipio’s opinion, that Caesar should disband his army by a certain day, and should he not do so, he should be considered as a public enemy. Marcus Antonius and Quintus Cassius, tribunes of the people, here announced their vetoes. At once the question was raised as to the validity of their vetoes. Violent opinions were uttered. Whoever spoke with the
greatest bitterness and cruelty was most loudly applauded by Caesar’s enemies.

The Senate having broken up in the evening, all who belonged to that body were summoned by Pompey. He commended the bold talkers and secured their votes for the next day; the more moderate he reproved and excited against Caesar. Many veterans from all parts, who had served in Pompey’s armies, were invited to his standard by the hopes of rewards and promotions. Several officers of the two legions that had been delivered up by Caesar [to Pompey] were sent for. The city and assembly place were crowded with tribunes, centurions, and veterans. All the consul’s friends, all Pompey’s connections, all those who bore any old grudge against Caesar, were forced into the Senate House. By their concourse and asseverations the timid were awed, the irresolute confirmed, and the actual majority deprived of the power to speak their minds freely.

Lucius Piso, the censor, offered to go to Caesar, and so did Lucius Roscius, the praetor, to tell him of how matters stood, and they asked only six days to dispatch their business. Also some opinions were expressed that commissioners should be sent to Caesar to acquaint him with the Senate’s pleasure; but all these proposals were rejected, and all were opposed in the harangues of the consul [Lentulus], Scipio, and Cato.

An old enmity against Caesar and chagrin at a [former] defeat goaded on Cato. Lentalus was spurred by the magnitude of his debts, and the hopes of having the government of an army and provinces, and by the presents which he expected from such princes as should get the title of “Friends of the Roman People.” He boasted among his friends that, “He would be a second Sulla, and to him the supreme power would return.” Like hopes of a province and armies which he expected to share
with Pompey on account of his [marriage] connection prompted Scipio. Besides that, he had the fear of being called to trial; and he was moved too by the adulation and an ostentatious display of himself and his friends in power, who at that time had great influence in the administration and the law courts. As for Pompey, he was stirred up by Caesar’s enemies, and was also unwilling that any man should be his equal in public dignity; consequently, he was now utterly cut off from Caesar’s friendship. He had reconciled himself with their common enemies, though most of these enemies he had himself brought upon Caesar, while the latter was his ally. Then, too, he was chagrined at the disgrace he had incurred by converting two legions from their expedition through Asia and Syria to increase his own power. He was, therefore, anxious for war.

Under these circumstances everything was done in a hasty and disorderly manner, and no time was given to Caesar’s kinsmen to inform him of what was happening, nor liberty to the tribunes of the plebs to set forth the peril they were exposed to, or even to retain the last privilege which Sulla had left them, of using their vetoes. On the seventh day [of the new year] they were obliged to think of their personal safety, something that the most violent plebeian tribunes had not been accustomed to be troubled about, or to fear being brought to book for their actions before the eighth month. Recourse was had to that extreme and final decree of the Senate, – though never had it been resorted to by daring innovators save when the city was in peril of incendiarism, or public safety was despaired of, – “That the Consuls, Praetors, and Plebeian Tribunes, and Proconsuls in the City should see to it that the state suffers no hurt.” These decrees were dated the 8th of January, therefore, in the first five days on which the Senate
could meet, from the day on which Lentulus entered into his consulate, the two [intervening] days of election excepted, the severest and most virulent decrees were passed against Caesar's government, and against those most illustrious dignitaries – the Plebeian Tribunes. The latter at once made their escape from the city and withdrew to Caesar, who was then at Ravenna awaiting an answer to his moderate demands, [hoping that] matters could be brought to a peaceful termination by any act of justice on the part of his enemies.

During the next days the Senate was convened outside the city. Pompey repeated the same things which he had declared through Scipio. He applauded the courage and firmness of the Senate, acquainted them with his force, and told them that he had ten legions ready; besides he was informed and assured that Caesar's soldiers were disaffected, and he could not persuade them to defend or even to follow him. [The Senate then voted all kinds of military levies and money for Pompey. The provinces were distributed among Caesar's enemies in a most headlong and disorderly manner.] Levies were made throughout Italy, arms demanded and money exacted from the municipal towns, and violently taken from the temples. . . .

[When the news came to Caesar he appealed to his army, especially dwelling on the unprecedented wrongs done the tribunes, and the troops cried out they would follow him.]

William Stearns Davis, *Readings in Ancient History Illustrative Extracts from the Sources*, vol. II Rome and the West (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1913), 144-149. Located on the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/stream/readingsinancieno0davi#page/144/mode/2up
Chapter 5: The Roman Empire 31 BCE-476 CE

After the collapse of the Roman Republic, Caesar’s adopted heir Octavian stood astride the Roman world as its sole leader. He was given the name Augustus, “the revered one,” by the Senate and for all intents and purposes became the first emperor of Rome. Under Augustus the army increased to roughly 150,000 soldiers, along with 130,000 foreign troops called auxiliaries. There was also the Praetorian Guard, nine thousand troops for the protection of the emperor and to police the city of Rome. Society under Augustus was divided into three groups based on wealth, with anyone not being a part of the Senatorial or Equestrian classes being in the third group with little political power. This social structure effectively re-consolidated power into the hands of the wealthy, who increasingly became dependent on the person of the emperor for their positions. Augustus was also concerned about the morality of the citizenry and did much to revive religious belief by introducing the cult of Roma and Augustus, an official state cult meant to unite Rome’s people with the Empire’s leadership. The Empire’s history can be broken into various ruling
dynasties, such as the Julio-Claudians, the Flavians, and the Five Good Emperors, based on the family lineages of the individual rulers and to some extent the policies they implemented. In terms of cultural and social developments, Rome had the wealth and stability to embark on gigantic building projects such as the Colosseum, hundreds of miles of roads, and impressive aqueducts to carry water to the capital's burgeoning population. Gladiator battles and chariot races were popular throughout the empire and were used to great effect by emperors to control the mobs. For Roman families the father/husband no longer had absolute control over the lives of everyone in his household, and upper class women enjoyed the rights to own and sell property as well as attend public gatherings formerly reserved for men. The good times began to end in the third century as Rome began experiencing serious economic problems and military setbacks, and the rise of Constantine saw more attention paid to the eastern end of the empire, which left the western half vulnerable to Germanic migration and invasions that eventually brought down the Western Roman Empire, leaving the eastern half to reorganize itself as the Byzantine Empire.

The documents begin with Pliny the Elder and his description of the city of Rome at the height of its magnificence. The historian Tacitus then describes for us the practice of an emperor adopting a non-family member as an heir, a practice used to great effect by the Five Good Emperors. Marcus Aurelius, one of those Five Good Emperors, was also an able philosopher and a follower of Stoicism and his Meditations contains Stoic based pieces of advice for how to navigate the world. The next four excerpts get into some of the problems the empire began experiencing in the late second and third centuries. First up is Suetonius, who will tell us how an emperor
could keep the peace in Rome by distracting the people from the dreariness of their lives. Herodianus will outline an event in which the leadership of the empire was literally for sale, demonstrating how much Rome had fallen from the ideals it used to symbolize. Pliny the Elder and Ammianus Marcellinus discuss the effects great wealth and luxury had on the people of Rome, and how life in the Empire differed greatly from that during the Republic. The last document is from the Byzantine emperor Justinian, who, among many other accomplishments, had codified the entire history of Roman law into a series of immense volumes. Finally there is a documentary on Roman life presented by historian Mary Beard focusing on how the Romans understood themselves and what it meant to be “Roman.”

1. Pliny the Elder—Natural History

Pliny the Elder was a Roman author and philosopher who was interested in the geography of the natural world. His work Natural History, excerpted here, became a template for how to arrange an encyclopedia. Pliny lived during the early decades of the Roman Empire, and the selection included here highlights some of the reasons he believed the city of Rome itself was the most magnificent on earth.

Romulus left the city of Rome, if we are to believe those who state the very greatest number, with only three gates, and no more. When the Vespasians’ were Emperors and Censors in the year of the building of the city, 826 [73 CE], the circumference of the walls which surrounded it was thirteen and two-fifths miles. Surrounding as it does the Seven Hills, the city is divided into fourteen districts, with 265 crossroads under the guardianship of the Lares [i.e., a little shrine to the Lares would stand at each crossing]. If a straight line is drawn from the mile column placed at the entrance of the Forum to each of the gates, which are at present thirty-seven in number—taking
care to count only once the twelve double gates, and to omit the seven old ones, which no longer exist—the total result will be a straight line of twenty miles and 765 paces. But if we draw a straight line from the same mile column to the very last of the houses, including therein the Praetorian camp [in the suburbs] and follow throughout the line of the streets, the result will be something over seventy miles. Add to these calculations the height of the houses, and then a person may form a fair idea of this city, and surely he must confess that no other place in the world can vie with it in size.

On the eastern side it is bounded by the mound (agger) of Tarquinius Superbus—a work of surpassing grandeur; for he raised it so high as to be on a level with the walls on the side on which the city lay most exposed to attack from the neighboring plains. On all the other sides it has been fortified either with lofty walls, or steep and precipitous hills; yet it has come to pass, that the buildings of Rome—increasing and extending beyond all bounds—have now united many outlying towns to it.

In great buildings as well as in other things the rest of the world has been outdone by us Romans. If, indeed, all the buildings in our City are considered in the aggregate, and supposing them—so to say—all thrown together in one vast mass, the united grandeur of them would lead one to imagine that we were describing another world, accumulated in a single spot.

Not to mention among our great works the Circus Maximus, that was built by the Dictator Caesar—one stadium broad and three in length—and occupying with the adjacent buildings no less than four iugera [about 2 acres] with room for no less than 160,000 spectators seated—am I not, however, to include in the number of our magnificent structures the Basilica of Paulus with its admirable Phrygian columns [built also in Julius
Caesar’s day], the Forum of the late Emperor Augustus, the Temple of Peace erected by the Emperor Vespasian Augustus—some of the finest work the world has ever seen? [and many others].

We behold with admiration pyramids that were built by kings, while the very ground alone that was purchased by the Dictator Caesar, for the construction of his Forum, cost 100,000,000 sesterces. If, too, an enormous expenditure has its attractions for any one whose mind is influenced by money matters, be it known that the house in which Clodius [Cicero’s enemy] dwelt was purchased by him at a price of 14,800,000 sesterces—a thing which I for my part look upon as no less astonishing than the monstrous follies that have been displayed by kings.

Frequently praise is given to the great sewer system of Rome. There are seven “rivers” made to flow, by artificial channels, beneath the city. Rushing onward like so many impetuous torrents, they are compelled to carry off and sweep away all the sewerage; and swollen as they are by the vast accession of the rain water, they reverberate against the sides and bottoms of their channels. Occasionally too the Tiber, overflowing, is thrown backward in its course, and discharges itself by these outlets. Obstinate is the struggle that ensues between the meeting tides, but so firm and solid is the masonry that it is able to offer an effectual resistance. Enormous as are the accumulations that are carried along above, the work of the channels never gives way. Houses falling spontaneously to ruins, or leveled with the ground by conflagrations are continually battering against them; now and then the ground is shaken by earthquakes, and yet—built as they were in the days of Tarquinius Priscus, seven hundred years ago—these constructions have survived, all but unharmed.
Passing to the dwellings of the city, in the consulship of Lepidus and Catulus [78 B.C.] we learn on good authority there was not in all Rome a finer house than that belonging to Lepidus himself, but yet—by Hercules!—within twenty-five years the very same house did not hold the hundredth rank simply in the City! Let anybody calculate—if he please—considering this fact, the vast masses of marble, the productions of painters, the regal treasures that must have been expended in bringing these hundred mansions to vie with one that in its day had been the most sumptuous and celebrated in all the City; and then let him reflect that, since then and down to the present, these houses had all of them been surpassed by others without number. There can be no doubt that the great fires are a punishment inflicted upon us for our luxury; but such are our habits, that in spite of such warnings, we cannot be made to understand that there are things in existence more perishable than even man himself.

But let us now turn our attention to some marvels that, if justly appreciated, may be pronounced to remain unsurpassed. Quintus Marcius Rex [praetor in 144 B.C.] upon being commanded by the Senate to repair the Appian Aqueduct and that of the Anio, constructed during his praetorship a new aqueduct that bore his name, and was brought hither by a channel pierced through the very sides of mountains. Agrippa, during his aedileship, united the Marcian and the Virgin Aqueducts and repaired and strengthened the channels of others. He also formed 700 wells, in addition to 500 fountains, and 130 reservoirs, many of them magnificently adorned. Upon these works too he erected 300 statues of marble or bronze, and 400 marble columns, and all this in the space of a single year! In the work which he has written in commemoration of his aedileship, he also informs us that public games were
celebrated for the space of fifty-seven days and 170 gratuitous bathing places were opened to the public. The number of these at Rome has vastly increased since his time.

The preceding aqueducts, however, have all been surpassed by the costly work which has more recently been completed by the Emperors Gaius [Caligula] and Claudius. Under these princes the Curtian and the Caerulean Waters with the “New Anio” were brought a distance of forty miles, and at so high a level that all the hills—whereon Rome is built—were supplied with water. The sum expended on these works was 350,000,000 sesterces. If we take into account the abundant supply of water to the public, for baths, ponds, canals, household purposes, gardens, places in the suburbs and country houses, and then reflect upon the distances that are traversed from the sources on the hills, the arches that have been constructed, the mountains pierced, the valleys leveled, we must perforce admit that there is nothing more worthy of our admiration throughout the whole universe.

William Stearns Davis, Readings in Ancient History Illustrative Extracts from the Sources, vol. II Rome and the West (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1913), 232-236. Located on the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/stream/readingsinancien00davi#page/232/mode/2up

2. Tacitus-Histories

The Roman historian Tacitus is one of the oft-cited sources for information on the Roman world. Serving as a senator in addition to studying history, Tacitus lived during the first and second centuries CE. His two major projects, Histories and Annals, together tell the story of Rome from the death of Augustus to the Jewish War in 70 CE, including the reigns of emperors such as Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero. The excerpt below comes from the Histories and concerns the
practice of an emperor adopting someone to be their successor rather than simply passing on the imperial power to a son.

We are told that Galba, taking hold of Piso’s hand, spoke to this effect: “If I were a private man, and were now adopting you by the Act of the Curiae before the pontiffs, as our custom is, it would be a high honour to me to introduce into my family a descendant of Gnaeus Pompey and Marcus Crassus; it would be a distinction to you to add to the nobility of your race the honours of the Sulpician and Lutatian houses. As it is, I, who have been called to the throne by the unanimous consent of gods and men, am moved by your splendid endowments and by my own patriotism to offer to you, a man of peace, that power, for which our ancestors fought, and which I myself obtained by war. I am following the precedent of the Divine Augustus, who placed on an eminence next to his own, first his nephew Marcellus, then his son-in-law Agrippa, afterwards his grandsons, and finally Tiberius Nero, his stepson. But Augustus looked for a successor in his own family, I look for one in the state, not because I have no relatives or companions of my campaigns, but because it was not by any private favour that I myself received the imperial power. Let the principle of my choice be shown not only by my connections which I have set aside for you, but by your own. You have a brother, noble as yourself, and older, who would be well worthy of this dignity, were you not worthier. Your age is such as to be now free from the passions of youth, and such your life that in the past you have nothing to excuse. Hitherto, you have only borne adversity; prosperity tries the heart with keener temptations; for hardships may be endured, whereas we are spoiled by success. You indeed will cling with the same constancy to honor, freedom, friendship, the best possessions of the human spirit, but others will seek to weaken them with their servility.
You will be fiercely assailed by adulation, by flattery, that worst poison of the true heart, and by the selfish interests of individuals. You and I speak together to-day with perfect frankness, but others will be more ready to address us as emperors than as men. For to urge his duty upon a prince is indeed a hard matter; to flatter him, whatever his character, is a mere routine gone through without any heart.

“Could the vast frame of this empire have stood and preserved its balance without a directing spirit, I was not unworthy of inaugurating a republic. As it is, we have been long reduced to a position, in which my age confer no greater boon on the Roman people than a good successor, your youth no greater than a good emperor. Under Tuberous, Chairs, and Claudius, we were, so to speak, the inheritance of a single family. The choice which begins with us will be a substitute for freedom. Now that the family of the Julii and the Claudii has come to an end, adoption will discover the worthiest successor. To be begotten and born of a princely race is a mere accident, and is only valued as such. In adoption there is nothing that need bias the judgment, and if you wish to make a choice, an unanimous opinion points out the man. Let Nero be ever before your eyes, swollen with the pride of a long line of Caesars; it was not Vindex with his unarmed province, it was not myself with my single legion, that shook his yoke from our necks. It was his own profligacy, his own brutality, and that, though there had been before no precedent of an emperor condemned by his own people. We, who have been called to power by the issues of war, and by the deliberate judgment of others, shall incur unpopularity, however illustrious our character. Do not however be alarmed, if, after a movement which has shaken the world, two legions are not yet quiet. I did not myself succeed to a throne without anxiety; and when men shall hear of your
adoption I shall no longer be thought old, and this is the only objection which is now made against me. Nero will always be regretted by the thoroughly depraved; it is for you and me to take care, that he be not regretted also by the good. To prolong such advice, suits not this occasion, and all my purpose is fulfilled if I have made a good choice in you. The most practical and the shortest method of distinguishing between good and bad measures, is to think what you yourself would or would not like under another emperor. It is not here, as it is among nations despotically ruled, that there is a distinct governing family, while all the rest are slaves. You have to reign over men who cannot bear either absolute slavery or absolute freedom.”

This, with more to the same effect, was said by Galba; he spoke to Piso as if he were creating an emperor; the others addressed him as if he were an emperor already.

It is said of Piso that he betrayed no discomposure or excessive joy, either to the gaze to which he was immediately subjected, or afterwards when all eyes were turned upon him. His language to the Emperor, his father, was reverential; his language about himself was modest. He showed no change in look or manner; he seemed like one who had the power rather than the wish to rule.


3. Marcus Aurelius-Meditations

Marcus Aurelius was a Roman emperor who ruled from CE 161-180. He was the last of the Five Good Emperors and his reign marked the end of the Pax Romana, or Roman peace, a period of roughly 200 years of prosperity and expansion for Rome. Aurelius was also a famous
philosopher who followed Stoic philosophy and wrote of his thoughts in a work called the Meditations, from which the excerpt below comes. As you read the selection keep in mind Epictetus from the previous chapter and compare and contrast that work to the present one.

[IX. 40.] Why dost thou not pray to the gods to give thee the faculty of not fearing the things which thou fearest, nor of desiring the things which thou desirest, nor of being pained at anything, rather than pray that any of these things should not happen? For certainly if the gods can cooperate with men, they can cooperate for these purposes.

[VI. 30.] Reverence the gods and help men. Short is life. There is only one fruit of this mundane life – a pious disposition and acts of social helpfulness.

[IX. 1.] He who acts unjustly acts impiously. For since the universal Nature has made rational animals for the sake of one another to help one another according to their deserts, but in no way to injure one another, he who transgresses her will is clearly guilty of impiety towards the highest divinity.

[III. 5.] Be cheerful and seek not external help nor the tranquility which others give. A man must stand erect, not be kept erect by others.

[XI. 1.] This again is a property of a rational soul – love of one’s neighbor.

[III. 6.] [There is nothing better in life than] thy own mind’s self-satisfaction in the things which it enables thee to do according to right reason.

[VII. 1.] There is nothing new: all things are both familiar and short lived.

[II. 5.] Every moment think steadfastly as a Roman and as a man to do what thou hast in hand with perfect and simple dignity, and feeling of affection, and freedom and justice, and
to give thyself relief from all other thoughts; and thou wilt give thyself relief if thou dost every act in thy life as if it were the last.

[VIII. 24.] Such as bathing appears to thee, – oil, sweat, dirt, filthy water, all things disgusting, – so is every part of life and everything [else].

[IV. 49.] Think of any trouble not that “this is a misfortune,” but that “to bear it nobly is good fortune.”

[III. 12.] If thou workest at that which is before thee, following right reason seriously, vigorously, calmly, without allowing anything else to distract thee, but keeping thy divine part pure, as if thou were bound to give it back [to God] immediately; if thou boldest to this, expecting nothing, fearing nothing, but satisfied with thy present activity according to nature, and with heroic truth in every word and sound that thou utterest, thou wilt live happy. And there is no man who is able to prevent this.

[IV. 5.] Death is even as the act of being born is, – a mystery of nature.

William Stearns Davis, Readings in Ancient History Illustrative Extracts from the Sources, vol. II Rome and the West (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1913), 280-281. Located on the Internet Archive:

https://archive.org/stream/readingsinancien00davi#page/280/mode/2up

4. Suetonius-Life of Domitian

Suetonius was a Roman historian living and writing in the first and second centuries CE. His most famous work is a chronicle of twelve successive Roman emperors called the Lives of the Twelve Caesars. The selection below comes from the Life of Domitian, emperor from CE 81-96 and the last of the Flavian rulers. The excerpt describes the manner in which the emperor managed the large number of people in the city of Rome in order to keep them docile.
He frequently entertained the people with the most magnificent and costly shows, not only in the amphitheater, but in the circus; where, besides the usual chariot races, with two or four horses abreast, he exhibited the imitation of a battle betwixt cavalry and infantry; and in the amphitheater a sea fight. The people too were entertained with wild-beast hunts, and gladiator fights even in the night-time, by torchlight. He constantly attended the games given by the quaestors, which had been disused for some time, but were revived by him; and upon those occasions, he always gave the people the liberty of demanding two pair of gladiators out of his own [private] “school,” who appeared last in court uniforms.

He presented the people with naval fights, performed by fleets almost as numerous as those usually employed in real engagements; making a vast lake near the Tiber, and building seats around it. And he witnessed these fights himself during a very heavy rain.

He likewise instituted in honor of Jupiter Capitolinus, a solemn contest in music to be performed every five years; besides horse-racing and gymnastic exercises. There was too a public performance in elocution both Greek and Latin, and beside the musicians who sung to the harp, there were others who played concerted pieces or solos without vocal accompaniment.

Thrice he bestowed upon the people a bounty of 300 sesterces [$12] per man, and at a public show of gladiators a very plentiful feast. At the “Festival of the Seven Hills” [held in December], he distributed large hampers of provisions to the Senatorial and Equestrian orders, and small baskets to the commonalty, and encouraged them to eat by setting the example. The day after, he scattered among the people a variety of cakes and other delicacies to be scrambled after; and on the greater part of them
falling amidst the seats of the lower classes, he ordered 500 tickets to be thrown into each range of benches belonging to the Senatorial and Equestrian orders.

William Stearns Davis, *Readings in Ancient History Illustrative Extracts from the Sources*, vol. II Rome and the West (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1913), 194-195. Located on the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/stream/readingsinancien00davi#page/194/mode/2up

5. **Herodianus-History of the Emperors**

*Herodianus*, or *Herodian* in Greek, was a Greek historian living during the second and third centuries CE. His major work is *the History of the Roman Empire since the Death of Marcus Aurelius* which chronicles different imperial administrations between CE 180 and 238. In the selection below Herodianus tells the story of how the imperial title changes hands from the emperor Pertinax to Didius Julianus. The event is representative of the chaos and disorder that befell Rome during the early years of the third century CE.

When the report of the murder of the Emperor [Pertinax] spread among the people, consternation and grief seized all minds, and men ran about beside themselves. An undirected effort possessed the people, — they strove to hunt out the doers of the deed, yet could neither find nor punish them. But the Senators were the worst disturbed, for it seemed a public calamity that they had lost a kindly father and a righteous ruler. Also a reign of violence was dreaded, for one could guess that the soldiery would find that much to their liking.

When the first and the ensuing days had passed, the people dispersed, each man fearing for himself; men of rank, however, fled to their estates outside the city, in order not to risk themselves in the dangers of a change on the throne. But at last when the soldiers were aware that the people were quiet, and that no one would try to avenge the blood of the Emperor,
they nevertheless remained inside their barracks and barred the gates; yet they set such of their comrades, as had the loudest voices upon the walls, and had them declare that the Empire was for sale at auction, and promise to him who bid highest that they would give him the power, and set him with the armed hand in the imperial palace.

When this proclamation was known, the more honorable and weighty Senators, and all persons of noble origin and property, would not approach the barracks to offer money in so vile a manner for a besmirched sovereignty. However, a certain Julianus – who had held the consulship, and was counted rich – was holding a drinking bout late that evening, at the time the news came of what the soldiers proposed. He was a man notorious for his evil living; and now it was that his wife and daughter and fellow feasters urged him to rise from his banqueting couch and hasten to the barracks, in order to find out what was going on. But on the way they pressed it on him that he might get the sovereignty for himself, and that he ought not to spare the money to outbid any competitors with great gifts [to the soldiers].

When he came to the wall [of the camp], he called out to the troops and promised to give them just as much as they desired, for he had ready money and a treasure room full of gold and silver. About the same time too came Sulpicianus, who had also been consul and was prefect of Rome and father-in-law of Pertinax, to try to buy the power also. But the soldiers did not receive him, because they feared lest his connection with Pertinax might lead him to avenge him by some treachery. So they lowered a ladder and brought Julianus into the fortified camp; for they would not open the gates, until they had made sure of the amount of the bounty they expected. When he was admitted he promised first to bring the memory of Commodus
again into honor and restore his images in the Senate house, where they had been cast down; and to give the soldiers the same lax discipline they had enjoyed under Commodus. Also he promised the troops as large a sum of money as they could ever expect to require or receive. The payment should be immediate, and he would at once have the cash brought over from his residence.

[According to the other contemporary historian, Cassius Dio, Julianus and Sulpicianus now bid against another “one from within the camp, and one without.” By their increases they speedily reached the sum of 4000 denarii per man; some of the guard kept reporting and saying to Julianus, “Sulpicianus offers so much; now how much will you add to that?” And again to Sulpicianus, ‘Julianus offers so much, how much will you raise it?’” Sulpicianus seemed about to win the day, when Julianus advanced to 6250 denarii “which he offered with a great shout, indicating the amount likewise upon his fingers,” whereupon the troops accepted his bid.]

Captivated by such speeches, and with such vast hopes awakened, the soldiers hailed Julianus as Emperor, and demanded that along with his own name he should take that of Commodus. Next they took their standards, adorned them again with the likeness of Commodus and made ready to go with Julianus in procession.

The latter offered the customary imperial sacrifices in the camp; and then went out with a great escort of the guards. For it was against the will and intention of the populace, and with a shameful and unworthy stain upon the public honor that he had bought the Empire, and not without reason did he fear the people might overthrow him. The guards therefore in full panoply surrounded him for protection. They were formed in a phalanx around him, ready to fight; they had “their Emperor” in
their midst; while they swung their shields and lances over his head, so that no missile could hurt him during the march. Thus they brought him to the palace, with no man of the multitude daring to resist; but just as little was there any cheer of welcome, as was usual at the induction of a new Emperor. On the contrary the people stood at a distance and hooted and reviled him as having bought the throne with lucre at an auction.

William Stearns Davis, *Readings in Ancient History Illustrative Extracts from the Sources*, vol. II Rome and the West (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1913), 203-206. Located on the Internet Archive:

https://archive.org/stream/readingsinancien00davi#page/202/mode/2up

6. Pliny the Elder-Natural History

The excerpt below is another from the Natural History of the Roman Pliny the Elder. This specific selection describes how the use of rings among the Roman people changed over time. A seemingly innocuous subject, Pliny connects this change to a larger problem he sees with Rome and its people.

It was the custom at first to wear rings on a single finger only, – the one next to the little finger, and this we see to be the case in the statues of Kuraa and Servius Tullius. Later it became usual to put rings on the finger next to the thumb, even with statues of the gods; and more recently still it has been the fashion to wear them upon the little finger too. Among the Gauls and Britons the middle finger – it is said – is used for the purpose. At the present day, however, with us, this is the only finger that is excepted, for all the others are loaded with rings, smaller rings even being separately adapted for the smaller joints of the fingers.

Some people thrust several rings upon the little finger alone;
while others wear but one ring upon this finger, the ring that carries the seal upon the signet ring itself, this last being carefully shut up as an object of rarity, too precious to be worn in common use, and only to be taken from the coffer as from a sanctuary. And thus is the wearing of a single ring upon the little finger, no more than an ostentatious advertisement that the owner has property of a more precious nature under seal at home.

Some too make a parade of their rings, whilst to others it is a decided labor to wear more than one at a time; some, in their solicitude for the safety of their gems, make the hoop of gold tinsel, and fill it with lighter material than gold, thinking thereby to diminish the risks of a fall. Others again, are in the habit of concealing poisons beneath their ring stones, and so wear them as instruments of death; so e.g. did Demosthenes, mightiest of Greek orators. And besides, how many of the crimes that are stimulated by cupiditly, are committed by the instrumentality of rings!

Happy the times; yes, truly innocent when no seal was ever put on anything! At the present day, indeed, our very food and drink even have to be kept from theft through the agency of the [seal] ring. This of course is thanks to those legions of slaves, those throngs of foreigners who are introduced into our houses, multitudes so great that we have to have a nomenclator [professional remembrancer] to tell us even the names of our own servants. Different surely it was in the times of our forefathers, when each person possessed a single slave only, one of his master’s own lineage, called Marcipor [Marcus’s boy] or Lucipor [Lucius’s boy], from his master’s name, as the case might be, and taking all his meals with him in common; when, too, there was no need to take precautions at home by keeping a watch upon the servants. But at present, we not only buy...
dainties that are sure to be pilfered but hands to pilfer them as well; and so far from its being enough to keep the very keys sealed, often the signet ring is taken from the owner's finger while he is overpowered with sleep, or actually lying on his death bed.

William Stearns Davis, *Readings in Ancient History Illustrative Extracts from the Sources*, vol. II Rome and the West (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1913), 251-252. Located on the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/stream/readingsinancien00davi#page/250/mode/2up

7. Ammianus Marcellinus-History

*The Res Gestae* is a chronicle of Rome's history from the emperor Nerva in CE 96 to the death of the emperor Valens in CE 378. The author, Ammianus Marcellinus, was a soldier and historian whose work is second only to that of the Byzantine historian Procopius regarding the latter years of the Roman Empire. In the selection presented here Marcellinus discusses the way that wealth has affected Rome's people, much like Pliny the Elder has in the previous document. Additionally, Marcellinus briefly examines the lives of poor Romans, concluding that neither group is contributing much to Rome's continuing existence.

[Despite the changes of the times] Rome is still looked upon as the queen of the earth, and the name of the Roman people is respected and venerated. But the [magnificence of Rome] is defaced by the inconsiderate levity of a few, who never recollect where they are born, but fall away into error and licentiousness as if a perfect immunity were granted to vice. Of these men, some, thinking that they can be handed down to immortality by means of statues, are eager after them, as if they would obtain a higher reward from brazen figures unendowed with sense than from a consciousness of upright and honorable actions; and they are even anxious to have them plated over with gold!
Others place the summit of glory in having a couch higher than usual, or splendid apparel; and so toil and sweat under a vast burden of cloaks which are fastened to their necks by many clasps, and blow about by the excessive fineness of the material, showing a desire by the continual wriggling of their bodies, and especially by the waving of the left hand, to make more conspicuous their long fringes and tunics, which are embroidered in multiform figures of animals with threads of divers colors.

Others again, put on a feigned severity of countenance, and extol their patrimonial estates in a boundless degree, exaggerating the yearly produce of their fruitful fields, which they boast of possessing in numbers, from east and west, being forsooth ignorant that their ancestors, who won greatness for Rome, were not eminent in riches; but through many a direful war overpowered their foes by valor, though little above the common privates in riches, or luxury, or costliness of garments.

... If now you, as an honorable stranger, should enter the house of any passing rich man, you will be hospitably received, as though you were very welcome; and after having had many questions put to you, and having been forced to tell a number of lies, you will wonder – since the gentleman has never seen you before – that a person of high rank should pay such attention to a humble individual like yourself, so that you become exceeding happy, and begin to repent not having come to Rome ten years before. When, however, relying on this affability you do the same thing the next day, you will stand waiting as one utterly unknown and unexpected, while he who yesterday urged you to “come again,” counts upon his fingers who you can be, marveling for a long time whence you came, and what you can want. But when at last you are recognized and admitted [again] to his acquaintance, if you should devote yourself to him for
three years running, and after that cease with your visits for the same stretch of time, then at last begin them again, you will never be asked about your absence any more than if you had been dead, and you will waste your whole life trying to court the humors of this blockhead.

But when those long and unwholesome banquets, which are indulged in at periodic intervals, begin to be prepared, or the distribution of the usual dole baskets takes place, then it is discussed with anxious care, whether, when those to whom a return is due are to be entertained, it is also proper to ask in a stranger; and if after the question has been duly sifted, it is determined that this may be done, the person preferred is one who hangs around all night before the houses of charioteers, or one who claims to be an expert with dice, or affects to possess some peculiar secrets. For hosts of this stamp avoid all learned and sober men as unprofitable and useless, – with this addition, that the nomenclators also, who usually make a market of these invitations and such favors, selling them for bribes, often for a fee thrust into these dinners mean and obscure creatures indeed.

The whirlpool of banquets, and divers other allurements of luxury I omit, lest I grow too prolix. Many people drive on their horses recklessly, as if they were post horses, with a legal right of way, straight down the boulevards of the city, and over the flint-paved streets, dragging behind them huge bodies of slaves, like bands of robbers. And many matrons, imitating these men, gallop over every quarter of the city, with their heads covered, and in closed carriages. And [like skillful generals] so the stewards of these city households [make careful arrangement of the cortege; the stewards themselves being] conspicuous by the wands in their right hands. First of all before the [master's] carriage march all his slaves concerned
with spinning and working; next come the blackened crew employed in the kitchen; then the whole body of slaves promiscuously mixed with a gang of idle plebeians; and last of all, the multitude of eunuchs, beginning with the old men and ending with the boys, pale and unsightly from the deformity of their features.

Those few mansions which were once celebrated for the serious cultivation of liberal studies, now are filled with ridiculous amusements of torpid indolence, reechoing with the sound of singing, and the tinkle of flutes and lyres. You find a singer instead of a philosopher; a teacher of silly arts is summoned in place of an orator, the libraries are shut up like tombs, [but] organs played by water-power are built, and lyres so big that they look like wagons! and flutes, and huge machines suitable for the theater.

[The Romans] have even sunk so far, that not long ago, when a dearth was apprehended, and the foreigners were driven from the city, those who practiced liberal accomplishments were expelled instantly, yet the followers of actresses and all their ilk were suffered to stay; and three thousand dancing girls were not even questioned, but remained unmolested along with the members of their choruses, and a corresponding number of dancing masters.

[On account of the frequency of epidemics in Rome, rich men take absurd precautions to avoid contagion, but even] when these rules are observed thus stringently, some persons, if they be invited to a wedding, though the vigor of their limbs be vastly diminished, yet when gold is pressed in their palm they will go with all activity as far as Spoletum! So much for the nobles.

As for the lower and poorer classes some spend the whole night in the wine shops, some lie concealed in the shady arcades
of the theaters. They play at dice so eagerly as to quarrel over them, snuffing up their nostrils, and making unseemly noises by drawing back their breath into their noses: – or (and this is their favorite amusement by far) from sunrise till evening, through sunshine or rain, they stay gaping and examining the charioteers and their horses; and their good and bad qualities.

Wonderful indeed it is to see an innumerable multitude of people, with prodigious eagerness, intent upon the events of the chariot race!

William Stearns Davis, *Readings in Ancient History Illustrative Extracts from the Sources*, vol. II Rome and the West (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1913), 306-309. Located on the Internet Archive:

https://archive.org/stream/readingsinancien00davi#page/306/mode/2up

**8. Justinian-The Institutes**

Perhaps the greatest of the Eastern Roman, or Byzantine, emperors, Justinian I ruled from CE 527 to 565. He launched a successful military expedition to recapture some of the Western Roman Empire that had been lost to various Germanic tribes and embarked on large scale building projects such as the Hagia Sophia. Perhaps most impactful of all of his initiatives was the *Corpus Juris Civilis*, the attempt to codify and organize centuries of Roman law into one gigantic set of volumes. The Corpus would eventually become the basis of law in many countries during the Middle Ages, and elements of it can still be seen in modern nations today. The excerpt below comes from one of the volumes called the Institutes, which serves as an introduction to the larger work for students and establishes some of the most basic principles of Roman law.

In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The Emperor Caesar Flavius Justinian, conqueror of the Alamanni, the Goths, the Franks, the Germans, the Antes, the Alani, the Vandals, the
Africans, pious, prosperous, renowned, victorious, and triumphant, ever august.

To the youth desirous of studying the law:

The imperial majesty should be armed with laws as well as glorified with arms, that there may be good government in times both of war and of peace, and the ruler of Rome may not only be victorious over his enemies, but may show himself as scrupulously regardful of justice as triumphant over his conquered foes.

With deepest application and forethought, and by the blessing of God, we have attained both of these objects. The barbarian nations which we have subjugated know our valour, Africa and other provinces without number being once more, after so long an interval, reduced beneath the sway of Rome by victories granted by Heaven, and themselves bearing witness to our dominion. All peoples too are ruled by laws which we have either enacted or arranged. Having removed every inconsistency from the sacred constitutions, hitherto inharmonious and confused, we extended our care to the immense volumes of the older jurisprudence; and, like sailors crossing the mid-ocean, by the favour of Heaven have now completed a work of which we once despaired. When this, with God’s blessing, had been done, we called together that distinguished man Tribonian, master and ex-quaestor of our sacred palace, and the illustrious Theophilus and Dorotheus, professors of law, of whose ability, legal knowledge, and trusty observance of our orders we have received many and genuine proofs, and specially commissioned them to compose by our authority and advice a book of Institutes, whereby you may be enabled to learn your first lessons in law no longer from ancient fables, but to grasp them by the brilliant light of imperial learning, and that your ears and minds may receive nothing
useless or incorrect, but only what holds good in actual fact. And thus whereas in past time even the foremost of you were unable to read the imperial constitutions until after four years, you, who have been so honoured and fortunate as to receive both the beginning and the end of your legal teaching from the mouth of the Emperor, can now enter on the study of them without delay. After the completion therefore of the fifty books of the Digest or Pandects, in which all the earlier law has been collected by the aid of the said distinguished Tribonian and other illustrious and most able men, we directed the division of these same Institutes into four books, comprising the first elements of the whole science of law. In these the law previously obtaining has been briefly stated, as well as that which after becoming disused has been again brought to light by our imperial aid. Compiled from all the Institutes of the ancient jurists, and in particular from the commentaries of our Gaius on both the Institutes and the common cases, and from many other legal works, these Institutes were submitted to us by the three learned men aforesaid, and after reading and examining them we have given them the fullest force of our constitutions.

Receive then these laws with your best powers and with the eagerness of study, and show yourselves so learned as to be encouraged to hope that when you have compassed the whole field of law you may have ability to govern such portion of the state as may be entrusted to you.

Given at Constantinople the 21st day of November, in the third consulate of the Emperor Justinian, Father of his Country, ever august.

BOOK I Title I OF JUSTICE AND LAW

Justice is the set and constant purpose which gives to every man his due. Jurisprudence is the knowledge of things divine and human, the science of the just and the unjust.
Having laid down these general definitions, and our object being the exposition of the law of the Roman people, we think that the most advantageous plan will be to commence with an easy and simple path, and then to proceed to details with a most careful and scrupulous exactness of interpretation. Otherwise, if we begin by burdening the student’s memory, as yet weak and untrained, with a multitude and variety of matters, one of two things will happen; either we shall cause him wholly to desert the study of law, or else we shall, bring him at last, after great labour, and often, too, distrustful of his own powers (the commonest cause, among the young, of ill-success), to a point which he might have reached earlier, without such labour and confident in himself, had he been led along a smoother path.

The precepts of the law are these: to live honestly, to injure no one, and to give every man his due. The study of law consists of two branches, law public, and law private. The former relates to the welfare of the Roman State; the latter to the advantage of the individual citizen. Of private law then we may say that it is of threefold origin, being collected from the precepts of nature, from those of the law of nations, or from those of the civil law of Rome.

Title II OF THE LAW OF NATURE, THE LAW OF NATIONS, AND THE CIVIL LAW

The law of nature is that which she has taught all animals; a law not peculiar to the human race, but shared by all living creatures, whether denizens of the air, the dry land, or the sea. Hence comes the union of male and female, which we call marriage; hence the procreation and rearing of children, for this is a law by the knowledge of which we see even the lower animals are distinguished. The civil law of Rome, and the law of all nations, differ from each other thus. The laws of every people governed by statutes and customs are partly peculiar to itself,
partly common to all mankind. Those rules which a state enacts for its own members are peculiar to itself, and are called civil law: those rules prescribed by natural reason for all men are observed by all peoples alike, and are called the law of nations. Thus the laws of the Roman people are partly peculiar to itself, partly common to all nations; a distinction of which we shall take notice as occasion offers. Civil law takes its name from the state wherein it binds; for instance, the civil law of Athens, it being quite correct to speak thus of the enactments of Solon or Draco. So too we call the law observed by the Roman people the civil law of the Romans, or the law of the Quirites; the law, that is to say, which they observe, the Romans being called Quirites after Quirinus. Whenever we speak, however, of civil law, without any qualification, we mean our own; exactly as, when ‘the poet’ is spoken of, without addition or qualification, the Greeks understand the great Homer, and we understand Vergil. But the law of nations is common to the whole human race; for nations have settled certain things for themselves as occasion and the necessities of human life required. For instance, wars arose, and then followed captivity and slavery, which are contrary to the law of nature; for by the law of nature all men from the beginning were born free. The law of nations again is the source of almost all contracts; for instance, sale, hire, partnership, deposit, loan for consumption, and very many others.

Our law is partly written, partly unwritten, as among the Greeks. The written law consists of statutes, plebiscites, senatusconsults, enactments of the Emperors, edicts of the magistrates, and answers of those learned in the law.

A statute is an enactment of the Roman people, which it used to make on the motion of a senatorial magistrate, as for instance a consul. A plebiscite is an enactment of the
commonalty, such as was made on the motion of one of their own magistrates, as a tribune. The commonalty differs from the people as a species from its genus; for ‘the people’ includes the whole aggregate of citizens, among them patricians and senators, while the term ‘commonalty’ embraces only such citizens as are not patricians or senators. After the passing, however, of the statute called the lex Hortensia, plebiscites acquired for the first time the force of statutes. A senatusconsult is a command and ordinance of the senate, for when the Roman people had been so increased that it was difficult to assemble it together for the purpose of enacting statutes, it seemed right that the senate should be consulted instead of the people. Again, what the Emperor determines has the force of a statute, the people having conferred on him all their authority and power by the lex regia, which was passed concerning his office and authority. Consequently, whatever the Emperor settles by rescript, or decides in his judicial capacity, or ordains by edicts, is clearly a statute; and these are what are called constitutions. Some of these of course are personal, and not to be followed as precedents, since this is not the Emperor’s will; for a favour bestowed on individual merit, or a penalty inflicted for individual wrongdoing, or relief given without a precedent, do not go beyond the particular person: though others are general, and bind all beyond a doubt. The edicts of the praetors too have no small legal authority, and these we are used to call the ms honorarium, because those who occupy posts of honour in the state, in other words the magistrates, have given authority to this branch of law. The curule aediles also used to issue an edict relating to certain matters, which forms part of the ius honororarium. The answers of those learned in the law are the opinions and views of persons authorized to determine and expound the law; for
it was of old provided that certain persons should publicly interpret the laws, who were called jurisconsults, and whom the Emperor privileged to give formal answers. If they were unanimous the judge was forbidden by imperial constitution to depart from their opinion, so great was its authority. The unwritten law is that which usage has approved: for ancient customs, when approved by consent of those who follow them, are like statute. And this division of the civil law into two kinds seems not inappropriate, for it appears to have originated in the institutions of two states, namely Athens and Lacedaemon; it having been usual in the latter to commit to memory what was observed as law, while the Athenians observed only what they had made permanent in written statutes.

But the laws of nature, which are observed by all nations alike, are established, as it were, by divine providence, and remain ever fixed and immutable: but the municipal laws of each individual state are subject to frequent change, either by the tacit consent of the people, or by the subsequent enactment of another statute.

The whole of the law which we observe relates either to persons, or to things, or to actions. And first let us speak of persons: for it is useless to know the law without knowing the persons for whose sake it was established.


9. Mary Beard-Meet the Romans

The documentary below is presented by Mary Beard, Professor of Classics at the University of Cambridge in England. The video is part of a larger series on Roman society. This first part covers how the Romans viewed themselves, what it meant to be Roman, and how all of
the various peoples that came together in Rome managed to coexist so successfully for so long.
Chapter 6: The Development of Christianity

Perhaps the most impactful development during the Roman Empire was the rise of the Christian faith, which would come to dominate the Empire and the Western European kingdoms in later centuries. Christianity was heavily influenced by Judaism, as Jesus, the founding figure of Christianity, belonged to a Jewish sect. After being inspired and baptized Jesus spent his time preaching a faith based on love and treating other peoples well. He drew the ire of not only the various Jewish groups, who believed him to be a false prophet, but also of Rome, which believed he was subverting its authority. Jesus was arrested and eventually crucified, after which his main followers, called apostles, spread out over the eastern Mediterranean world to teach the philosophy of Christ. Some made their way into the Western half of Rome, utilizing the infrastructure of the Empire to travel on secure roads and seaways to reach far flung corners of the Roman world. Paul of Tarsus, originally a persecutor of Christians who was later converted to the faith, is also an important figure in the early development of the faith. It was Paul who urged a change in the way Christianity was
preached and who focused less on Jesus the person and more on the message he wanted to deliver. In the early decades Christianity remained an obscure faith, limited to small, decentralized communities that evolved differently from the others. As the faith became more popular it once again drew the attention of Rome, as various emperors blamed catastrophes on the Christians and began persecuting them. Christianity would come to prominence, though, under the reigns of Constantine and later Theodosius, and the development of monasticism and an increasingly strong papacy in the fourth and fifth centuries would cement the place of Christianity across the Mediterranean Basin, despite a split between Orthodox Christianity, practiced in the more Greek leaning Byzantine Empire, and Catholic Christianity, practiced in the west after the collapse of the Empire there.

Chapter 6 begins with perhaps the most famous set of teachings in the Christian canon, the Sermon on the Mount from the Book of Matthew. In this selection Jesus is instructing his followers regarding anger, murder, judging others, pursuing wisdom, how to pray, and a host of other topics. Following that are two of the letters written by the apostle Paul of Tarsus that explain his view on the primary message of this new faith as well as his thoughts on who should receive this new wisdom. Document 3 is from the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great and certain legal gifts he’s bestowing upon the Christians living in the Empire, while document 4 relates the story of a bishop, Ambrose, and his showdown with Theodosius, at the time Emperor of Rome. Taken together these two documents illustrate for us how far Christianity had come in a couple of centuries. Next is The Rule of St. Benedict, a series of prescriptions for how monks were to live their lives which became the standard for monasteries and monks across
Lastly is an excerpt from the *Chronicle of St. Denis*, describing the conversion of the Germanic king Clovis and the impact that conversion had on his Frankish tribe. The excerpt illustrates for us the strategy monks and bishops often used to score conversions and the importance of leaders like Clovis to the continuing development of Christianity.

1. Book of Matthew-Sermon on the Mount

*Containing some of the foundational teachings of the Christian faith, the Sermon on the Mount is one of the most famous and most quoted sections of the New Testament. In the Book of Matthew, Jesus teaches his followers about prayer, giving to the needy, judgment, love, and the afterlife. The specific selection below contains sections from the Sermon that establish the basic principles of Christianity.*

Copy and paste the link below into your web browser to access this document:

https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=MATT+5-7&version=NIV

2. Paul of Tarsus-Letters to the Galatians and Corinthians

*Paul, formerly Saul, of Tarsus, is one of the most important figures in Christianity, especially its early development. Originally Paul was a zealous persecutor of Christians, but had an extraordinary conversion experience while on the road to the city of Damascus. After this experience Paul became an advocate and defender of the Christian faith. Seven of Paul’s letters are generally thought to be authentic, while the authorship of the others is under question. The excerpts below come from letters to the Galatians and Corinthians, which are believed to be authentic. The letters contain Paul’s beliefs about the relationship between faith and law and the role of love in the Christian faith.*

Copy and paste the links below into your web browser to access these documents:

https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=GAL+3%3A15-29&version=NIV
3. Constantine-Edict of Toleration

Constantine the Great was an emperor of the Roman world from 306 to 337. He was one of four rulers after the division of the empire into the Tetrarchy by Diocletian. In 324 he defeated rivals Maxentius and Licinius to become the sole emperor of Rome. Constantine is famous for many things, including building a new city to be the capital of the Roman world, the city of Constantinople. Additionally, Constantine converted to Christianity on his deathbed, but well before that he issued the document below, giving various benefits to the Christian population within the empire.

The “Edict of Milan” (313 A.D.)

When I, Constantine Augustus, as well as I Licinius Augustus fortunately met near Mediolanum (Milan), and were considering everything that pertained to the public welfare and security, we thought -, among other things which we saw would be for the good of many, those regulations pertaining to the reverence of the Divinity ought certainly to be made first, so that we might grant to the Christians and others full authority to observe that religion which each preferred; whence any Divinity whatsoever in the seat of the heavens may be propitious and kindly disposed to us and all who are placed under our rule And thus by this wholesome counsel and most upright provision we thought to arrange that no one whatsoever should be denied the opportunity to give his heart to the observance of the Christian religion, of that religion which he should think best for himself, so that the Supreme Deity, to whose worship we freely yield our hearts) may show in all things His usual favor and benevolence. Therefore, your
Worship should know that it has pleased us to remove all conditions whatsoever, which were in the rescripts formerly given to you officially, concerning the Christians and now any one of these who wishes to observe Christian religion may do so freely and openly, without molestation. We thought it fit to commend these things most fully to your care that you may know that we have given to those Christians free and unrestricted opportunity of religious worship. When you see that this has been granted to them by us, your Worship will know that we have also conceded to other religions the right of open and free observance of their worship for the sake of the peace of our times, that each one may have the free opportunity to worship as he pleases; this regulation is made we that we may not seem to detract from any dignity or any religion.

Moreover, in the case of the Christians especially we esteemed it best to order that if it happens anyone heretofore has bought from our treasury from anyone whatsoever, those places where they were previously accustomed to assemble, concerning which a certain decree had been made and a letter sent to you officially, the same shall be restored to the Christians without payment or any claim of recompense and without any kind of fraud or deception, Those, moreover, who have obtained the same by gift, are likewise to return them at once to the Christians. Besides, both those who have purchased and those who have secured them by gift, are to appeal to the vicar if they seek any recompense from our bounty, that they may be cared for through our clemency. All this property ought to be delivered at once to the community of the Christians through your intercession, and without delay. And since these Christians are known to have possessed not only those places in which they were accustomed to assemble, but also other property, namely the churches, belonging to them as a
corporation and not as individuals, all these things which we have included under the above law, you will order to be restored, without any hesitation or controversy at all, to these Christians, that is to say to the corporations and their conventicles: providing, of course, that the above arrangements be followed so that those who return the same without payment, as we have said, may hope for an indemnity from our bounty. In all these circumstances you ought to tender your most efficacious intervention to the community of the Christians, that our command may be carried into effect as quickly as possible, whereby, moreover, through our clemency, public order may be secured. Let this be done so that, as we have said above, Divine favor towards us, which, under the most important circumstances we have already experienced, may, for all time, preserve and prosper our successes together with the good of the state. Moreover, in order that the statement of this decree of our good will may come to the notice of all, this rescript, published by your decree, shall be announced everywhere and brought to the knowledge of all, so that the decree of this, our benevolence, cannot be concealed.

Dana Carleton Munro and Edith Bramhall, eds., *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, vol. IV, no. 1 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, n.d.), 29-30. Located on the Internet Archive:

https://archive.org/stream/translationsrepro4univiala#page/n35

4. *Theodoret-Ecclesiastical History*

*Theodosius I was the last ruler of the undivided Roman Empire, and the one who made Christianity the official religion of the Empire. In the late fourth century he drew the ire of Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, as a result of an event that took place in the Greek city of Thessalonica. The conflict between the two men became one of the most remarkable*
moments in the history of Christianity, as it marks the first time that an official of the Catholic Church asserted power over the Emperor of Rome.

Thessalonica is a large and populous city, in the province of Macedonia. [In consequence of a sedition there] the anger of the Emperor [Theodosius] rose to the highest pitch, and he gratified his vindictive desire for vengeance by unsheathing the sword most unjustly, and tyrannically against all, slaying the innocent and guilty alike. It is said 7000 perished without any forms of law, and without even having judicial sentence passed upon them; but that, like ears of corn in the time of harvest, they were alike cut down.

When Ambrose [Bishop of Milan] heard of this deplorable catastrophe, he went out to meet the Emperor, who — on his return to Milan — desired as usual to enter the holy church, but Ambrose prohibited his entrance, saying, “You do not reflect, it seems, 0 Emperor, on the guilt you have incurred by that great massacre; but now that your fury is appeased, do you not perceive the enormity of your crime? You must not be dazzled by the splendor of the purple you wear, and be led to forget the weakness of the body which it clothes. Your subjects, 0 Emperor, are of the same nature as yourself, and not only so, but are likewise your fellow servants; for there is one Lord and Ruler of all, and He is the Maker of all creatures, whether princes or people. How would you look upon the temple of the one Lord of all? How could you lift up in prayer hands steeped in the blood of so unjust a massacre? Depart then, and do not by a second crime add to the guilt of the first.”

The Emperor, who had been brought up in the knowledge of Holy Writ, and who knew well the distinction between the ecclesiastical and the temporal power, submitted to the rebuke, and with many tears and groans returned to his palace. More
than eight months after, occurred the festival of our Savior's birth. The Emperor shut himself up in his palace . . . and shed floods of tears.

[After vain attempts by intermediaries to appease the bishop, Theodosius at last went to Ambrose privately and besought mercy, saying], “I beseech you, in consideration of the mercy of our common Lord, to unloose me from these bonds, and not to shut the door which is opened by the Lord to all that truly repent.” [Ambrose stipulated that the Emperor should prove his repentance by recalling his unjust decrees, and especially by ordering] “that when sentence of death or of proscription has been signed against any one, thirty days are to elapse before execution, and on the expiration of that time the case is to be brought again before you, for your resentment will then be calmed [and you can justly decide the issue].” The Emperor listened to this advice, and deeming it excellent, he at once ordered the law to be drawn up, and himself signed the document. St. Ambrose then unloosed his bonds.

The Emperor, who was full of faith, now took courage to enter holy church, [where] he prayed neither in a standing, nor in a kneeling posture, but throwing himself on the ground. He tore his hair, struck his forehead, and shed torrents of tears, as he implored forgiveness of God. [Ambrose restored him to favor, but forbade him to come inside the altar rail, ordering his deacon to say], “The priests alone, o Emperor, are permitted to enter within the barriers by the altar. Retire then, and remain with the rest of the laity. A purple robe makes Emperors, but not priests.” . . .

[Theodosius uttered some excuses, and meekly obeyed, praising Ambrose for his spirit, and saying], “Ambrose alone deserves the title of ‘bishop.’”

William Stearns Davis, Readings in Ancient History Illustrative
Extracts from the Sources, vol. II Rome and the West (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1913), 298-300. Located on the Internet Archive:
https://archive.org/stream/readingsinancienoodavi#page/298/mode/2up

5. Benedict of Nursia-Rule of St. Benedict

The Rule of St. Benedict is a list of behavioral rules for monks to follow. Benedict of Nursia founded numerous monasteries throughout Italy, but his set of rules is his most influential accomplishment. The rule was copied and distributed throughout Europe, and it continues to be employed by Benedictine monasteries today. The excerpts presented below contain chapters on obedience in monasteries, good works, and the daily labor monks were expected to engage in.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT ARE THE INSTRUMENTS OF GOOD WORKS.

1. First of all, to love the Lord God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength.

2. Then our neighbour as ourself.

3. Then not to kill.

4. Not to commit adultery.

5. Not to steal.

6. Not to covet.

7. Not to bear false witness.

8. To honour all men.

9. Not to do to another what we would not have done to ourselves.

10. To deny ourselves, in order to follow Christ.

11. To chastise the body.

12. Not to seek after delights.

13. To love fasting.
14. To relieve the poor.
15. To clothe the naked.
16. To visit the sick.
17. To bury the dead.
18. To help those that are in tribulation.
19. To comfort the sad.
20. To withdraw ourselves from worldly ways.
21. To prefer nothing to the love of Christ.
22. Not to give way to anger.
23. Not to harbour revenge in our mind.
24. Not to foster guile or deceit in our heart.
25. Not to make a feigned peace.
27. Not to swear at all, lest we forswear ourselves.
28. To speak the truth with heart and mouth.
29. Not to render evil for evil.
30. Not to do any injury; yea, and patiently to bear an injury done to us.
31. To love our enemies.
32. Not to speak ill of such as speak ill of us, but rather to speak well of them.
33. To suffer persecution for justice sake.
34. Not to be proud.
35. Not given to wine.
36. Not a great eater.
37. Not drowsy.
38. Not slothful.
40. Not a detractor.
41. To put our trust in God.
42. When we see any good in ourselves, let us attribute it to God and not to ourselves.
43. But let us always know that evil is done by ourselves, therefore let us attribute it to ourselves.
44. To fear the day of judgment.
45. To be afraid of hell.
46. To desire life everlasting with spiritual thirst.
47. To have death always before our eyes.
48. To observe at every hour the actions of our life.
49. To know for certain that God beholdeth us in every place.
50. Presently, by the remembrance of Christ, to put away any evil thoughts which may enter into our heart.
51. And to reveal all such to our spiritual Father.
52. To keep our mouth from evil and filthy words.
53. Not to love much talking.
54. Not to speak vain words, nor such as move to laughter.
55. Not to love much and dissolute laughter.
56. Willingly to hear holy readings.
57. To pray often devoutly.
58. With tears and sighs, daily to confess our past evils to God in prayer, and to amend them for the time to come.
59. Not to fulfill the desires of the flesh, and to hate self-will
60. To obey in all things the commands of the Abbot, though he himself (which God forbid) should do otherwise, being mindful of that precept of our Lord: “What they say, do ye; but what they do, do ye not.?
61. Not to desire to be called holy, before we be so, and first to be holy, that we may truly be called so.
62. Daily to fulfill in deeds the commandments of God.
63. To love chastity.
64. To hate no man.
65. To flee envy and emulation.
66. Not to love contention.
67. To flee haughtiness.
68. To reverence the Elders.
69. To love inferiors for Christ’s sake.
70. To pray for our enemies.
71. To make peace with adversaries before the setting of the sun.
72. Never to despair of God’s mercy.

Behold these are the tools or instruments of our spiritual profession; if we constantly employ them day and night, and have them signed with approval in the day of judgment, that reward shall be given us by our Lord as a recompense “Which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for those that love Him.” The workshop where all these things are to be done is the cloister of the monastery, and steadfast abiding in the Congregation.

CHAPTER V. OF THE OBEDIENCE OF DISCIPLES.

The first degree of humility is obedience without delay. This beseemeth those who, either through fear of hell or for the glory of life everlasting, count nothing more dear to them than Christ. These, presently, as soon as anything is commanded them by the Superior, I make no delay in doing it, just as if the command had come from God. Of such, our Lord saith: “At the hearing of the ear he hath obeyed Me.”?And to superiors and teachers He saith: “He that heareth you, heareth Me.”?

Therefore, such as these, leaving presently all their occupations, and forsaking their own will, leave unfinished what they were about, and with the speedy foot of obedience follow by deeds the voice of him who commands. And thus, as it were in one and the same moment the command of the master and the perfect work of the disciple with the fear of God, go both jointly together, and are speedily effected by those who thirst after life everlasting. These take the narrow way, of which
the Lord saith: “Narrow is the way which leadeth to life.” They live not according to their own will, nor follow their own desires and pleasures, but, abiding in monasteries, they will to have an Abbot over them, and walk according to his command and direction. Without doubt these fulfill that saying of our Lord: “I came not to do my own will, but the will of Him Who sent me.”

This obedience will then be acceptable to God and pleasing to men, if what is commanded be not done fearfully, slowly, coldly, or with murmuring, or an answer showing unwillingness; because the obedience which is given to superiors is given to God, Who hath said: “He that heareth you, heareth Me.”? Hence it ought to be done by the disciples with a good will, because God “loveth a cheerful giver.”? If the disciple obey with ill-will, and murmur, not only in words, but also in heart, although be fulfill what is commanded him, it will not be acceptable to God, Who considereth the heart of the murmurer. For such a work he shall not have any reward, but rather incurreth the penalty of murmurers, unless he amend and make satisfaction.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

OF DAILY MANUAL LABOUR.

Idleness is an enemy of the soul. Therefore the Brethren ought to be employed at certain times in labouring with their hands, and at other fixed times, in holy reading. Wherefore we think that both these occasions may be well ordered thus: From Easter till the first of October, let them, on going forth from Prime, labour at whatever they are required till about the fourth hour. From the fourth, till close upon the sixth hour, let them be employed in reading. On rising from table after the sixth hour, let them rest on their beds with all silence, or if perchance any one shall desire to read, let him read in such a way as not to disturb anyone else.
Let None be said seasonably, at about the middle of the eighth hour, and after that let them work at what they have to do till the evening. If the situation of the place, or their poverty require them to labour in reaping their corn, let them not be saddened thereat, for then are they Monks in very deed, when they live by the labour of their hands, as our Fathers and the Apostles did before us. Yet let all things be done with moderation for the sake of the fainthearted.

From the first of October till the beginning of Lent, they shall be employed in reading till the second hour complete, when Tierce shall be celebrated, and from that till the ninth hour, let them labour at whatever work is enjoined them. At the first signal of the ninth hour, let them all leave off work, so as to be ready when the second signal is given. After their refectory they shall be employed in reading spiritual books, or the psalms. But in Lent they must read from morning till the third hour complete, then let them work till the end of the tenth hour, at what is enjoined them. In these days of Lent, each one shall take a book from the Library, and read it all through in order. The books must be given at the beginning of Lent. Let one or two Seniors be specially appointed to go about the Monastery at the hours in which the Brethren are employed in reading, and see that no one be slothful or give himself up to idleness or foolish talk, and neglect his reading, being thus not only unprofitable to himself, but also a hindrance to others. If such an one be found (which God forbid!) let him be reprehended once or twice, and if he do not amend, let him be so severely corrected, that others may take warning by it. Neither let one Brother associate himself with another at unseasonable times.

On Sunday all shall devote themselves to reading, except such as are deputed for the various offices. But if any one shall be so negligent and slothful as to be either unwilling or unable
to read or meditate, let him have some work imposed upon him which he can do, and thus not be idle. To the Brethren who are of weak constitution or in delicate health, such work or art shall be given as shall keep them from idleness, and yet not oppress them with so much labour as to drive them away. Their weakness must be taken into consideration by the Abbot.

CHAPTER LXXII. OF THE GOOD ZEAL WHICH MONKS OUGHT TO HAVE.

As there is a zeal of bitterness which separateth from God, and leadeth to hell, so there is a good zeal, which separateth from vices and leadeth to God and life everlasting. Let Monks, therefore, exercise this zeal with most fervent love; that is to say, let them “in honour prevent one another.” Let them bear patiently with each other’s infirmities, whether of body or of mind, and contend with one another in the virtue of obedience. Let no one follow what he thinketh profitable to himself, but rather that which is profitable to another; let them show unto each other all brotherly charity with a chaste love. Let them fear God, love their Abbot with sincere and humble affection, and prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and may He bring us to life everlasting. Amen.

The Rule of Our Most Holy Father St. Benedict Patriarch of Monks (London: R. Washbourne, 1875), 37-51, 201-205, 297. Located on the Internet Archive:
https://archive.org/stream/TheRuleOfOurMostHolyFather#page/n69/mode/2up

6. Chronicle of St. Denis-How Clovis the Frank became a Catholic Christian

The Chronicle of St. Denis is a history of France begun during the reign of Saint Louis (1226-1270) and finished in the mid-fifteenth century. The Chronicle covers three major French dynasties and over 900 years of history. The selection included below concerns an
important event in the early history of France, the conversion of the Frankish king Clovis to Christianity.

[Clovis having a Catholic wife, Clothilde, was often urged by her to accept Christianity, but long resisted her entreaty.]

At this time the King was yet in the errors of his idolatry [and went to war] with the Alemanni, since he wished to render them tributary. Long was the battle, many were slain on one side or the other, for the Franks fought to win glory and renown, the Alemanni to save life and freedom. When the King at length saw the slaughter of his people and the boldness of his foes, he had greater expectation of disaster than of victory. He looked up to heaven humbly, and spoke thus, “Most mighty God, whom my queen Clothilde worships and adores with heart and soul, I pledge Thee perpetual service unto Thy faith, if only Thou givest me now the victory over mine enemies.”

Instantly when he had said this, his men were filled with burning valor, and a great fear smote his enemies, so that they turned the back and fled the battle; and victory remained with the King and with the Franks. The king of the Alemanni was slain; and as for the Alemanni, seeing themselves discomfited, and that their king had fallen, they yielded themselves to Clovis and his Franks and became his tributaries.

The King returned after this victory into Frankland. He went to Reims, and told unto the Queen what had befallen; and they together gave thanks unto Our Lord. The King made his confession of faith from his heart, and with right good will. The Queen, who was wondrously overjoyed at the conversion of her lord, went at once to St. Remi, at that time archbishop of the city.

Straightway he hastened to the palace to teach the King the way by which he could come unto God, for his mind was still in doubt about it. He presented himself boldly before his face,
Although a little while before he [the bishop] had not dared to come before him.

When St. Remi had preached to the King the [Christian] faith and taught him the way of the Cross, and when the king had known what the faith was, Clovis promised fervently that he would henceforth never serve any save the all-powerful God. After that he said he would put to the test and try the hearts and wills of his chieftains and lesser people: for he would convert them more easily if they were converted by pleasant means and by mild words, than if they were driven to it by force; and this method seemed best to St. Remi. The folk and the chieftains were assembled by the command of the King. He arose in the midst of them, and spoke to this effect:—

“Lords of the Franks, it seems to me highly profitable that ye should know first of all what are those gods which ye worship. For we are certain of their falsity: and we come right freely into the knowledge of Him who is the true God. Know of a surety that this same God which I preach to you has given victory over your enemies in the recent battle against the Alemanni. Lift therefore your hearts in just hope; and ask the Sovran Defender, that He give to you all, that which ye desire – that He save our souls and give us victory over our enemies.”

When the King full of faith had thus preached to and admonished his people, one and all banished from their hearts all unbelief, and recognized their Creator.

[According to the Chronicle of Frodoard, when shortly afterward Clovis set out for the Church for baptism, St. Remi prepared a great procession. The streets of Reims were hung with banners and tapestry.] The church was decorated. The baptistery was covered with balsams and all sorts of perfumes. The people believed they were already breathing the delights of paradise. The cortege set out from the palace, the clergy led the
way bearing the holy Gospels, the cross and banners, chanting hymns and psalms. Then came the bishop leading the King by the hand, next the Queen with the multitude. Whilst on the way the King asked of the bishop, “If this was the Kingdom of Heaven which he had promised him.” “Not so,” replied the prelate; “it is the road that leadeth unto it.”

[When in the church, in the act of bestowing baptism] the holy pontiff lifted his eyes to heaven in silent prayer and wept. Straightway a dove, white as snow, descended bearing in his beak a vial of holy oil. A delicious odor exhaled from it: which intoxicated those nearby with an inexpressible delight. The holy bishop took the vial, and suddenly the dove vanished. Transported with joy at the sight of this notable miracle, the King renounced Satan, his pomps and his works; and demanded with earnestness the baptism; at the moment when he bent his head over the fountain of life, the eloquent pontiff cried, “Bow dozen thine head, fierce Sicambrian! Adore that which once thou hast burned: burn that which thou hast adored!”

After having made his profession of the orthodox faith, the King is plunged thrice in the waters of baptism. Then in the name of the holy and indivisible Trinity, – Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, – the prelate consecrated him with the divine unction. [Two sisters of the King and] 3000 fighting men of the Franks and a great number of women and children were likewise baptized. Thus we may well believe that day was a day of joy in heaven for the holy angels; likewise of rejoicing on earth for devout and faithful men!

[The King showed vast zeal for his new faith. He built a splendid church at Paris, called St. Genevieve, where later he and Clothilde were buried.] Faith and religion and zeal for justice were pursued by him all the days of his life.
[Certain Franks still held to paganism, and found a leader in Prince Ragnachairus] but he was presently delivered up in fetters to Clovis who put him to death. Thus all the Frankish people were converted and baptized by the merits of St. Remi.

William Stearns Davis, Readings in Ancient History Illustrative Extracts from the Sources, vol. II Rome and the West (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1913), 232-235. Located on the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/stream/readingsinancieno0odavi#page/332/mode/2up
Chapter 7: The Early Middle Ages 750-1000

The Early Middle Ages spans a period of roughly 250 years during which Western Europe was trying to recover from a bleak period following the collapse of the Roman Empire. During this era new institutions would arise that would serve as the foundation for much of the social, economic, and political culture of the entire Middle Ages. An important figure in the recovery from the Dark Ages was Charles the Great, more commonly known as Charlemagne. Charlemagne’s father had overthrown a previous ruling family and had been crowned King of the Franks by a papal representative, a title that Charlemagne inherited upon his father’s death in 768. Under Charlemagne the Frankish kingdom would expand through numerous wars of conquest to become the largest empire Europe would see until Napoleon in the nineteenth century. New political/military officers would be used to govern and defend the vast territory under Charlemagne’s sway, and he would strengthen relations with the Catholic Church by aiding Pope Leo III against his enemies, a favor which would be returned when the Pope anointed Charlemagne as the Holy
Roman Emperor. Interest in learning was also renewed during Charlemagne’s rule, exemplified by the palace school he established that attracted scholars from Germany, Italy, Spain, and Ireland. Additionally, monasteries in the Frankish empire began constructing or converting spaces into rooms where monks would meticulously copy ancient texts, both Christian and pagan, and loan volumes to other monasteries. The empire created by Charlemagne would not last forever, though, as his grandsons divided the territory into three parts in 843, a division which would lead to the evolution of both the French and German kingdoms. In the ninth and tenth centuries attacks by invaders such as the Muslims, Magyars, and especially Vikings would continue the fragmentation of Western Europe, prompting the development of new social and economic systems. In the first, the system of vassalage, warriors would pledge their loyalty to a lord in return for good treatment and land, agreeing to fight for that lord when needed. In the second, the system of manorialism, those warriors would grant protection to ordinary peasants who became serfs and were tied to the land they worked and subject to numerous fines, fees, and rules.

There are three documents in this chapter that illustrate some of the themes of the Early Middle Ages. First up is a law code from an early group of Franks that would serve as an example for other law codes, not only in other Germanic tribes, but in later kingdoms. Second is a set of rules established by Charlemagne that governed not only secular officials like counts but also religious officials such as priests and bishops. The document gives us a window into the mind of Charlemagne and how he viewed the relationship between church and state. Finally comes a document that itself contains excerpts from three primary sources all dealing with Viking
invasions. Each excerpt presents the Vikings in a slightly different light, and the three together show an interesting development in Viking behavior and how European kings and nobles reacted to them.

1. The Salic Law

The Salian Franks were one of many Germanic groups that occupied Europe after the fall of Rome in the west. The most famous Frankish king, Clovis, promulgated a new law code in roughly 500, excerpts of which are presented below. The Laws of the Salian Franks, or Salic Law as it is sometimes known, covers both civil and criminal issues and became an influential law code, especially in the Early Middle Ages. The selection here contains laws concerning breaking and entering, rape, assault, and other aspects of criminal law. As you read this selection keep in mind what these laws tell us about the society of the Franks during this period of time.

Title XL Concerning Thefts or Housebreakings of Freemen,

1. If any freeman steal, outside of the house, something worth 2 denars, he shall be sentenced to 600 denars, which make 15 shillings.

2. But if he steal, outside of the house, something worth 40 denars, and it be proved on him, he shall be sentenced, besides the amount and the fines for delay, to 1400 denars, which make 35 shillings.

3. If a freeman break into a house and steal something worth 2 denars, and it be proved on him, he shall be sentenced to 15 shillings

4. But if he shall have stolen something worth more than 5 denars, and it have been proved on him, he shall be sentenced, besides the worth of the object and the fines for delay, to 1400 denars, which make 35 shillings.

5. But if he have broken, or tampered with, the lock, and thus have entered the house and stolen anything from it, he shall
be sentenced, besides the worth of the object and the fines for delay, to 1800 denars, which make 45 shillings.

6. And if he have taken nothing, or have escaped by flight, he shall, for the housebreaking alone, be sentenced to 1200 denars, which make 30 shillings.

Title XII Concerning Thefts or Housebreakings on the Part of Slaves.

1. If a slave steal, outside of the house, something worth two denars, he shall, besides paying the worth of the object and the fines for delay, be stretched out and receive 120 blows.

2. But if he steal something worth 40 denars, he shall either be castrated or pay 6 shillings. But the lord of the slave who committed the theft shall restore to the plaintiff the worth of the object and the fines for delay.

Title XIII Concerning Rape committed by Freeman

1. If three men carry off a free born girl, they shall be compelled to pay 30 shillings.

2. If there are more than three, each one shall pay 5 shillings.

3. Those who shall have been present with boats shall be sentenced to three shillings.

4. But those who commit rape shall be compelled to pay 2500 denars, which make 63 shillings.

5. But if they have carried off that girl from behind lock and key, or from the spinning room, they shall be sentenced to the above price and penalty.

6. But if the girl who is carried off be under the king’s protection, then the ‘frith” (peace-money) shall be 2500 denars, which make 63 shillings.

7. But if a bondsman of the king, or a leet, should carry off a free woman, he shall be sentenced to death.

8. But if a free woman have followed a slave of her own will, she shall lose her freedom.
9. If a freeborn man shall have taken an alien bonds woman, he shall suffer similarly.

10. If anybody take an alien spouse and join her to himself in matrimony, he shall be sentenced to 2500 denars, which make 63 shillings.

Title XIV. Concerning Assault and Robbery

1. If anyone have assaulted and plundered a free man, and it be proved on him, he shall be sentenced to 2500 denars, which make 63 shillings.

2. If a Roman have plundered a Salian Frank, the above law shall be observed.

3. But if a Frank have plundered a Roman, he shall be sentenced to 35 shillings.

4. If any man should wish to migrate, and has permission from the king, and shall have shown this in the public “Thing:” whoever, contrary to the decree of the king, shall presume to oppose him, shall be sentenced to 8000 denars, which make 200 shillings.

Title XVII. Concerning Wounds

1. If anyone have wished to kill another person, and the blow have missed, he on whom it was proved shall be sentenced to 2500 denars, which make 63 shillings.

2. If any person have wished to strike another with a poisoned arrow, and the arrow have glanced aside, and it shall be proved on him: he shall be sentenced to 2500 denars, which make 63 shillings.

3. If any person strike another on the head so that the brain appears, and the three bones which lie above the brain shall project, he shall be sentenced to 1200 denars, which make 30 shillings.

4. But if it shall have been between the ribs or in the stomach, so that the wound appears and reaches to the entrails, he shall
be sentenced to 1200 denars – which make 30 shillings – besides five shillings for the physician’s pay.

5. If anyone shall have struck a man so that blood falls to the floor, and it be proved on him, he shall be sentenced to 600 denars, which make 15 shillings.

6. But if a freeman strike a freeman with his fist so that blood does not flow, he shall be sentenced for each blow – up to 3 blows – to 120 denars, which make 3 shillings.

Title XXIV. Concerning the Killing of little children and women

1. If anyone have slain a boy under 10 years – up to the end of the tenth – and it shall have been proved on him, he shall be sentenced to 24000 denars, which make 600 shillings.

3. If anyone have hit a free woman who is pregnant, and she dies, he shall be sentenced to 28000 denars, which make 700 shillings.

6. If anyone have killed a free woman after she has begun bearing children, he shall be sentenced to 24000 denars, which make 600 shillings.

7. After she can have no more children, he who kills her shall be sentenced to 8000 denars, which make 200 shillings.

Title XXX. Concerning Insults

3. If anyone, man or woman, shall have called a woman harlot, and shall not have been able to prove it, he shall be sentenced to 1800 denars, which make 45 shillings.

4. If any person shall have called another “fox,” he shall be sentenced to 3 shillings.

5. If any man shall have called another “hare,” he shall be sentenced to 3 shillings.

6. If any man shall have brought it up against another that he have thrown away his shield, and shall not have been able
to prove it, he shall be sentenced to 120 denars, which make 3 shillings.

7. If any man shall have called another “spy” or “perjurer,” and shall not have been able to prove it, he shall be sentenced to 600 denars, which make 15 shillings.

Title XLL Concerning the Murder of Free Men

1. If anyone shall have killed a free Frank, or a barbarian living under the Salic law, and it have been proven on him, he shall be sentenced to 8000 denars.

2. But if he shall have thrown him into a well or in the water, or shall have covered him with branches or an thing else, to conceal him, he shall be sentenced to 24000 denars, which make 600 shillings.

3. But if anyone has slain a man who is in the service of the king, he shall be sentenced to 24000 denars, which make 600 shillings.

4. But if he have put him in the water or in a well, and covered him with anything to conceal him, he shall be sentenced to 72000 denars, which make 1800 shillings.

5. If anyone have slain a Roman who eats in the King’s palace, and it have been proved on him, he shall be sentenced to 12000 denars, which make 300 shillings.

6. But if the Roman shall not have been a landed proprietor and table companion of the king, he who killed him shall be sentenced to 4000 denars, which make 10 shillings.

7. But if he shall have killed a Roman who was obliged to pay tribute, he shall be sentenced to 63 shillings.

9. If anyone have thrown a free man into a well, and he have escaped alive, he (the criminal) shall be sentenced to 4000 denars, which make 100 shillings.
2. Charlemagne-The Capitulary of Charlemagne

King of the Franks from 768 and Holy Roman Emperor from 800 to his death in 814, Charlemagne is one of the most famous personages in European history. A warrior, a sponsor of education, and a defender of the Christian faith, Charlemagne established many institutions that would thrive during the long course of the Middle Ages. The selection below is called a capitulary, or a set of laws and administrative acts issued by various Germanic kings during the Early Middle Ages. The capitulary below concerns the enforcement of royal law throughout Charlemagne’s vast empire as well as regulations on the behavior of both royal and church officials.

CHAPTER I. CONCERNING THE EMBASSY SENT OUT BY THE LORD EMPEROR.

The most serene and most Christian emperor Charles did choose from among his nobles the most prudent and the wisest men – archbishops as well as other bishops, and venerable abbots, and pious laymen – and did send them over his whole kingdom; and did grant through them, by means of all the following provisions, that men should live according to law and right. He did order them, moreover, that, where anything is contained in the law that is otherwise than according to right and justice, they should inquire into this most diligently, and make it known to him: and he, God granting, hopes to better it. And let no one, through his cleverness or astuteness – as many are accustomed to do – dare to oppose the written law, or the sentence passed upon him, or to prevail against the churches of God, or the poor, or widows, or minors, or any Christian man. But all should live together according to the precept of
God, in a just manner and under just judgment; and each one should be admonished to live in unity with the others in his occupation or calling. The monastic clergy should altogether observe in their actions a canonical mode of living, far removed from turpid gains; nuns should keep diligent guard over their lives; laymen and secular clergy should make proper use of their privileges without malicious fraud; all should live together in mutual charity and perfect peace. And let the messengers diligently investigate all cases where any man claims that injustice has been done to him by any one, according as they themselves hope to retain for themselves the grace of omnipotent God, and to preserve the fidelity promised to Him. And thus, altogether and everywhere and in all cases, whether the matter concerns the holy churches of God, or the poor, or wards and widows, or the whole people, let them fully administer law and justice according to the will and to the fear of God. And if there should be any matter such that they themselves, with the counts of the province, could not better it and render justice with regard to it: without any ambiguity they shall refer it, together with their reports, to the emperor’s court. Nor should anyone be kept back from the right path of justice by the adulation or the reward of any man, by the obstacle of any relationship, or by the fear of powerful persons.

2. CONCERNING THE FEALTY TO BE PROMISED TO THE LORD EMPEROR.

And he ordained that every man in his whole kingdom – ecclesiastic or layman, each according to his vow and calling – who had previously promised fealty to him as king should now make this promise to him as emperor; and that those who had hitherto not made this promise should all, down to those under 12 years of age, do likewise. And he ordained that it should be publicly told to All – so that each one should understand
it – what important things and how many things are comprehended in that oath: not alone, as many have hitherto believed, fidelity to the emperor as regards his life, or the not introducing an enemy into his kingdom for a hostile purpose, or the not consenting to the infidelity of another, or the not keeping silent about it. But all should know that the oath comprises in itself the following meaning:

3. Firstly, that every one of his own accord should strive, according to his intelligence and strength, wholly to keep himself in the holy service of God according to the precept of God and to his own promise – inasmuch as the emperor cannot exhibit the necessary care and discipline to each man singly.

5. That no one shall presume through fraud to plunder or do any injury to the holy churches of God, or to widows, orphans or strangers; for the emperor himself, after God and his saints, has been constituted their protector and defender.

6. That no one shall dare to devastate a fief of the emperor or to take possession of it.

7. That no one shall presume to neglect a summons to arms of the emperor; and that no count be so presumptuous as to dare to release – out of regard for any relationship, or on account of flattery or of any one's gift – any one of those who owe military service.

8. That no one at all shall dare in any way to impede a ban or precept of the emperor, or delay or oppose or damage any undertaking of his, or in any way act contrary to his will and precepts. And that no one shall dare to interfere with his taxes and with what is due to him.

10. That bishops and priests should live according to the canons and should teach others to do likewise.

11. That bishops, abbots and abbesses, who are placed in power over others, should strive to surpass in veneration and
diligence those subject to them; that they should not oppress them with severe and tyrannous rule, but should carefully guard the flock committed to them, with simple love, with mercy and charity, and by the example of good works.

12. That abbots should live where the monks are, and wholly with the monks, according to the rule; and that they should diligently teach and observe the canons; and that abbesses shall do the same.

14. That bishops, abbots and abbesses, and counts shall be mutually in accord, agreeing, with all charity and unity of peace, in wielding the law and in finding a right judgment; and that they shall faithfully live according to the will of God, so that everywhere and always, through them and among them, just judgments may be carried out. The poor, widows, orphans and pilgrims shall have consolation and protection from them; so that we, through their good will, may merit, rather than punishment, the rewards of eternal life.

25. That counts and centenars shall see to it that justice is done in full; and they shall have younger men in their service in whom they can securely trust, who will faithfully observe law and justice, and by no means oppress the poor; who will not, under any pretext, induced by reward or flattery, dare to conceal thieves, robbers, or murderers, adulterers, magicians and wizards or witches, or any godless men, – but will rather give them up that they may be bettered and chastised by the law: so that, God permitting, all these evils may be removed from the Christian people.

26. That judges shall judge justly, according to the written law and not according to their own judgment.

27. We decree that throughout our whole realm no one shall dare to deny hospitality to the rich, or to the poor, or to pilgrims: that is, no one shall refuse shelter and fire and water
to pilgrims going through the land in God’s service, or to any one travelling for the love of God and the safety of his soul. If anyone shall wish to do further kindness to them, he shall know that his best reward will be from God, who said Himself: “And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me.” And again: “I was a stranger and ye took me in.”

35. That all men shall at all times, in the service and will of God, venerate with all honour their bishops and priests. Let them not dare to pollute themselves and others by incestuous nuptials; let them not presume to be wedded until the bishops and priests, together with the elders of the people, shall diligently inquire into the degree of blood-relationship between those being joined together. And then, with a benediction, let them be wedded. Let them avoid drunkenness, shun greed, commit no theft. Let strife and contentions and blasphemy, whether at feasts or assemblies, be altogether avoided; but let them live in charity and concord.

36. Also that, in carrying out every sentence, all shall be altogether of one mind with our envoys. And they shall not at all permit the practice of perjury, which most evil crime must be removed from Christian people. If anyone henceforth shall be proved a perjurer, he shall know that he shall lose his right hand; and he shall, in addition, be deprived of his inheritance until we have judged his case.

Ernest F. Henderson, ed. and trans., *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1905), 189-193, 197, 199-200. Located on the Internet Archive:
https://archive.org/stream/selecthistorica01hendgoog#page/n218/mode/2up

3. Three Sources on the Ravages of the Northmen in Frankland

*The Vikings terrorized much of Europe in the ninth and tenth*
centuries. Employing well constructed ships they could navigate rivers and seas, attacking northern Europe and making contact as far away as Constantinople. The excerpts below come from three different sources, the Annals of St. Bertin, Wars of Count Odo with the Northmen in the Reign of Charles the Fat, and the Chronicle of St. Denis. The three sources, put together in this fashion, are notable for how each portrays the Vikings in a different light than the other two. As you read the selection, keep in mind both the similarities and differences you see in how the Vikings are presented by these sources.

From the Annals of St. Bertin

843 A.D. Pirates of the Northmen’s race came to Nantes, killed the bishop and many of the clergy and laymen, both men and women, and pillaged the city. Thence they set out to plunder the lands of lower Aquitaine. At length they arrived at a certain island [the isle of Rhé, near La Rochelle, north of the mouth of the Garonne], and carried materials thither from the mainland to build themselves houses; and they settled there for the winter, as if that were to be their permanent dwelling-place.

844. The Northmen ascended the Garonne as far as Toulouse and pillaged the lands along both banks with impunity. Some, after leaving this region went into Galicia [in Northern Spain] and perished, part of them by the attacks of the crossbowmen who had come to resist them, part by being overwhelmed by a storm at sea. But others of them went farther into Spain and engaged in long and desperate combats with the Saracens; defeated in the end, they withdrew.

845. Then the other, came without meeting any resistance to Paris. Charles [the Bald] resolved to hold out against them; but seeing the impossibility of gaining a victory, he made with them a certain agreement and by a gift of 7,000 livres he bought them off from advancing farther and persuaded them to return. Euric, king of the Northmen, advanced, with six hundred
vessels, along the course of the River Elbe to attack Louis of Germany. The Saxons prepared to meet him, gave battle, and with the aid of our Lord Jesus Christ won the victory. The Northmen returned down the Seine and coming to the ocean pillaged, destroyed, and burned all the regions along the coast.

846. The Danish pirates landed in Frisia. They were able to force from the people whatever contributions they wished and, being victors in battle, they remained masters of almost the entire province.

847. The Northmen made their appearance in the part of Gaul inhabited by the Britons and won three victories. Noménoé [a chief of the Britons], although defeated, at length succeeded in buying them off with presents and getting them out of his country.

853-854. The Danish pirates, making their way into the country eastward from the city of Nantes, arrived without opposition, November Eighth, before Tours. This they burned, together with the church of St. Martin and the neighboring places. But that incursion had been foreseen with certainty and the body of St. Martin had been removed to Cormery, a monastery of that church, and from there to the city of Orleans. The pirates went on to the château of Blois and burned it, proposing then to proceed to Orleans and destroy that city in the same fashion. But Agius, bishop of Orleans, and Burchard, bishop of Chartres, had gathered soldiers and ships to meet them; so they abandoned their design and returned to the lower Loire, though the following year [855] they ascended it anew to the city of Angers.

855. They left their ships behind and undertook to go overland to the city of Poitiers; but the Aquitanians came to meet them and defeated them, so that not more than 300 escaped.
856. On the eighteenth of April, the Danish pirates came to the city of Orleans, pillaged it, and went away without meeting opposition. Other Danish pirates came into the Seine about the middle of August and, after plundering and ruining the towns on the two banks of the river, and even the monasteries and villages farther back, came to a well located place near the Seine called Jeufosse, and, there quietly passed the winter.

859. The Danish pirates having made a long sea-voyage (for they had sailed between Spain and Africa) entered the Rhone, where they pillaged many cities and monasteries and established themselves on the island called Camargue. . . . They devastated everything before them as far as the city of Valence. Then, after ravaging all these regions, they returned to the island where they had fixed their habitation. Thence they went on toward Italy, capturing and plundering Pisa and other cities.

From Odo’s Wars of Count Odo with the Northmen in the Reign of Charles the Fat

885. The Northmen came to Paris with 700 sailing ships, not counting those of smaller size which are commonly called barques. At one stretch the Seine was lined with the vessels for more than two leagues, so that one might ask in astonishment in what cavern the river had been swallowed up, since it was not to be seen. The second day after the fleet of the Northmen arrived under the walls of the city, Siegfried, who was then king only in name but who was in command of the expedition, came to the dwelling of the illustrious bishop. He bowed his head and said: “Gauzelin, have compassion on yourself and on your flock. We beseech you to listen to us, in order that you may escape death. Allow us only the freedom of the city. We will do no harm and we will see to it that whatever belongs either to you or to Odo shall be strictly respected.” Count Odo, who later became king, was then the defender of the city.
bishop replied to Siegfried, “Paris has been entrusted to us by the Emperor Charles, who, after God, king and lord of the powerful, rules over almost all the world. He has put it in our care, not at all that the kingdom may be ruined by our misconduct, but that he may keep it and be assured of its peace. If, like us, you had been given the duty of defending these walls, and if you should have done that which you ask us to do, what treatment do you think you would deserve?” Siegfried replied. “I should deserve that my head be cut off and thrown to the dogs. Nevertheless, if you do not listen to my demand, on the morrow our war machines will destroy you with poisoned arrows. You will be the prey of famine and of pestilence and these evils will renew themselves perpetually every year.” So saying, he departed and gathered together his comrades.

In the morning the Northmen, boarding their ships, approached the tower and attacked it [the tower blocked access to the city by the so-called “Great Bridge,” which connected the right bank of the Seine with the island on which the city was built. The tower stood on the present site of the Châtelet]. They shook it with their engines and stormed it with arrows. The city resounded with clamor, the people were aroused, the bridges trembled. All came together to defend the tower. There Odo, his brother Robert, and the Count Ragenar distinguished themselves for bravery; likewise the courageous Abbot Ebolus, the nephew of the bishop. A keen arrow wounded the prelate, while at his side the young warrior Frederick was struck by a sword. Frederick died, but the old man, thanks to God, survived. There perished many Franks; after receiving wounds they were lavish of life. At last the enemy withdrew, carrying off their dead. The evening came. The tower had been sorely tried, but its foundations were still solid, as were also the narrow bays which surmounted them. The people spent the night repairing
it with boards. By the next day, on the old citadel had been erected a new tower of wood, a half higher than the former one. At sunrise the Danes caught their first glimpse of it. Once more the latter engaged with the Christians in violent combat. On every side arrows sped and blood flowed. With the arrows mingled the stones hurled by slings and war-machines; the air was filled with them. The tower which had been built during the night groaned under the strokes of the darts, the city shook with the struggle, the people ran hither and thither, the bells jangled. The warriors rushed together to defend the tottering tower and to repel the fierce assault. Among these warriors two, a count and an abbot [Ebolus], surpassed all the rest in courage. The former was the redoubtable Odo who never experienced defeat and who continually revived the spirits of the worn-out defenders. He ran along the ramparts and hurled back the enemy. On those who were secreting themselves so as to undermine the tower he poured oil, wax, and pitch, which, being mixed and heated, burned the Danes and tore off their scalps. Some of them died; others threw themselves into the river to escape the awful substance. . . .

Meanwhile Paris was suffering not only from the sword outside but also from a pestilence within which brought death to many noble men. Within the walls there was not ground in which to bury the dead. . . . Odo, the future king, was sent to Charles, emperor of the Franks, to implore help for the stricken city. One day Odo suddenly appeared in splendor in the midst of three bands of warriors. The sun made his armor glisten and greeted him before it illuminated the country around. The Parisians saw their beloved chief at a distance, but the enemy, hoping to prevent his gaining entrance to the tower, crossed the Seine and took up their position on the bank. Nevertheless Odo, his horse at a gallop, got past the Northmen and reached
the tower, whose gates Ebolus opened to him. The enemy pursued fiercely the comrades of the count who were trying to keep up with him and get refuge in the tower. [The Danes were defeated in the attack.]

Now came the Emperor Charles, surrounded by soldiers of all nations, even as the sky is adorned with resplendent stars. A great throng, speaking many languages, accompanied him. He established his camp at the foot of the heights of Montmartre, near the tower. He allowed the Northmen to have the country of Sens to plunder; and in the spring he gave them 700 pounds of silver on condition that by the month of March they leave France for their own kingdom. Then Charles returned, destined to an early death.

From the Chronicle of St. Denis

The king had at first wished to give to Rollo the province of Flanders, but the Norman rejected it as being too marshy. Rollo refused to kiss the foot of Charles when he received from him the duchy of Normandy. “He who receives such a gift,” said the bishops to him, “ought to kiss the foot of the king.” “Never,” replied he, “will I bend the knee to anyone, or kiss anybody’s foot.” Nevertheless, impelled by the entreaties of the Franks, he ordered one of his warriors to perform the act in his stead. This man seized the foot of the king and lifted it to his lips, kissing it without bending and so causing the king to tumble over backwards. At that there was a loud burst of laughter and a great commotion in the crowd of onlookers. King Charles, Robert, Duke of the Franks, the counts and magnates, and the bishops and abbots, bound themselves by the oath of the Catholic faith to Rollo, swearing by their lives and their bodies and by the honor of all the kingdom, that he might hold the land and transmit it to his heirs from generation to generation throughout all time to come. When these things had been
satisfactorily performed, the king returned in good spirits into his dominion, and Rollo with Duke Robert set out for Rouen.

In the year of our Lord 912 Rollo was baptized in holy water in the name of the sacred Trinity by Franco, archbishop of Rouen. Duke Robert, who was his godfather, gave to him his name. Rollo devotedly honored God and the Holy Church with his gifts. . . . The pagans, seeing that their chieftain had become a Christian, abandoned their idols, received the name of Christ, and with one accord desired to be baptized. Meanwhile, the Norman duke made ready for a splendid wedding and married the daughter of the king [Gisela] according to Christian rites.

Rollo gave assurance of security to all those who wished to dwell in his country. The land he divided among his followers, and, as it had been a long time unused, he improved it by the construction of new buildings. It was peopled by the Norman warriors and by immigrants from outside regions. The duke established for his subjects certain inviolable rights and laws, confirmed and published by the will of the leading men, and he compelled all his people to live peaceably together. He rebuilt the churches, which had been entirely ruined; he restored the temples, which had been destroyed by the ravages of the pagans; he repaired and added to the walls and fortifications of the cities; he subdued the Britons who rebelled against him; and with the provisions obtained from them he supplied all the country that had been granted to him.


https://archive.org/stream/sourcebookofmedi00oggfuoft#page/164
Chapter 8: Islam

Today the Islamic faith has over a billion adherents, making it the world’s second most popular religion. The central text of Islam, the Qur’an, or Koran, is said to be a golden book on which the words of the Islamic god Allah are inscribed. According to tradition the prophet Muhammad was the first person to have this new faith revealed to him. Muhammad was a caravan merchant who traveled the Arabian Peninsula when he suddenly began experiencing visions of the Qur’an, visions he came to believe were given to him directly by Allah. Muhammad’s visions and his retelling of them did not receive a warm welcome, especially because Muhammad’s family were caretakers of the Ka’ba, a shrine to the pagan gods the Bedouin tribes in the area worshipped. Muhammad was exiled from his home city of Mecca but found sanctuary in the city of Medina where he began converting people to the new faith. An important lesson for the newly converted was the Five Pillars—five foundational beliefs and actions that all Muslims, the name for adherents to Islam, must follow. Additionally, Muhammad was revered as the liaison between Allah and man, so his words
and actions were passed down from generation to generation and would become important teachings for future converts and those raised in the faith. In the year 630 Muhammad returned to Mecca and conquered it, rededicating the Ka’ba as a monument to Allah and beginning what would be an extraordinary period of growth for Islam. After Muhammad’s death his followers established a theocracy, a government and political culture based on religious belief, and began conquering territory in the Arabian Peninsula and beyond. By 750 all of the Middle East, North Africa, and Spain had fallen to the Muslim armies. At that time a new dynasty, the Abbasid, rose to power and changed the nature of Islamic civilization by moving away from militancy and toward learning and art. A new capital city, Baghdad, became a hub for economics and culture. Focus was put more on scholars than warriors, and under the Abbasids the texts of the ancient Greek and Roman worlds were translated and studied. Medical tracts, political works, and philosophical books were all translated, and anything the Muslims could absorb into their culture they did. Huge libraries, like the ones in Cordoba, Spain, contained as many as 400,000 texts. The Abbasid Dynasty, however, would crumble under the weight of its own corruption, leading parts of the Islamic empire such as Spain and Egypt to break off and form their own governments by the tenth century.

There are three documents contained in this chapter. The first document contains two surahs, or chapters, from the Qur’an. These surahs give us insight into the nature and characteristics of Islam’s god, Allah. The second document is known as the Sunnah, which refers to the sayings and deeds of the prophet Muhammad that were passed down orally for generations before being codified. Though not as authoritative as the Qur’an, the Sunnah is nonetheless a vital document for
Muslims, as it contains examples of behavior and wisdom from Islam’s founding figure that should be imitated by believers. The Sunnah excerpts in this chapter deal with topics such as women, prayer, charity, and government. Last up is a modern document, an article written by a Muslim who has committed the entire Qur’an to memory. Dr. Azeem’s article specifically discusses the contrast between what the Qur’an says about the role and responsibilities of women in society and what other religious texts such as the Old and New Testaments say on the same subject.

1. Qur’an-Surahs 1 and 47

The Qur’an is the central text of the Islamic faith. It is believed by Muslims that the text was given to the prophet Muhammad by Allah, the god of Islam. The book is divided into chapters, called surahs, and each surah is further divided into verses. The selection below contains two surahs that give the reader a sense of the characteristics of Allah. As you read the surahs keep in mind how this portrayal of Allah is similar to portrayals of God in Christianity.

Copy and paste the link below into your web browser to access this document:
https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/koran-sel.asp

2. The Sunnah

The Sunnah is a compilation of traditions and customs of Islamic culture. Composed of sayings and actions attributed to the prophet Muhammad and his followers that were originally transmitted verbally, the Sunnah is an important foundation of Islamic law. The excerpt below contains passages on women, prayer, government, labor, charity, and other concepts. As you read this compare and contrast the principles of Islamic faith with those of Christianity.

When God created the creation he wrote a book, which is near him upon the sovereign throne; and what is written in it is this: “Verily my compassion overcometh my wrath.”
Say not, if people do good to us, we will do good to them, and if people oppress us, we will oppress them: but resolve that if people do good to you, you will do good to them, and if they oppress you, oppress them not again.

God saith: Whoso does one good act, for him are ten rewards, and I also give more to whomsoever I will; and whoso does ill, its retaliation is equal to it, or else I forgive him; and he who seeketh to approach me one cubit, I will seek to approach him two fathoms; and he who walketh toward me, I will run toward him; and he who cometh before me with the earth full of sins, but joins no partner to me, I will come before him with an equal front of forgiveness.

There are seven people whom God will draw under his own shadow, on that day when there will be no other shadow: one a just king; another, who hath employed himself in devotion from his youth; the third, who fixes his heart on the mosque 'till he return to it; the fourth, two men whose friendship is to please God, whether together or separate; the fifth, a man who remembereth God when he is alone, and weeps; the sixth, a man who is tempted by a rich and beautiful woman, and saith, Verily I fear God; the seventh, a man who hath given alms and concealed it, so that his left hand knoweth not what his right hand doeth.

The most excellent of all actions is to befriend anyone on God’s account, and to be at enmity with whosoever is the enemy of God.

Verily ye are in an age in which if ye abandon one-tenth of what is ordered, ye will be ruined. After this a time will come when he who shall observe one-tenth of what is now ordered will be redeemed.

**Concerning Prayer**

Angels come among you both night and day; then those of
the night ascend to heaven, and God asks them how they left his creatures: they say, We left them at prayer, and we found them at prayer.

The rewards for the prayers which are performed by people assembled together are double of those which are said at home.

Ye must not say your prayers at the rising or the setting of the sun: so when a limb of the sun appeareth, leave your prayers until her whole orb is up: and when the sun begins to set, quit your prayers until the whole orb hath disappeared; for, verily she riseth between the two horns of the devil.

No neglect of duty is imputable during sleep; for neglect can only take place when one is awake: therefore, when any of you forget your prayers, say them when ye recollect.

When any one of you goeth to sleep, the devil ties three knots upon his neck; and saith over every knot, “The night is long, sleep.” Therefore, if a servant awake and remember God, it openeth one knot; and if he perform the ablution, it openeth another; and if he say prayers, it openeth the other; and he riseth in the morning in gladness and purity: otherwise he riseth in a lethargic state.

When a Muslim performs the ablution, it washes from his face those faults which he may have cast his eyes upon; and when he washes his hands, it removes the faults they may have committed, and when he washes his feet, it dispels the faults toward which they may have carried him: so that he will rise up in purity from the place of ablution.

**Of Charity**

When God created the earth it began to shake and tremble; then God created mountains, and put them upon the earth, and the land became firm and fixed; and the angels were astonished at the hardness of the hills, and said, “O God, is there anything of thy creation harder than hills?” and God said, “Yes, water is
harder than the hills, because it breaketh them.” Then the angel said, “O Lord, is there anything of thy creation harder than water?” He said, “Yes, wind overcometh water: it does agitate it and put it in motion.” They said, “O our Lord! is there anything of thy creation harder than wind?” He said, “Yes, the children of Adam giving alms: those who give with their right hand, and conceal from their left, overcome all.”

The liberal man is near the pleasure of God and is near paradise, which he shall enter into, and is near the hearts of men as a friend, and he is distant from hell; but the niggard is far from God’s pleasure and from paradise, and far from the hearts of men, and near the fire; and verily a liberal ignorant man is more beloved by God than a niggardly worshiper.

A man’s giving in alms one piece of silver in his lifetime is better for him than giving one hundred when about to die.

Think not that any good act is contemptible, though it be but your brother’s coming to you with an open countenance and good humor.

There is alms for a man’s every joint, every day in which the sun riseth; doing justice between two people is alms; and assisting a man upon his beast, and with his baggage, is alms; and pure words, for which are rewards; and answering a questioner with mildness is alms, and every step which is made toward prayer is alms, and removing that which is an inconvenience to man, such as stones and thorns, is alms.

The people of the Prophet’s house killed a goat, and the Prophet said, “What remaineth of it?” They said, “Nothing but the shoulder; for they have sent the whole to the poor and neighbors, except a shoulder which remaineth.” The Prophet said, “Nay, it is the whole goat that remaineth except its shoulder: that remaineth which they have given away, the
rewards of which will be eternal, and what remaineth in the
house is fleeting."

Feed the hungry, visit the sick, and free the captive if he be
unjustly bound.

Of Labor and Profit

Verily the best things which ye eat are those which ye earn
yourselves or which your children earn.

Verily it is better for one of you to take a rope and bring a
bundle of wood upon his back and sell it, in which case God
guards his honor, than to beg of people, whether they give him
or not; if they do not give him, his reputation suffers and he
returns disappointed; and if they give him, it is worse than that,
for it layeth him under obligations.

A man came to the Prophet, begging of him something, and
the Prophet said, “Have you nothing at home?” He said, “Yes,
there is a large carpet, with one part of which I cover myself,
and spread the other, and there is a wooden cup in which I
drink water.” Then the Prophet said, “Bring me the carpet and
the cup.” And the man brought them, and the Prophet took
them in his hand, and said, “Who will buy them?” A man said,
“I will take them at one silver piece.” He said, “Who will give
more?” This he repeated twice or thrice. Another man said, “I
will take them for two pieces of silver.” Then the Prophet gave
the carpet and cup to that man, and took the two pieces of
silver, and gave them to the helper, and said, “Buy food with one
of these pieces, and give it to your family, that they may make
it their sustenance for a few days; and buy a hatchet with the
other piece and bring it to me.” And the man brought it; and
the Prophet put a handle to it with his own hands, and then
said, “Go, cut wood, and sell it, and let me not see you for fifteen
days.” Then the man went cutting wood, and selling it; and he
came to the Prophet, when verily he had got ten pieces of silver,
and he bought a garment with part of it, and food with part. Then the Prophet said, “This cutting and selling of wood, and making your livelihood by it, is better for you than coming on the day of resurrection with black marks on your face.”

Acts of begging are scratches and wounds by which a man wounds his own face; then he who wishes to guard his face from scratches and wounds must not beg, unless that a man asks from his prince, or in an affair in which there is no remedy.

The Prophet hath cursed ten persons on account of wine: one, the first extractor of the juice of the grape for others; the second, for himself; the third, the drinker of it; the fourth, the bearer of it; the fifth, the person to whom it is brought; the sixth, the waiter; the seventh, the seller of it; the eighth, the eater of its price; the ninth, the buyer of it; the tenth, that person who hath purchased it for another.

Merchants shall be raised up liars on the day of resurrection, except he who abstains from that which is unlawful, and does not swear falsely, but speaketh true in the price of his goods.

The taker of interest and the giver of it, and the writer of its papers and the witness to it, are equal in crime.

The holder of a monopoly is a sinner and offender.

The bringers of grain to the city to sell at a cheap rate gain immense advantage by it, and he who keepeth back grain in order to sell at a high rate is cursed.

He who desireth that God should redeem him from the sorrows and difficulties of the day of resurrection must delay in calling on poor debtors, or forgive the debt in part or whole.

A martyr shall be pardoned every fault but debt.

Whosoever has a thing with which to discharge a debt, and refuseth to do it, it is right to dishonor and punish him.

A bier was brought to the Prophet, to say prayers over it. He said, “Hath he left any debts?” They said, “Yes.” He said,
“Hath he left anything to discharge them?” They said, “No.” The Prophet said, “Say ye prayers over him; I shall not.”

Give the laborer his wage before his perspiration be dry.

**Of Judgments**

The first judgment that God will pass on man at the day of resurrection will be for murder.

Whosoever throws himself from the top of a mountain and killeth himself is in hell fire forever; and whosoever killeth himself with iron, his iron shall be in his hand, and he will stab his belly with it in hell fire everlastingly.

No judge must decide between two persons whilst he is angry.

There is no judge who hath decided between men, whether just or unjust, but will come to God’s court on the day of resurrection held by the neck by an angel; and the angel will raise his head toward the heavens and wait for God’s orders; and if God orders to throw him into hell, the angel will do it from a height of forty years’ journey.

Verily there will come on a just judge at the day of resurrection such fear and horror, that he will wish, Would to God that I had not decided between two persons in a trial for a single date.

**Of Women and Slaves**

The world and all things in it are valuable, but the most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous woman.

I have not left any calamity more hurtful to man than woman.

A Muslim can not obtain (after righteousness) anything better than a well-disposed, beautiful wife: such a wife as, when ordered by her husband to do anything, obeys; and if her husband look at her, is happy; and if her husband swear by her to do a thing, she does it to make his oath true; and if he
be absent from her, she wishes him well in her own person by guarding herself from inchastity, and taketh care of his property.

Verily the best of women are those who are content with little.

Admonish your wives with kindness; for women were created out of a crooked rib of Adam, therefore if ye wish to straighten it, ye will break it; and if ye let it alone, it will be always crooked.

Every woman who dieth, and her husband is pleased with her, shall enter into paradise.

That which is lawful but disliked by God is divorce.

A woman may be married by four qualifications: one, on account of her money; another, on account of the nobility of her pedigree; another, on account of her beauty; a fourth, on account of her faith; therefore look out for religious women, but if ye do it from any other consideration, may your hands be rubbed in dirt.

A widow shall not be married until she be consulted; nor shall a virgin be married until her consent be asked, whose consent is by her silence.

When the Prophet was informed that the people of Persia had made the daughter of Chosroes their queen, he said The tribe that constitutes a woman its ruler will not find redemption.

Do not prevent your women from coming to the mosque; but their homes are better for them.

O assembly of women, give alms, although it be of your gold and silver ornaments; for verily ye are mostly of hell on the day of resurrection.

When ye return from a journey and enter your town at night,
go not to your houses, so that your wives may have time to comb their disheveled hair.

God has ordained that your brothers should be your slaves: therefore him whom God hath ordained to be the slave of his brother, his brother must give him of the food which he eateth himself, and of the clothes wherewith he clothes himself and not order him to do anything beyond his power, and if he does order such a work, he must himself assist him in doing it.

He who beats his slave without fault, or slaps him in the face, his atonement for this is freeing him.

A man who behaves ill to his slave will not enter into paradise.

Forgive thy servant seventy times a day.

**Of Government**

Government is a trust from God, and verily government will be at the day of resurrection a cause of inquiry, unless he who hath taken it be worthy of it and have acted justly and done good.

Verily a king is God’s shadow upon the earth; and every one oppressed turneth to him: then when the king doeth justice, for him are rewards and gratitude from his subjects: but, if the king oppresses, on him is his sin, and for the oppressed resignation.

That is the best of men who dislikes power. Beware! ye are all guardians; and ye will be asked about your subjects: then the leader is the guardian of the subject, and he will be asked respecting the subject; and a man is a shepherd to his own family, and will be asked how they behaved, and his conduct to them; and a wife is guardian to her husband’s house and children, and will be interrogated about them; and a slave is a shepherd to his master’s property, and will be asked about it, whether he took good care of it or not.
There is no prince who oppresses the subject and dieth, but God forbids paradise to him.

If a negro slave is appointed to rule over you, hear him, and obey him, though his head should be like a dried grape.

There is no obedience due to sinful commands, nor to any other than what is lawful.

O Prophet of God, if we have princes over us, wanting our rights, and withholding our rights from us, then what do you order us? He said, “Ye must hear them and obey their orders: it is on them to be just and good, and on you to be obedient and submissive.”

He is not strong or powerful who throws people down, but he is strong who withholds himself from anger.

When one of you getteth angry, he must sit down, and if his anger goeth away from sitting, so much the better; if not, let him lie down.

**Of the State after Death**

To whomsoever God giveth wealth, and he does not perform the charity due from it, his wealth will be made into the shape of a serpent on the day of resurrection, which shall not have any hair upon its head, and this is a sign of its poison and long life, and it hath two black spots upon its eyes, and it will be twisted round his neck like a chain on the day of resurrection; then the serpent will seize the man’s jaw-bones, and will say, “I am thy wealth, the charity for which thou didst not give, and I am thy treasure, from which thou didst not separate any alms.”

The Prophet asked us, “Did any one of you dream?” We said, “No.” He said, “But I did. Two men came to me and took hold of my hands, and carried me to a pure land: and behold, there was a man sitting and another standing: the first had an iron hook in his hand, and was hooking the other in the lip, and split it to the back of the neck, and then did the same with the other
lip. While this was doing the first healed, and the man kept on from one lip to the other. I said, 'What is this?' They said, 'Move on,' and we did so 'till we reached a man sleeping on his back, and another standing at his head with a stone in his hand, with which he was breaking the other's head, and afterward rolled the stone about and then followed it, and had not yet returned, when the man's head was healed and well. Then he broke it again, and I said, 'What is this?' They said, 'Walk on'; and we walked, 'till we came to a hole like an oven, with its top narrow and its bottom wide, and fire was burning under it, and there were naked men and women in it; and when the fire burned high the people mounted also, and when the fire subsided they subsided also. Then I said, 'What is this?' They said, 'Move on'; and we went on 'till we came to a river of blood, with a man standing in the middle of it, and another man on the bank, with stones in his hands: and when the man in the river attempted to come out, the other threw stones in his face, and made him return. And I said, 'What is this?' They said, 'Advance'; and we moved forward, 'till we arrived at a green garden, in which was a large tree, and an old man and children sitting on the roots of it, and near it was a man lighting a fire. Then I was carried upon the tree, and put into a house which was in the middle of it—a better house I have never seen: and there were old men, young men, women, and children. After that they brought me out of the house and carried me to the top of the tree, and put me into a better house, where were old men and young men. And I said to my two conductors, 'Verily ye have shown me a great many things tonight, then inform me of what I have seen.' They said, 'Yes: as to the man whom you saw with split lips, he was a liar, and will be treated in that way 'till the day of resurrection; and the person you saw getting his head broken is a man whom God taught the Qur'an, and he did not repeat it in the night,
nor practice what is in it by day, and he will be treated as you saw ’till the day of resurrection; and the people you saw in the oven are adulterers; and those you saw in the river are receivers of usury; and the old man you saw under the tree is Abraham; and the children around them are the children of men: and the person who was lighting the fire was Malik, the keeper of hell; and the first house you entered was for the common believers; and as to the second house, it is for the martyrs: and we who conducted you are one of us Gabriel, and the other Michael; then raise up your head”; and I did so, and saw above it as it were a cloud: and they said, ‘That is your dwelling.’ I said, ‘Call it here, that I may enter it;’ and they said, ‘Verily your life remaineth, but when you have completed it, you will come into your house.’

When God created paradise, he said to Gabriel, “Go and look at it”; then Gabriel went and looked at it and at the things which God had prepared for the people of it. After that Gabriel came and said, “O my Lord! I swear by thy glory no one will hear a description of paradise but will be ambitious of entering it.” After that God surrounded paradise with distress and troubles, and said, “O Gabriel, go and look at paradise.” And he went and looked, and then returned and said, “O my Lord, I fear that verily no one will enter it.” And when God created hell fire he said to Gabriel, “Go and take a look at it.” And he went and looked at it; and returned and said, “O my Lord, I swear by thy glory that no one who shall hear a description of hell fire will wish to enter it.” Then God surrounded it with sins, desires, and vices; after that he said to Gabriel, “Go and look at hell fire,” and he went and looked at it, and said, “O my Lord, I swear by thy glory I am afraid that every one will enter hell, because sins are so sweet that there is none but will incline to them.”
If ye knew what I know of the condition of the resurrection and futurity, verily ye would weep much and laugh little.

Then I said, “O messenger of God! shall we perish while the virtuous are among us?” He said, Yes, when the wickedness shall be excessive, verily there will be tribes of my sects that will consider the wearing of silks and drinking liquor lawful, and will listen to the lute: and there will be men with magnificent houses, and their milch-animals will come to them in the evening, full of milk, and a man will come begging a little and they will say, Come to-morrow. Then God will quickly send a punishment upon them, and will change others into the shape of monkeys and swine, unto the day of resurrection.

Verily among the signs of the resurrection will be the taking away of knowledge from among men; and their being in great ignorance and much wickedness and much drinking of liquor, and diminution of men, and there being many women; to such a degree that there will be fifty women to one man, and he will work for a livelihood for the women.

How can I be happy, when Israel hath put the trumpet to his mouth to blow it, leaning his ear toward the true God for orders, and hath already knit his brow, waiting in expectation of orders to blow it?


3. Dr. Sherif Abdel-Azeem—Women in Islam versus Women in the Judeo-Christian Tradition
The link below will take you to an article written by Dr. Sherif Abdel-Azeem Mohamed, an electrical engineering professor at Cairo University in Egypt. Dr. Azeem is known as a Hafiz, the name given to Muslims who have committed the entire Qu’ran to memory. Please read the following sections from the webpage: the Introduction, the Veil, and the Epilogue.

Copy and paste the following link into your web browser to access this text:

http://www.twf.org/Library/WomenICJ.html
Chapter 9: Power in the High Middle Ages 1000-1300

The High Middle Ages lasted from roughly 1000 to 1300 and saw an astounding amount of change and development. This chapter focuses specifically on the evolution of powerful institutions such as kingdoms and the Catholic Church, more specifically the papacy. In England William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy, invaded in 1066 and took the throne from Harold Godwinson, initiating a new ruling dynasty and changing the relationship between England and France for centuries to come. William established a new law code, put many of his followers in leadership positions, and fortified England with castles to protect his interests. He also brought the systems of vassalage and manorialism to England. In later centuries all of the gains made by English kings would be lost by King John, who was forced to sign the Magna Carta, or Great Charter, a document which would limit the power of English kings and demonstrate the limits of royal power. King Edward I would formalize the institution known as Parliament as a means of securing funding for royal projects without risking full on rebellion, and the monarchy and Parliament would co-
rule England until the modern era. France experienced developments similar to those in England, as kings such as Philip II Augustus would use armed conquest to capture territory and increase their own power in relation to French nobles. New offices such as the royal council and a finance office would develop under the reign of Philip IV, and France would become one of the predominant players on the European stage. In Spain the High Middle Ages saw the long Reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula from the Muslims, a task finally completed in 1492. New Christian kingdoms such as Castile and Aragon would emerge, and access to Muslim libraries and scholarship would reintroduce ancient thinkers to Christian Europe. The Church meanwhile was recovering from a period of decline due to the lax discipline of monks and bishops and repeated assaults by Viking raiders. During this time powerful popes began to assert not just the spiritual power of the Church, but also the power popes had over secular rulers such as kings. Gregory VII would bring Henry IV, King of Germany, to heel in the Investiture Controversy, while Innocent III would use the spiritual weapons at his disposal to demonstrate his firm belief that the Church was and would always be more powerful than the State. The Church also enacted a series of internal reforms that strengthened it, including the creation of an efficient hierarchy known as the papal monarchy and the founding of new religious orders such as the Cistercians, Dominicans, and Franciscans. Indeed, so powerful was the Church at this time that it embarked on a major project to rescue the Holy Land from the hands of the Muslims, and so began the Crusades in the late 11th century.

The documents in this chapter focus on the growth of England and the Church and begin with the *Domesday Book*, a work commissioned by William the Conqueror two decades
after he had taken England. The book is a statistical record of people and possessions throughout the kingdom. Next up is Henry II of England and the *Constitutions of Clarendon*, a significant document in the history of church/state relations. Here Henry is attempting to assert power over church operations in his kingdom. The third document is the aforementioned *Magna Carta* from the reign of King John. The excerpts included here illustrate how the Great Charter limited the power of the king was well as how the provisions of the document would be enforced. Lastly for the documents concerning England are two from King Edward I, one being the letters the king sent out summoning certain figures to the first official meeting of Parliament in 1295, the other being an attempt by the king to increase his power and revenue by taking control of certain land transactions, specifically those in which the church would gain lands in perpetuity. Moving on to the Catholic Church the first excerpts come from the Investiture Controversy between Gregory VII and Henry IV. Important here are the powers the pope is claiming for his office and his reaction to Henry IV’s defiance. The next document contains excerpts from various letters written by Innocent III, perhaps the most powerful pope of the Middle Ages. These letters discuss Innocent’s views on church/state relations, heresy, Europe’s Jewish population, and his interactions with various kings such as King John of England and Philip II of France. Next up are two documents from the Dominican monk Bernard Gui, who also happened to be a church inquisitor. The first excerpt from Gui concerns the Albigensians, also known as the Cathars, who were considered heretics in the eyes of the Catholic Church because they denied the truth behind certain elements of church dogma. The second excerpt is a hypothetical interrogation of a supposed heretic which Gui uses to
demonstrate how to question heretics and how they may try to defend themselves. The final pair of excerpts concern the Crusades. First is from Robert the Monk, who is transcribing his memory of the speech given by Pope Urban II in 1095 urging the knights and lords of Europe to travel to the Holy Land and free it from Muslim control. The final document in this chapter is an excerpt from a chronicle of Richard I of England’s life, specifically the deal he made with the Muslim general Saladin regarding the city of Jerusalem to end the Third Crusade.

1. Instructions for Collection of the Domesday Returns

King William I of England, known to history as William the Conqueror, was a Norman duke who invaded and took control of England in 1066. As king William made a series of reforms that would prove crucial to the future development of the kingdom, including the compilation of the Domesday (pronounced doomsday) Book, a statistical record of virtually everything in the realm. Though Charlemagne had attempted something similar during his reign, the Domesday Book is the most comprehensive survey we have from the Middle Ages. The excerpt below contains sections on the general instructions the surveyors were to follow and examples of the information they recorded during their travels.

Here is subscribed the inquisition of lands as the barons of the king have made inquiry into them; that is to say by the oath of the sheriff of the shire, and of all the barons and their Frenchmen, and the whole hundred, the priests, reeves, and six villains of each manor; then, what the manor is called, who held it in the time of king Edward, who holds now; how many hides, how many plows in demesne, how many belonging to the men, how many villains, how many cottars, how many serfs, how many free-men, how many socmen, how much woods, how much meadow, how many pastures, how many mills, how many fish-ponds, how much has been added or taken away, how
much it was worth altogether at that time, and how much now, how much each free man or socman had or has. All this threefold, that is to say in the time of king Edward, and when king William gave it, and as it is now; and whether more can be had than is had.

The land of Robert Malet.

Fredrebruge Hundred and half. Glorestorp. Godwin, a freeman, held it. Two carucates of land in the time of king Edward. Then and afterwards 8 villains; now 3. Then and afterwards 3 bordare; now 5. At all times 3 serfs, and 30 acres of meadow. At all times 2 carucates in demesne. Then half a carucate of the men, and now. Woods for 8 swine, and 2 mills Here are located 13 socmen, of 40 acres of land. When it was received there were 2 r., 1 now 1. At all times 8 swine, then 20 sheep, and it is worth 60 shillings.

There is situated there, in addition, one berewick, as the manor of Heuseda. In the time of king Edward, 1 carucate of land; then and afterwards 7 villains, now 5. At all times 12 bordars, and 3 serfs, and 40 acres of meadow; 1 mill. Woods for 16 swine and 1 salt pond and a half. Then 1 r., and now and 14 swine, 30 sheep, and 50 goats. In this berewick are located 3 socmen, of 10 acres of land, and it is worth 30 shilling. The two manors have 2 leagues in length and 4 firlongs in breadth. Whosoever is tenant there, returns 12 pence of the twenty shillings of geld.

Scerpham Hundred Culverstestun Edric held it in the time of king Edward. Two carucates of land. At all times there were 4 villains, and 1 bordar. and 4 serfs; 5 acres of meadow and two carucates in the demesne. Then and afterwards 1 carucate, now one-half. At all times 1 mill and one fish-pond. Here is located 1 socmen of the king, of 40 acres of land; which his predecessors held only as commended and he claims his land from the gift
of the king. Then and afterwards there was one carucate, now 2 bovates, and 2 acres of meadow. At all times two r., and 4 geese; then 300 sheep, now 300 less 12; then 16 swine now 3. Then and afterwards it was worth 60 shillings, now 80; and there could be one plow. Walter of Caen holds it from Robert.

Heinstede Hundred. In Sasilingaham Edric, the predecessor of Robert Malet, held 2 sokes and a half, of 66 acres of land, now Walter holds them. Then 9 bordare, now 13. At all times 3 carucates and a half among all, and 3 acres of meadow, and the eighth part of a mill; and under these 1 soke of 6 acres of land. At all times half a carucate. Then it was worth 30 shillings, now it returns 50 shillings.

In Scotessa Ulcetel was tenant, a free man commended to Edric, in the time of king Edward of 30 acres of land. At that time 1 bordar, afterward and now 2. Then half a carucate, none afterward nor now. It was at all times worth 5 shillings and 4 pence; the same.


https://archive.org/stream/translationsrepro3univiala#page/n33

2. Henry II-Constitutions of Clarendon

Another influential king, Henry II ruled England from 1154-1189. Not only was he king of England, but due to French ancestry he also controlled territory in that kingdom as well. During the early years of his reign he expanded his control into Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and France, creating what would become known as the Angevin Empire. Henry also sought to extend royal control over the church, which brought him into conflict with Thomas Becket, the archbishop of Canterbury and most powerful church figure in England. The
document presented here is Henry’s attempt to establish control over the way the English church operated.

From the year of our Lord’s incarnation 1164, the fourth year of the papacy of Alexander, the tenth of the most illustrious Henry, king of the English, in the presence of the same king, was made this remembrance or recognition of a certain part of the customs, liberties, and dignities of his predecessors, that is to say of King Henry his grandfather and others, which ought to be observed and held in the kingdom. And because of discontents and discords which had arisen between the clergy and the lord king’s justices and the barons of the kingdom concerning the customs and dignities, this recognition has been made before the archbishops and bishops and clergy, and the earls and barons and great men of the kingdom. And these same customs declared by the archbishops, bishops, earls, and barons, and by the nobler and older men of the kingdom, Thomas archbishop of Canterbury and Roger archbishop of York and Gilbert bishop of London and Henry bishop of Winchester and Nigel bishop of Ely and William bishop of Norwich and Robert bishop of Lincoln and Hilary bishop of Chichester and Jocelin bishop of Salisbury and Richard bishop of Chester and Bartholomew bishop of Exeter and Robert bishop of Hereford and David bishop of St. David’s and Roger elect of Worcester conceded and on the word of truth firmly promised by word of mouth should be held and observed for the lord king and his heirs in good faith and without subtlety, these being present: Robert earl of Leicester, Reginald earl of Cornwall, Conan earl of Brittany, John earl of Eu, Roger earl of Clare, earl Geoffrey de Mandeville, Hugh earl of Chester, William earl of Arundel, earl Patrick, William earl of Ferrers, Richard de Luci, Reginald de Mowbray, Simon de Beauchamp, Humphrey de Bohun, Matthew de Hereford, Walter de
Mayenne, Manser Biset the steard, William Malet, William deCourcy, Robert de Dunstaville, Jocelin de Baillol, William de Lanvallei, William de Caisnet, Geoffrey de Vere, William de Hastings, Hugh de Moreville, Alan de Neville, Simon Fitz Peter, William Maudit the chamberlain, John Maudit, John Marshall, Peter de Mara, and many other great men and nobles of the kingdom both clergy and laymen.

A certain part of the customs and dignities which were recognized is contained in the present writing. Of which part these are the articles:

1. If a controversy arise between laymen, or between laymen and clerks, or between clerks concerning patronage and presentation of churches, it shall be treated or concluded in the court of the lord king.

2. Churches of the lord king’s fee cannot be permanently bestowed without his consent and grant.

3. Clerks charged and accused of any matter, summoned by the king’s justice, shall come into his court to answer there to whatever it shall seem to the king’s court should be answered there; and in the church court to what it seems should be answered there; however the king’s justice shall send into the court of holy Church for the purpose of seeing how the matter shall be treated there. And if the clerk be convicted or confess, the church ought not to protect him further.

4. It is not permitted the archbishops, bishops, and priests of the kingdom to leave the kingdom without the lord king’s permission. And if they do leave they are to give security, if the lord king please, that they will seek no evil or damage to king or kingdom in going, in making their stay, or in returning.

5. Excommunicate persons ought not to give security for an indefinite time, or give an oath, but only security and pledge
for submitting to the judgment of the church in order that they may be absolved.

6. Laymen ought not to be accused save by dependable and lawful accusers and witnesses in the presence of the bishop, yet so that the archdeacon lose no this right or anything which he ought to have thence. And if there should be those who are deemed culpable, but whom no one wishes or dares to accuse, the sheriff, upon the bishop’s request, shall cause twelve lawful men of the neighborhood or the vill to take oath before the bishop that they will show the truth of the matter according to their conscience.

7. No one who holds of the king in chief or any of the officials of his demesne is to be excommunicated or his lands placed under interdict unless the lord king, if he be in the land, or his justiciar, if he be outside the kingdom, first gives his consent, that he may do for him what is right: yet so that what pertains to the royal court be concluded there, and what looks to the church court be sent thither to be concluded there.

8. As to appeals which may arise, they should pass from the archdeacon to the bishop, and from the bishop to the archbishop. And if the archbishop fail in furnishing justice, the matter should come to the lord king at the last, that at his command the litigation be concluded in the archbishop’s court; and so because it should not pass further without the lord king’s consent.

9. If litigation arise between a clerk concerning any holding which the clerk would bring to charitable tenure but the layman to lay fee, it shall be determined on the decision of the king’s chief justice by the recognition of twelve lawful men in the presence of the king’s justice himself whether the holding pertain to charitable tenure or to lay fee. And if the recognition declare it to be charitable tenure, it shall be litigated in the
church court, but if lay fee, unless both plead under the same bishop or baron, the litigation shall be in the royal court. But if both plead concerning that fief under the same bishop or baron, it shall be litigated in his court; yet so that he who was first seised lose not his seisin on account of the recognition that was made, until the matter be determined by the plea.

10. If anyone who is of a city, castle, borough, or demesne manor of the king shall be cited by archdeacon or bishop for any offense for which he ought to be held answerable to them and despite their summonses he refuse to do what is right, it is fully permissible to place him under interdict, but he ought not to be excommunicated before the king’s chief official of that vill shall agree, in order that he may authoritatively constrain him to come to his trial. But if the king’s official fail in this, he himself shall be in the lord king’s mercy; and then the bishop shall be able to coerce the accused man by ecclesiastical authority.

11. Archbishops, bishops, and all ecclesiastics of the kingdom who hold of the king in chief have their possessions of the lord king as barony and answer for them to the king’s justices and ministers and follow and do all royal rights and customs; and they ought, just like other barons, to be present at the judgments of the lord king’s court along with the barons, until it come in judgment to loss of limbs or death.

12. When an archbishopric or bishopric, or an abbey or priory of the king’s demesne shall be vacant, it ought to be in his hands, and he shall assume its revenues and expenses as pertaining to his demesne. And when the time comes to provide for the church, the lord king should notify the more important clergy of the church, and the election should be held in the lord king’s own chapel with the assent of the lord king and on the advice of the clergy of the realm whom he has summoned for the purpose. And there, before he be consecrated, let the elect
perform homage and fealty to the lord king as his liege lord for life, limbs, and earthly honor, saving his order.

13. If any of the great men of the kingdom should forcibly prevent archbishop, bishop, or archdeacon from administering justice in which he or his men were concerned, then the lord king ought to bring such an one to justice. And if it should happen that any one deforce the lord king of his right, archbishops, bishops, and archdeacons ought to constrain him to make satisfaction to the lord king.

14. Chattels which have been forfeited to the king are not to be held in churches or cemeteries against the king's justice, because they belong to the king whether they be found inside churches or outside.

15. Pleas concerning debts, which are owed on the basis of an oath or in connection with which no oath has been taken, are in the king's justice.

16. Sons of villeins should not be ordained without the consent of the lord on whose land it is ascertained they were born.

The declaration of the above-mentioned royal customs and dignities has been made by the archbishops, bishops, earls, barons, and the nobler and older men of the kingdom, at Clarendon on the fourth day before the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, lord Henry being present there with the lord king his father. There are, indeed, many other great customs and dignities of holy mother church and of the lord king and barons of the kingdom, which are not included in this writing, but which are to be preserved to holy church and to the lord king and his heirs and the barons of the kingdom, and are to be kept inviolate forever.

Albert Beebe White and Wallace Notestein, eds., *Source
3. The Magna Carta

One of the critical events in the development of English legal and governmental history occurred during the reign of King John (1199-1216). John was an ineffective king who began losing territory in France and subsequently raising revenues in England to try and reclaim them, but failed to do so. After a major invasion in 1214 failed to produce any result, many of John’s top nobles, called barons, in England rebelled against him, leading to the signing of the Magna Carta, which severely limited John’s powers as king and enhanced the power of the noble class. The selection below contains some of Magna Carta’s provisions.

John, by the grace of God, king of England, lord of Ireland, duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, count of Anjou, to the archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, barons, justiciars, foresters, sheriffs, reeves, servants, and all bailiffs and his faithful people greeting. Know that by the inspiration of God and for the good of our soul and those of all our predecessors and of our heirs, to the honor of God and the exaltation of holy church, and the improvement of our kingdom, by the advice of our venerable fathers Stephen, archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England and cardinal of the holy Roman church, Henry, archbishop of Dublin, William of London, Peter of Winchester, Jocelyn of Bath and Glastonbury, Hugh of Lincoln, Walter of Worcester, William of Coventry, and Benedict of Rochester, bishops; of Master Pandulf, sub-deacon and member of the household of the lord Pope, of Brother Aymeric, master of the Knights of the Temple in England; and of the noblemen William Marshall, earl of Pembroke, William, earl of Salisbury,

2. If any of our earls or barons, or others holding from us in chief by military service shall have died, and when he has died his heir shall be of full age and owe relief, he shall have his inheritance by the ancient relief; that is to say, the heir or heirs of an earl for the whole barony of an earl a hundred pounds; the heir or heirs of a baron for a whole barony a hundred pounds; the heir or heirs of a knight for a whole knight’s fee a hundred shillings at most; and who owes less let him give less according to the ancient custom of fiefs.

3. If moreover the heir of any one of such shall be under age, and shall be in wardship, when he comes of age he shall have his inheritance without relief and without a fine.

7. A widow, after the death of her husband, shall have her marriage portion and her inheritance immediately and without obstruction, nor shall she give anything for her dowry or for her marriage portion, or for her inheritance, which inheritance her husband and she held on the day of the death of her husband; and she may remain in the house of her husband for forty days after his death, within which time her dowry shall be assigned to her.

8. No widow shall be compelled to marry so long as she prefers to live without a husband, provided she gives security that she will not marry without our consent, if she holds from us, or without the consent of her lord from whom she holds, if she holds from another.

12. No scutage or aid shall be imposed in our kingdom except
by the common council of our kingdom, except for the
ransoming of our body, for the making of our oldest son a
knight, and for once marrying our oldest daughter, and for
these purposes it shall be only a reasonable aid; in the same way
it shall be done concerning the aids of the city of London.

14. And for holding a common council of the kingdom
concerning the assessment of an aid otherwise than in the
three cases mentioned above, or concerning the assessment
of a scutage, we shall cause to be summoned the archbishops,
bishops, abbots, earls, and greater barons by our letters under
seal; and besides we shall cause to be summoned generally, by
our sheriffs and bailiffs all those who hold from us in chief, for
a certain day, that is at the end of forty days at least, and for
a certain place; and in all the letters of that summons, we will
express the cause of the summons, and when the summons has
thus been given the business shall proceed on the appointed
day, on the advice of those who shall be present, even if not all
of those who were summoned have come.

20. A free man shall not be fined for a small offence, except
in proportion to the measure of the offence; and for a great
offence he shall be fined in proportion to the magnitude of the
offence, saving his freehold; and a merchant in the same way,
saving his merchandise; and the villain shall be fined in the
same way, saving his wainage, if he shall be at our mercy; and
none of the above fines shall be imposed except by the oaths of
honest men of the neighborhood.

21. Earls and barons shall be fined only by their peers, and
only in proportion to their offence.

22. A clergyman shall be fined, like those before mentioned,
only in proportion to his lay holding, and not according to the
extent of his ecclesiastical benefice.
23. No manor or man shall be compelled to make bridges over the rivers except those which ought to do it of old and rightfully.

24. No sheriff, constable, coroners, or other bailiffs of ours shall hold pleas of our crown.

25. All counties, hundreds, wapentakes, and tri things shall be at the ancient rents and without any increase, excepting our demesne manors.

28. No constable or other bailiff of ours shall take anyone’s grain or other chattels, without immediately paying for them in money, unless he is able to obtain a postponement at the good will of the seller.

29. No constable shall require any knight to give money in place of his ward of a castle if he is willing to furnish that ward in his own person or through another honest man, if he himself is not able to do it for a reasonable cause; and if we shall lead or send him into the army he shall be free from ward in proportion to the amount of time by which he has been in the army through us.

30. No sheriff or bailiff of ours or anyone else shall take horses or wagons of any free man for carrying purposes except on the permission of that free man.

31. Neither we nor our bailiffs will take the wood of another man for castles, or for anything else which we are doing, except by the permission of him to whom the wood belongs.

32. We will not hold the lands of those convicted of a felony for more than a year and a day, after which the lands shall be returned to the lords of the fiefs.

61. Since, moreover, for the sake of God, and for the improvement of our kingdom, and for the better quieting of the hostility sprung up lately between us and our barons, we have made all these concessions; wishing them to enjoy these in a complete and firm stability forever, we make and concede
to them the security described below; that is to say, that they shall elect twenty-five barons of the kingdom, whom they will, who ought with all their power to observe, hold, and cause to be observed, the peace and liberties which we have conceded to them, and by this our present charter confirmed to them; in this manner, that if we or our justiciar, or our bailiffs, or any of our servants shall have done wrong in any way toward any one, or shall have transgressed any of the articles of peace or security; and the wrong shall have been shown to four barons of the aforesaid twenty-five barons, let those four barons come to us or to our justiciar, if we are out of the kingdom, laying before us the transgression, and let them ask that we cause that transgression to be corrected without delay. And if we shall not have corrected the transgression or, if we shall be out of the kingdom, if our justiciar shall not have corrected it within a period of forty days, counting from the time in which it has been shown to us or to our justiciar, if we are out of the kingdom; the aforesaid four barons shall refer the matter to the remainder of the twenty-five barons, and let these twenty-five barons with the whole community of the country distress and injure us in every way they can; that is to say by the seizure of our castles, lands, possessions, and in such other ways as they can until it shall have been corrected according to their judgment, saving our person and that of our queen, and those of our children; and when the correction has been made, let them devote themselves to us as they did before. And let whoever in the country wishes take an oath that in all the above-mentioned measures he will obey the orders of the aforesaid twenty-five barons, and that he will injure us as far as he is able with them, and we give permission to swear publicly and freely to each one who wishes to swear, and no one will we ever forbid to swear. All those, moreover, in the country who of
themselves and their own will are unwilling to take an oath to the twenty-five barons as to distressing and injuring us along with them, we will compel to take the oath by our mandate, as before said. And if any one of the twenty-five barons shall have died or departed from the land or shall in any other way be prevented from taking the above mentioned action, let the remainder of the aforesaid twenty-five barons choose another in his place, according to their judgment, who shall take an oath in the same way as the others. In all those things, moreover, which are committed to those five and twenty barons to carry out, if perhaps the twenty-five are present, and some disagreement arises among them about something, or if any of them when they have been summoned are not willing or are not able to be present, let that be considered valid and firm which the greater part of those who are present arrange or command, just as if the whole twenty-five had agreed in this; and let the aforesaid twenty-five swear that they will observe faithfully all the things which are said above, and with all their ability cause them to be observed. And we will obtain nothing from any one, either by ourselves or by another by which any of these concessions and liberties shall be revoked or diminished; and if any such thing shall have been obtained, let it be invalid and void, and we will never use it by ourselves or by another.

https://archive.org/stream/translationsrepr01univiala#page/6/mode/2up

4. Edward I—Three Summons to Parliament
Edward I ruled England from 1272 to 1307 and was one of England’s most accomplished kings. Reforms were made to the law, Wales was
conquered and fortified, and victories were had over the Scots. In the realm of politics, Edward is credited with the first organized meeting of Parliament, a representative body of different elements of English society designed to give the king the finances he needed in return for certain concessions requested. The excerpts below are from the summonses Edward sent out calling for certain members of society to meet in the city of Westminster.

**Summons of a Bishop to Parliament (1295)**

The King to the venerable father in Christ Robert, by the same grace archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England, greeting. As a most just law, established by the careful providence of sacred princes, exhorts and decrees that what affects all, by all should be approved, so also, very evidently should common danger be met by means provided in common. You know sufficiently well, and it is now, as we believe, divulged through all regions of the world, how the king of France fraudulently and craftily deprives us of our land of Gascony, by withholding it unjustly from us. Now, however, not satisfied with the before-mentioned fraud and injustice, having gathered together for the conquest of our kingdom a very great fleet, and an abounding multitude of warriors, with which he has made a hostile attack on our kingdom and the inhabitants of the same kingdom, he now proposes to destroy the English language altogether from the earth, if his power should correspond to the detestable proposition of the contemplated injustice, which God forbid. Because, therefore, darts seen beforehand do less injury, and your interest especially, as that of the rest of the citizens of the same realm, is concerned in this affair, we command you, strictly enjoining you in the fidelity and love in which you are bound to us, that on the Lord’s day next after the feast of St. Martin, in the approaching winter, you be present in person at Westminster; citing beforehand the
dean and chapter of your church, the archdeacons and all the clergy of your diocese, causing the same dean and archdeacons in their own persons, and the said chapter by one suitable proctor, and the said clergy by two, to be present along with you, having full and sufficient power from the same chapter and clergy, to consider, ordain and provide, along with us and with the rest of the prelates and principal men and other inhabitants of our kingdom, how the dangers and threatened evils of this kind are to be met. Witness the king at Wangham, the thirtieth day of September.

**Summons of a Baron to Parliament (1295)**

The king to his beloved and faithful relative, Edmund, Earl of Cornwall, greeting. Because we wish to have a consultation and meeting with you and with the rest of the principal men of our kingdom, as to provision for remedies against the dangers which in these days are threatening our whole kingdom; we command you, strictly enjoining you in the fidelity and love in which you are bound to us, that on the Lord’s day next after the feast of St. Martin, in the approaching winter, you be present in person at Westminster, for considering, ordaining and doing along with us and with the prelates, and the rest of the principal men and other inhabitants of our kingdom, as may be necessary for meeting dangers of this kind.

Witness the king at Canterbury, the first of October.

**Summons of Representatives of Shires and Towns to Parliament (1295)**

The king to the sheriff of Northamptonshire. Since we intend to have a consultation and meeting with the earls, barons and other principal men of our kingdom with regard to providing remedies against the dangers which are in these days threatening the same kingdom; and on that account have commanded them to be with us on the Lord’s day next after the
feast of St. Martin in the approaching winter, at Westminster, to consider, ordain, and do as may be necessary for the avoidance of these dangers; we strictly require you to cause two knights from the aforesaid county, two citizens from each city in the same county, and two burgesses from each borough, of those who are especially discreet and capable of laboring, to be elected without delay, and to cause them to come to us at the aforesaid said time and place.

Moreover, the said knights are to have full and sufficient power for themselves and for the community of the aforesaid county, and the said citizens and burgesses for themselves and the communities of the aforesaid cities and boroughs separately, then and there for doing what shall then be ordained according to the common counsel in the premises; so that the aforesaid business shall not remain unfinished in any way for defect of this power. And you shall have there the names of the knights, citizens and burgesses and this writ.

Witness the king at Canterbury on the third day of October.

https://archive.org/stream/translationsrepro1univiala#page/32

5. Edward I-Statute of Mortmain

The Statutes of Mortmain were a pair of documents issued by Edward I in 1279 and 1290. The first document is presented below. The documents are Edward’s attempt to increase his revenues and reassert control over the church.

The king to his Justices of the Bench, greeting. Where as of late it was provided that religious men should not enter into the fees of any without the will and licence of the lords in chief of
whom these fees are held immediately; and such religious men have, notwithstanding, later entered as well into their own fees as into those of others, appropriated, them to themselves, and buying them, and sometimes receiving them from the gift of others, whereby the services which are due of such fees, and which at the beginning, were provided for the defence of the realm, are unduly withdrawn, and the lords in chief do lose their escheats of the same; we, therefore, to the profit of our realm, wishing to provide a fit remedy in this matter, by advice of our prelates, counts and other subjects of our realm who are of our council, have provided, established, and ordained, that no person, religious or other, whatsoever presume to buy or sell any lands or tenements, or under colour of gift or lease, or of any other term or title whatever to receive them from any one, or in any other craft or by wile to appropriate them to himself, whereby such lands and tenements may come into mortmain under pain of forfeiture of the same. We have provided also that if any person, religious or other, do presume either by craft or wile to offend against this statute it shall be lawful for us and for other immediate lords in chief of the fee so alienated, to enter it within a year from the time of such alienation and to hold it in fee as an inheritance. And if the immediate lord in chief shall be negligent and be not willing to enter into such fee within the year, then it shall be lawful for the next mediate lord in chief, within the half year following, to enter that fee and to hold it, as has been said; and thus each mediate lord may do if the next lord be negligent in entering such fee as as been said. And if all such chief lords of such fee, who shall be of full age, and within the four seas and out of prison, shall be for one year negligent or remiss in this matter, we, straightway after the year is completed from the time when such purchases, gifts, or appropriations of another kind happen to have been made,
shall take such lands and tenements into our hand, and shall enfief others therein by certain services to be rendered thence to us for the defence of our kingdom; saving to the lords in chief of the same fees their weds, escheats and other things which pertain to them, and the services therefrom due and accustomed. And therefore we command you to cause the aforesaid statute to be read before you, and from henceforth firmly kept and observed. Witness myself at Westminster, the 15th day of November, the 7th year of our reign.

Ernest P. Henderson, ed. and trans., Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages (London: George Bell and Sons, 1896), 148-149. Located on the Internet Archive:
https://archive.org/stream/selecthistorica02hendgoog#page/n167

6. Documents of the Investiture Controversy-Decree Forbidding Lay Investitures

In the late 11th century Pope Gregory VII and Henry IV, King of the Germans became mired in a dispute over who could appoint religious officials. The Investiture Controversy, as it became known, was also a power struggle between the Catholic Church and secular kings. It would become a seminal moment for the Catholic Church, as the controversy would mark the beginning of the church’s rise to prominence in Europe during the Middle Ages.

Decree of Pope Gregory VII March 7th, 1080:

Following the statutes of the holy fathers, as, in the former councils which by the mercy of God we have held, we decreed concerning the ordering of ecclesiastical dignities, so also now we decree and confirm: that, if any one henceforth shall receive a bishopric or abbey from the hand of any lay person, he shall by no means be considered as among the number of the bishops or abbots; nor shall any hearing be granted him as bishop or abbot. Moreover we further deny to him the favor of St. Peter and the
entry of the church, until, coming to his senses, he shall desert
the place that he has taken by the crime of ambition as well
as by that of disobedience—which is the sin of idolatry. In like
manner also we decree concerning the inferior ecclesiastical
dignities.

Likewise if any emperor, king, duke, margrave, count, or any
one at all of the secular powers or persons, shall presume to
perform the investiture with bishoprics or with any
ecclesiastical dignity,—he shall know that he is bound by the
bonds of the same condemnation. And, moreover, unless he
come to his senses and relinquish to the church her own
prerogative, he shall feel, in this present life, the divine
displeasure as well with regard to his body as to his other
belongings: in order that, at the coming of the Lord, his soul
may be saved.

The Dictate of the Pope.

That the Roman church was founded by God alone,
That the Roman pontiff alone can with right be called
universal.

That he alone can depose or reinstate bishops.

That, in a council, his legate, even if a lower grade, is above all
bishops, and can pass sentence of deposition against them.

That the pope may depose the absent.

That, among other things, we ought not to remain in the
same house with those excommunicated by him.

That for him alone is it lawful, according to the needs of
the time, to make new laws, to assemble together new
congregations, to make an abbey of a canonry; and, on the other
hand, to divide a rich bishopric and unite the poor ones.

That he alone may use the imperial insignia.

That of the pope alone all princes shall kiss the feet.

That his name alone shall be spoken in the churches.
That this is the only name in the world.
That it may be permitted to him to depose emperors.
That he may be permitted to transfer bishops if need be.
That he has power to ordain a clerk of any church he may wish.

That he who is ordained by him many preside over another church, but may not hold a subordinate position; and that such a one may not receive a higher grade from any bishop.

That no synod shall be called a general one without his order.
That no chapter and no book shall be considered canonical without his authority.

That a sentence passed by him may be retracted by no one; and that he himself, alone of all, may retract it.

That he himself may be judged by no one.

That no one shall dare to condemn one who appeals to the apostolic chair.

That to the latter should be referred the more important cases of every church.

That the Roman church has never erred; nor will it err to all eternity, the Scripture bearing witness.

That the Roman pontiff, if he have been canonically ordained, is undoubtedly made a saint by the merits of St. Peter; St. Ennodius, bishop of Pavia, bearing witness, and many holy fathers agreeing with him. As is contained in the decrees of St. Symmachus the pope.

That, by his command and consent, it may be lawful for subordinates to bring accusations.

That he may depose and reinstate bishops without assembling a synod.

That he who is not at peace with the Roman church shall not be considered catholic.

That he may absolve subjects from their fealty to wicked.
Henry IV.’s Answer to Gregory VII., Jan. 24, 1076.

Henry, king not through usurpation but through the holy ordination of God, to Hildebrand, at present not pope but false monk. Such greeting as this hast thou merited through thy disturbances, inasmuch as there is no grade in the church which thou hast omitted to make a partaker not of honour but of confusion, not of benediction but of malediction. For, to mention few and especial cases out of many, not only hast thou not feared to lay hands upon the rulers of the holy church, the anointed of the Lord—the archbishops, namely, bishops and priests—but thou hast trodden them under foot like slaves ignorant of what their master is doing. Thou hast won favour from the common herd by crushing them; thou hast looked upon all of them as knowing nothing, upon thy sole self, moreover, as knowing all things. This knowledge, however, thou hast used not for edification but for destruction; so that with reason we believe that St. Gregory, whose name thou hast usurped for thyself, was prophesying concerning thee when he said: “The pride of him who is in power increases the more, the greater the number of those subject to him; and he thinks that he himself can do more than all.” And we, indeed, have endured all this, being eager to guard the honour of the apostolic see; thou, however, hast understood our humility to be fear, and hast not, accordingly, shunned to rise up against the royal power conferred upon us by God, daring to threaten to divest us of it. As if we had received our kingdom from thee! As if the kingdom and the empire were in thine and not in God’s hand! And this although our Lord Jesus Christ did call us to the kingdom, did not, however, call thee to the priesthood. For thou hast ascended by the following steps. By wiles, namely, which the profession of monk abhors, thou hast achieved money; by money, favour; by the sword, the throne of peace. And from
the throne of peace thou hast disturbed peace, inasmuch as thou hast armed subjects against those in authority over them; inasmuch as thou, who wert not called, hast taught that our bishops called of God are to be despised; inasmuch as thou hast usurped for laymen the ministry over their priests, allowing them to depose or condemn those whom they themselves had received as teachers from the hand of God through the laying on of hands of the bishops. On me also who, although unworthy to be among the anointed, have nevertheless been anointed to the kingdom, thou hast lain thy hand; me who—as the tradition of the holy Fathers teaches, declaring that I am not to be deposed for any crime unless; which God forbid, I should have strayed from the faith—am subject to the judgment oyl God alone. For the wisdom of the holy fathers committed even Julian the apostate not to themselves, but to God alone, to be judged and to be deposed. For himself the “true pope, Peter, also exclaims: “Fear God, honour the king.” But thou who dost not fear God, dost dishonour in me his appointed one. Wherefore St. Paul, when lie has not spared an angel of Heaven if he shall have preached otherwise, has not excepted thee also who dost teach otherwise upon earth. For he says: “If any one, either I or an angel from Heaven, should preach a gospel other than that which has been preached to you, he shall be damned. Thou, therefore, damned by this curse and by the judgment of all our bishops and by our own, descend and relinquish the apostolic chair which thou hast usurped. Let another ascend the throne of St. Peter, who shall not practise violence under the cloak of religion, but shall teach the sound doctrine of St. Peter. I Henry, king by the grace of God, do say unto thee, together with all our bishops: Descend, descend, to be damned throughout the ages.
First Deposition and Banning of Henry IV by Gregory VII.,
February 22, 1076.

O St. Peter, chief of the apostles, incline to us, I beg, thy holy ears, and hear me thy servant whom thou hast nourished from infancy, and whom, until this day, thou hast freed from the hand of the wicked, who have hated and do hate me for my faithfulness to thee. Thou, and my mistress the mother of God, and thy brother St. Paul are witnesses for me among all the saints that thy holy Roman church drew me to its helm against my will; that I had no thought of ascending thy chair through force, and that I would rather have ended my life as a pilgrim than, by secular means, to have seized thy throne for the sake of earthly glory. And therefore I believe it to be through thy grace and not through my own deeds that it has pleased and does please thee that the Christian people, who have been especially committed to thee, should obey me. And especially to me, as thy representative and by thy favour, has the power been granted by God of binding and loosing in Heaven and on earth. On the strength of this belief therefore, for the honour and security of thy church, in the name of Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, I withdraw, through thy power and authority, from Henry the king, son of Henry the emperor, who has risen against thy church with unheard of insolence, the rule over the whole kingdom of the Germans and over Italy. And I absolve all Christians from the bonds of the oath which they have made or shall make to him; and I forbid anyone to serve him as king. For it is fitting that he who strives to lessen the honour of thy church should himself lose the honour which belongs to him. And since he has scorned to obey as a Christian, and has not returned to God whom he had deserted – holding intercourse with the excommunicated; practising manifold iniquities; spurning my commands which, as thou dost bear witness, I
issued to him for his own salvation; separating himself from thy church and striving to rend it – I bind him in thy stead with the chain of the anathema. And, leaning on thee, I so bind him that the people may know and have proof that thou art Peter, and above thy rock the Son of the living God hath built His church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

Ernest F. Henderson, ed. and trans., Select Historical Document of the Middle Ages (London: George Bell and Sons, 1907), 365-367, 372-373, 376-377. Located on the Internet Archive:
https://archive.org/stream/cu31924014186526#page/n383/mode/2up

7. Innocent III-Letters on Papal Policies

The height of papal power during the Middle Ages was during the time of Pope Innocent III (r. 1198-1216). Innocent approved the creation of new monastic orders such as the Franciscans, launched a series of crusades within and outside of Europe, and asserted his authority over secular rulers. The excerpts below come from a series of letters Innocent composed during his reign, explaining his positions on various subjects from the relationship between the church and state to the crusades to the Jewish populations of Europe.

Copy and paste the link below into your web browser to access this document:
https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/innIII-policies.asp

8. Bernard Gui-On the Albigensians

Bernard Gui was for a time a French bishop and a member of the Dominican monastic order. He took part in the medieval Inquisition against the Albigensians, also known as the Cathars, in France. The Albigensians were considered heretics in the eyes of the Catholic Church for maintaining beliefs that were different from official doctrine. In the excerpt below Gui discusses how the Albigensians viewed themselves and summarizes some of the beliefs they held which the church felt were problematic.
It would take too long to describe in detail the manner in which these same Manichaean heretics preach and teach their followers, but it must be briefly considered here.

In the first place, they usually say of themselves that they are good Christians, who do not swear, or lie, or speak evil of others; that they do not kill any man or animal, nor anything having the breath of life, and that they hold the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ and his gospel as the apostles taught. They assert that they occupy the place of the apostles, and that, on account of the above-mentioned things, they of the Roman Church, namely the prelates, clerks, and monks, and especially the inquisitors of heresy persecute them and call them heretics, although they are good men and good Christians, and that they are persecuted just as Christ and his apostles were by the Pharisees.

Moreover they talk to the laity of the evil lives of the clerks and prelates of the Roman Church, pointing out and setting forth their pride, cupidity, avarice, and uncleanness of life, and such other evils as they know. They invoke with their own interpretation and according to their abilities the authority of the Gospels and the Epistles against the condition of the prelates, churchmen, and monks, whom they call Pharisees and false prophets, who say, but do no.

Then they attack and vituperate, in turn, all the sacraments of the Church, especially the sacrament of the eucharist, saying that it cannot contain the body of Christ, for had this been as great as the largest mountain Christians would have entirely consumed it before this. They assert that the host comes from straw, that it passes through the tails of horses, to wit, when the flour is cleaned by a sieve (of horse hair); that, moreover, it passes through the body and comes to a vile end, which, they say, could not happen if God were in it.
Of baptism, they assert that the water is material and corruptible and is therefore the creation of the evil power, and cannot sanctify the soul, but that the churchmen sell this water out of avarice, just as they sell earth for the burial of the dead, and oil to the sick when they anoint them, and as: they sell the confession of sins as made to the priests.

Hence they claim that confession made to the priests of, the Roman Church is useless, and that, since the priests may be sinners, they cannot loose nor bind, and, being unclean in themselves, cannot make others clean. They assert, moreover, that the cross of Christ should not be adored or venerated, because, as they urge, no one would venerate or adore the gallows upon which a father, relative, or friend had been hung. They urge, further, that they who adore the cross ought, for similar reasons, to worship all thorns and lances, because as Christ's body was on the cross during the passion, so was the crown of thorns on his head and the soldier's lance in his side, they proclaim many other scandalous things in regard to the sacraments.

Moreover they read from the Gospels and the Epistles in the vulgar tongue, applying and expounding them in their favor and against the condition of the Roman Church in a manner which it would take too long to describe in detail; but all that relates to this subject may be read more fully in the books they have written and infected, and may be learned from the confessions of such of their followers as have been converted.

James Harvey Robinson, *Readings in European History*, vol. I (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1904), 381-383. Located on the Internet Archive:

https://archive.org/stream/readingsineurope01robi_1#page/380

**9. Bernard Gui-Inquisitorial Technique**
The selection presented below comes from the medieval inquisitor Bernard Gui. In the excerpt Gui presents a fictional interrogation of an Albigensian heretic as an example for other interrogators on the proper way to conduct an inquisition and how to handle the ways the heretics would try to get out of admitting their guilt. Pay close attention to the back and forth between the inquisitor, denoted with an “I” and the accused heretic, denoted with an “A.”

When a heretic is first brought up for examination, he assumes a confident air, as though secure in his innocence. I ask him why he has been brought before me. He replies, smiling and courteous, “Sir, I would be glad to learn the cause from you.”

I. You are accused as a heretic, and that you believe and teach otherwise than Holy Church believes.

A. (Raising his eyes to heaven, with an air of the greatest faith) Lord, thou knowest that I am innocent of this, and that I never held any faith other than that of true Christianity.

I. You call your faith Christian, for you consider ours as false and heretical. But I ask whether you have ever believed as true another faith than that which the Roman Church holds to be true?

A. I believe the true faith which the Roman Church believes, and which you openly preach to us.

I. Perhaps you have some of your sect at Rome whom you call the Roman Church. I, when I preach, say many things, some of which are common to us both, as that God liveth, and you believe some of what I preach. Nevertheless you may be a heretic in not believing other matters which are to be believed.

A. I believe all things that a Christian should believe.

I. I know your tricks. What the members of your sect believe you hold to be that which a Christian should believe. But we
waste time in this fencing. Say simply, Do you believe in one
God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost?

A. I believe.

I. Do you believe in Christ born of the Virgin, suffered, risen, and
ascended to heaven?

A. (Briskly) I believe.

I. Do you believe the bread and wine in the mass performed
by the priests to be changed into the body and blood of Christ
by divine virtue?

A. Ought I not to believe this?

I. I don’t ask if you ought to believe, but if you do believe.

A. I believe whatever you and other good doctors order me to
believe.

I. Those good doctors are the masters of your sect; if I accord
with them you believe with me; if not, not.

A. I willingly believe with you if you teach what is good to me.

I. You consider it good to you if I teach what your other
masters teach. Say, then, do you believe the body of our Lord,
Jesus Christ to be in the altar?

A. (Promptly) I believe that a body is there, and that all bodies
are of our Lord.

I. I ask whether the body there is of the Lord who was born
of the Virgin, hung on the cross, arose from the dead, ascended,
etc.

A. And you, sir, do you not believe it?

I. I believe it wholly.

A. I believe likewise.

I. You believe that I believe it, which is not what I ask, but
whether you believe it.

A. If you wish to interpret all that I say otherwise than simply
and plainly, then I don’t know what to say. I am a simple and
ignorant man. Pray don’t catch me in my words.
I. If you are simple, answer simply, without evasions.
   A. Willingly.

I. Will you then swear that you have never learned anything contrary to the faith which we hold to be true?
   A. (Growing pale) If I ought to swear, I will willingly swear.
   I. I don’t ask whether you ought, but whether you will swear.
   A. If you order me to swear, I will swear.

I. I don’t force you to swear, because as you believe oaths to be unlawful, you will transfer the sin to me who forced you; but if you will swear, I will hear it.
   A. Why should I swear if you do not order me to?
   I. So that you may remove the suspicion of being a heretic.
   A. Sir, I do not know how unless you teach me.

I. If I had to swear, I would raise my hand and spread my fingers and say, “So help me God, I have never learned heresy or believed what is contrary to the true faith.”

Then trembling as if he cannot repeat the form, he will stumble along as though speaking for himself or for another, so that there is not an absolute form of oath and yet he may be thought to have sworn. If the words are there, they are so turned around that he does not swear and yet appears to have sworn. Or he converts the oath into a form of prayer, as “God help me that I am not a heretic or the like”; and when asked whether he had sworn, he will say: “Did you not hear me swear?” [And when further hard pressed he will appeal, saying] “Sir, if I have done amiss in aught, I will willingly bear the penance, only help me to avoid the infamy of which I am accused though malice and without fault of mine.” But a vigorous inquisitor must not allow himself to be worked upon in this way, but proceed firmly till he make these people confess their error, or at least publicly abjure heresy, so that if they are subsequently
found to have sworn falsely, he can without further hearing, abandon them to the secular arm”.

https://archive.org/stream/historyofinquis01leah#page/n429

10. **Robert the Monk-Urban II’s Speech at Clermont**

Robert the Monk is usually identified as a prior of a monastic commune called Senuc in northern France and a former abbot of Saint-Remi, a cathedral in Reims, France, although there is some uncertainty regarding his identity. Also uncertain is the exact date of the work excerpted below. The text is a transcription of a speech given by Pope Urban II calling for a crusade against the Muslims in the Holy Land at the Council of Clermont in 1095. Robert claims to have been at the Council, and was therefore an eye-witness, but didn’t put what he saw to paper until over a decade later. Other sources, however, have corroborated the content of the speech, in which the Pope lays out recent events in cities like Jerusalem and encourages French knights to take up the religious cause to free the Holy Land.

Oh, race of Franks, race from across the mountains, race chosen and beloved by God-as shines forth in very many of your works-set apart from all nations by the situation of your country, as well as by your catholic faith and the honor of the holy church! To you our discourse is addressed and for you our exhortation is intended. We wish you to know what a grievous cause has led us to Your country, what peril threatening you and all the faithful has brought us.

From the confines of Jerusalem and the city of Constantinople a horrible tale has gone forth and very frequently has been brought to our ears, namely, that a race from the kingdom of the Persians, an accursed race, a race
utterly alienated from God, a generation forsooth which has not directed its heart and has not entrusted its spirit to God, has invaded the lands of those Christians and has depopulated them by the sword, pillage and fire; it has led away a part of the captives into its own country, and a part it has destroyed by cruel tortures; it has either entirely destroyed the churches of God or appropriated them for the rites of its own religion. They destroy the altars, after having defiled them with their uncleanness. They circumcise the Christians, and the blood of the circumcision they either spread upon the altars or pour into the vases of the baptismal font. When they wish to torture people by a base death, they perforate their navels, and dragging forth the extremity of the intestines, bind it to a stake; then with flogging they lead the victim around until the viscera having gushed forth the victim falls prostrate upon the ground. Others they bind to a post and pierce with arrows. Others they compel to extend their necks and then, attacking them with naked swords, attempt to cut through the neck with a single blow. What shall I say of the abominable rape of the women? To speak of it is worse than to be silent. The kingdom of the Greeks is now dismembered by them and deprived of territory so vast in extent that it cannot be traversed in a march of two months. On whom therefore is the labor of avenging these wrongs and of recovering this territory incumbent, if not upon you? You, upon whom above other nations God has conferred remarkable glory in arms, great courage, bodily activity, and strength to humble the hairy scalp of those who resist you.

Let the deeds of your ancestors move you and incite your minds to manly achievements; the glory and greatness of king Charles the Great, and of his son Louis, and of your other kings, who have destroyed the kingdoms of the pagans, and have extended in these lands the territory of the holy church. Let the
holy sepulchre of the Lord our Saviour, which is possessed by unclean nations, especially incite you, and the holy places which are now treated with ignominy and irreverently polluted with their filthiness. Oh, most valiant soldiers and descendants of invincible ancestors, be not degenerate, but recall the valor of your progenitors.

But if you are hindered by love of children, parents and wives, remember what the Lord says in the Gospel, “He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.” “Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name’s sake shall receive an hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life.” Let none of your possessions detain you, no solicitude for your family affairs, since this land which you inhabit, shut in on all sides by the seas and surrounded by the mountain peaks, is too narrow for your large population; nor does it abound in wealth; and it furnishes scarcely food enough for its cultivators. Hence it is that you murder one another, that you wage war, and that frequently you perish by mutual wounds. Let therefore hatred depart from among you, let your quarrels end, let wars cease, and let all dissensions and controversies slumber. Enter upon the road to the Holy Sepulchre; wrest that land from the wicked race, and subject it to yourselves. That land which as the Scripture says “floweth with milk and honey,” was given by God into the possession of the children of Israel Jerusalem is the navel of the world; the land is fruitful above others, like another paradise of delights. This the Redeemer of the human race has made illustrious by His advent, has beautified by residence, has consecrated by suffering, has redeemed by death, has glorified by burial. This royal city, therefore, situated at the centre of the world, is now held captive by His enemies, and is in subjection to those who do not know God, to the worship of the heathens.
She seeks therefore and desires to be liberated, and does not cease to implore you to come to her aid. From you especially she asks succor, because, as we have already said, God has conferred upon you above all nations great glory in arms. Accordingly undertake this journey for the remission of your sins, with the assurance of the imperishable glory of the kingdom of heaven.

When Pope Urban had said these and very many similar things in his urbane discourse, he so influenced to one purpose the desires of all who were present, that they cried out, “It is the will of God! It is the will of God!” When the venerable Roman pontiff heard that, with eyes uplifted to heaven he gave thanks to God and, with his hand commanding silence, said:

Most beloved brethren, today is manifest in you what the Lord says in the Gospel, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.” Unless the Lord God had been present in your spirits, all of you would not have uttered the same cry. For, although the cry issued from numerous mouths, yet the origin of the cry was one. Therefore I say to you that God, who implanted this in your breasts, has drawn it forth from you. Let this then be your war-cry in combats, because this word is given to you by God. When an armed attack is made upon the enemy, let this one cry be raised by all the soldiers of God: It is the will of God! It is the will of God!

And we do not command or advise that the old or feeble, or those unfit for bearing arms, undertake this journey; nor ought women to set out at all, without their husbands or brothers or legal guardians. For such are more of a hindrance than aid, more of a burden than advantage. Let the rich aid the needy; and according to their wealth, let them take with them experienced soldiers. The priests and clerks of any order are
not to go without the consent of their bishop; for this journey would profit them nothing if they went without permission of these. Also, it is not fitting that laymen should enter upon the pilgrimage without the blessing of their priests.

Whoever, therefore, shall determine upon this holy pilgrimage and shall make his vow to God to that effect and shall offer himself to Him as a, living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, shall wear the sign of the cross of the Lord on his forehead or on his breast. When, ‘truly’, having fulfilled his vow be wishes to return, let him place the cross on his back between his shoulders. Such, indeed, by the twofold action will fulfill the precept of the Lord, as He commands in the Gospel, “He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.”

https://archive.org/stream/translationsrepro1univiala#page/n31

11. Richard I Makes Peace with Saladin

The Itinerarium Regis Ricardi is a Latin chronicle of the Third Crusade, which lasted from 1189-1192, and featured some of the most prestigious rulers of Europe, such as the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa and Richard I of England, one of the central figures in the excerpt below. Here, Richard makes an agreement with the Muslim general and sultan Saladin regarding the city of Jerusalem as well as other territories in order to end the crusade.

Copy and past the link below to access this document:
https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/1192peace.asp
Chapter 10: Life in the High Middle Ages 1000-1300

Life during the High Middle Ages did not stay static as all of the political changes discussed in the previous chapter were happening. In fact, this period of history witnessed serious and consequential developments in architecture, trade, and intellectual development. A new farming technique, the three-field system, allowed for greater production which helped to feed a growing European population. Life for peasants was still difficult, as they spent much of their time doing the laborious farm labor they had done in previous eras. However, newer plows made the work a bit less onerous and the numerous religious festivals and holidays were a welcome respite from the daily grind. For nobles, money became increasingly valuable, and many began converting feudal privileges into payments peasants would make as rent. Aristocratic men were still the warriors of society, though as external invasions subsided they turned their attention inward, leading to the development of tournaments for knights to test their skills. Aristocratic women, though still normally under the control of their husbands, did have important rights and responsibilities, such
as the ability to hold land and managing the household servants while the husband was away for a tournament or on a Crusade. Perhaps the most consequential development during this time was the revival of urban life in Western Europe, which had almost completely collapsed with the fall of Rome. New cities, often built on the ruins of old cities, became hubs for artisans and craftsmen as well as important trading posts. Noble landlords would often accept payment from townsfolk in return for the granting of certain privileges and liberties, which the inhabitants of the town guarded jealously. New trading areas allowed money to return to circulation and some to create vast fortunes. Guilds also emerged in cities to regulate the activities of the various trades that were practiced and would become wealthy and powerful institutions in their own right. Access to Greek and Roman ideas and theories through the Muslim world led to a renewed interest in learning and the creation of universities. Most began teaching the seven liberal arts, normally in Latin, so that students from all parts of Europe could come together to learn. The main preoccupation of medieval philosophers was Scholasticism, the attempt to reconcile reason and faith into one coherent system. Roman law was also of interest to a world in which there seemed to be numerous law codes all operative simultaneously. In the realm of literature heroic epics and troubadour poetry were increasingly written in vernacular, or non-Latin, languages. The construction of cities and churches led to the birth of gothic architecture that demonstrated the confidence many felt during this time of growth and prosperity.

Chapter 10’s documents begin with a look at city life, specifically a charter granted by a land-holding lord, in this case the king of France himself, to a city. Contained in the charter are freedoms and liberties that the residents paid a
hefty sum for, illustrating for us how important even a measure of freedom was. The next two documents are from guilds in the German territories that give us a window into how much control such groups had over their respective professions. Next is a BBC documentary that shines light on the more disgusting nature of medieval cities and the solutions people and governments had to come up with in order to deal with massive amounts of filth. The rest of the documents and excerpts in this chapter relate to Scholasticism, specifically medieval attempts to use logical arguments to prove that God exists. First up is Anselm, who will present the classical example of the ontological proof, as well as the response from fellow monk Gaunilo. Next is Dominican Thomas Aquinas’ five ways from the Summa Theologica, which makes the cosmological argument, followed by 18th century philosopher David Hume’s response to said argument from his Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. William Paley will then present the third great proof, the teleological proof, using the design of the universe as an indication of divine will, while once again Hume will try and refute that argument. In the final document William Leibniz attempts to address the problem of suffering by discussing what really constitutes a perfect universe.

1. Charter of Lorris

The city of Lorris is located in north-central France. The document excerpted below is a royal charter granted in 1155 by Louis VII to the townspeople. The granting of charters containing certain liberties, freedoms, and exemptions was a common practice during the Middle Ages. Townspeople would often pool their resources to gather enough money to pay either a one-time or recurring fee and in return were granted the provisions contained in a charter. This arrangement benefited both sides, as the monarchy and nobility made money and the people gained certain rights and responsibilities.
1. Everyone who has a house in the parish of Lorris shall pay as cens sixpence only for his house, and for each acre of land that he possesses in the parish.

2. No inhabitant of the parish of Lorris shall be required to pay a toll or any other tax on his provisions; and let him not be made to pay measurage fee on the grain which he has raised by his own labor.

3. No burgher shall go on an expedition, on foot or on horseback, from which he cannot return the same day to his home if he desires.

4. No burgher shall pay toll on the road to Etampes, to Orleans, to Milly (which is in the Gatinais), or to Melun.

5. No one who has property in the parish of Lorris shall forfeit it for any offense whatsoever, unless the offense shall have been committed against us or any of our hotes.

6. No person while on his way to the fairs and markets of Lorris, or returning, shall be arrested or disturbed, unless he shall have committed an offense on the same day.

9. No one, neither we nor any other, shall exact from the burghers of Lorris any tallage, tax, or subsidy.

12. If a man shall have had a quarrel with another, but without breaking into a fortified house, and if the parties shall have reached an agreement without bringing a suit before the provost, no fine shall be due to us or our provost on account of the affair.

15. No inhabitant of Lorris is to render us the obligation of corvee, except twice a year, when our wine is to be carried to Orleans, and not elsewhere.

16. No one shall be detained in prison if he can furnish
surety that he will present himself for judgment.

- 17. Any burgher who wishes to sell his property shall have the privilege of doing so; and, having received the price of the sale, he shall have the right to go from the town freely and without molestation, if he so desires, unless he has committed some offense in it.

- 18. Anyone who shall dwell a year and a day in the parish of Lorris, without any claim having pursued him there, and without having refused to lay his case before us or our provost, shall abide there freely and without molestation.

- 35. We ordain that every time there shall be a change of provosts in the town the new provost shall take an oath faithfully to observe these regulations; and the same thing shall be done by new sergeants every time that they are installed.


https://archive.org/stream/sourcebookofmedi00oggfuoft#page/328

2. Regulations of the Garment Cutters’ Guild of Stendal

Stendal is a town in the province of Saxony in Germany. In 1231 the garment cutters guild produced a set of rules governing the operations of all garment cutters in the town; some of those rules are presented here. Guilds were powerful organizations during the Middle Ages, exercising influence on politicians and nobles as well as controlling virtually everything about their particular industry.

Copy and paste the link below into your web browser to access this document:

https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/1231Weavers3.asp
3. Regulations of the Weavers’ Guild of Stendal

The excerpt presented here is another set of guild regulations, this time from the weavers’ guild of the city of Stendal in Germany. As you read this document, keep in mind the previous excerpt from the garment cutters guild and note any similarities and differences you see. Also keep in mind the larger context of the role guilds played in the economic life of the medieval era.

Copy and paste the link below into your web browser to access this document:
https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/1233Weavers4.asp

4. Dan Snow-Filthy Cited Medieval London

The documentary below is part of a BBC series called “Filthy Cities” presented by historian Dan Snow. The episode is about medieval London and the problems associated with overpopulation as well as the various solutions the people and government employed to solve those problems. As you watch the film keep in mind the larger context of medieval history and how this information fits into that larger story.
5. Anselm vs. Gaunilo

Anselm was a Benedictine monk who served as archbishop of Canterbury in England from 1093 to 1109. He was also a philosopher who followed the Scholastic practice of attempting to combine reason and faith, using logic to explain various beliefs of the Catholic Church. His most famous contribution is excerpted below, the ontological proof, which is an attempt to use the nature of existence to prove to an atheist that God does exist. Also presented here is a response to Anselm’s proof from Gaunilo, another Benedictine monk who took up Anselm’s argument and found it flawed.

Anselm’s Ontological Proof

Truly there is a God, although the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.

And so, Lord, do thou, who dost give understanding to faith, give me, so far as thou knowest it to be profitable, to understand that thou art as we believe; and that thou art that which we believe. And, indeed, we believe that thou art a being than which nothing greater can be conceived. Or is there no such nature, since the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God? (Psalms xiv. i). But, at any rate, this very fool, when he hears of this being of which I speak – a being than which nothing greater can be

Conceived – understands what he hears, and what he understands is in his understanding; although he does not understand to exist.
For, it is one thing for an object to be in the understanding, and another to understand that the object exists. When a painter first conceives of what he will afterwards perform, he has it in his understanding, but he does not yet understand it to be, because he has not yet performed it. But after he has made the painting, he both has it in his understanding, and he understands that it exists, because he has made it.

Hence, even the fool is convinced that something exists in the understanding, at least, than which nothing greater can be conceived. For, when he hears of this, he understands it. And whatever is understood, exists in the understanding. And assuredly that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, cannot exist in the understanding alone. For, suppose it exists in the understanding alone: then it can be conceived to exist in reality; which is greater. Therefore, if that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, exists in the understanding alone, the very being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, is one, than which a greater can be conceived. But obviously this is impossible. Hence, there is no doubt that there exists a being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, and it exists both in the understanding and in reality.

_Gaunilo’s Repsonse_

For he who says that this being exists, because otherwise the being which is greater than all will not be greater than all, does not attend strictly enough to what he is saying. For I do not yet say, no, I even deny or doubt that this being is greater than any real object. Nor do I concede to it any other existence than this (if it should be called existence) which it has when the mind, according to a word merely heard, tries to form the image of an object absolutely unknown to it.

How, then, is the veritable existence of that being proved to me from the assumption, by hypothesis, that it is greater
than all other beings? For I should still deny this, or doubt your
demonstration of it, to this extent, that I should not admit that
this being is in my understanding and concept even in the way
in which many objects whose real existence is uncertain and
doubtful, are in my understanding and concept. For it should
be proved first that this being itself really exists somewhere;
and then, from the fact that it is greater than all, we shall not
hesitate to infer that it also subsists in itself.

6. For example: it is said that somewhere in the ocean is
an island, which, because of the difficulty, or rather the
impossibility, of discovering what does not exist, is called the
lost island. And they say that this island has an inestimable
wealth of all manner of riches and delicacies in greater
abundance than is told of the Islands of the Blest; and that
having no owner or inhabitant, it is more excellent than all
other countries, which are inhabited by mankind, in the
abundance with which it is stored.

Now if someone should tell me that there is such an island,
I should easily understand his words, in which there is no
difficulty. But suppose that he went on to say, as if by a logical
inference: “You can no longer doubt that this island which is
more excellent than all lands exists somewhere, since you have
no doubt that it is in your understanding. And since it is more
excellent not to be in the understanding alone, but to exist both
in the understanding and in reality, for this reason it must
exist. For if it does not exist, any land which really exists will be
more excellent than it; and so the island already understood by
you to be more excellent will not be more excellent.”

If a man should try to prove to me by such reasoning that
this island truly exists, and that its existence should no longer
be doubted, either I should believe that he was jesting, or I
know not which I ought to regard as the greater fool: myself,
supposing that I should allow this proof; or him, if he should suppose that he had established with any certainty the existence of this island. For he ought to show first that the hypothetical excellence of this island exists as a real and indubitable fact, and in no wise as any unreal object, or one whose existence is uncertain, in my understanding.

7. This, in the mean time, is the answer the fool could make to the arguments urged against him. When he is assured in the first place that this being is so great that its non-existence is not even conceivable, and that this in turn is proved on no other ground than the fact that otherwise it will not be greater than all things, the fool may make the same answer, and say:

When did I say that any such being exists in reality, that is, a being greater than all others? – that on this ground it should be proved to me that it also exists in reality to such a degree that it cannot even be conceived not to exist? Whereas in the first place it should be in some way proved that a nature which is higher, that is, greater and better, than all other natures, exists; in order that from this we may then be able to prove all attributes which necessarily the being that is greater and better than all possesses.

Moreover, it is said that the non-existence of this being is inconceivable. It might better be said, perhaps, that its non-existence, or the possibility of its non-existence, is unintelligible. For according to the true meaning of the word, unreal objects are unintelligible. Yet their existence is conceivable in the way in which the fool conceived of the non-existence of God. I am most certainly aware of my own existence; but I know, nevertheless, that my non-existence is possible. As to that supreme being, moreover, which God is, I understand without any doubt both his existence, and the impossibility of his non-existence. Whether, however, so long
as I am most positively aware of my existence, I can conceive of my non-existence, I am not sure. But if I can, why can I not conceive of the non-existence of whatever else I know with the same certainty? If, however, I cannot, God will not be the only being of which it can be said, it is impossible to conceive of his non-existence.

Sindney Norton Deane, trans., St. Anselm (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1903), 7-8, 150-152. Located on the Internet Archive:
https://archive.org/stream/proslogiummonol00deangoog#page/n50/mode/2up

6. Thomas Aquinas-The Five Ways

Thomas Aquinas was a Dominican friar, priest, and philosopher who composed a monumental work known as the Summa Theologica. The Summa was an effort to summarize and compile all existing Catholic theology into one source. The excerpt presented here is the famous Five Ways; five proofs that show the existence of God. The first way, the argument from motion, is the most recognizable and follows in the tradition of other cosmological arguments. As you read the selection note how Aquinas’ arguments fit into the larger context of medieval Scholasticism.

I answer that it can be proved in five ways that God exists. The first and plainest is the method that proceeds from the point of view of motion. It is certain and in accord with experience, that things on earth undergo change. Now everything that is moved is moved by something; nothing, indeed, is changed, except it is changed to something which it is in potentiality. Moreover, anything moves in accordance with something actually existing; change itself, is nothing else than to bring forth something from potentiality into actuality. Now nothing can be brought from potentiality to actual existence except through something actually existing: thus heat in
action, as fire, makes fire-wood, which is hot in potentiality, to be hot actually, and through this process, changes itself. The same thing cannot at the same time be actually and potentially the same thing, but only in regard to different things. What is actually hot cannot be at the same time potentially hot, but it is possible for it at the same time to be potentially cold. It is impossible, then, that anything should be both mover and the thing moved, in regard to the same thing and in the same way, or that it should move itself. Everything, therefore, is moved by something else. If, then, that by which it is moved, is also moved, this must be moved by something still different, and this, again, by something else. But this process cannot go on to infinity (1) because there would not be any first mover, nor, because of this fact, anything else in motion, as the succeeding things would not move except because of what is moved by the first mover, just as a stick is not moved except through what is moved from the hand. Therefore it is necessary to go back to some first mover, which is itself moved by nothing, and this all men know as God.

The second proof is from the nature of the efficient cause. We find in our experience that there is a chain of causes: nor is it found possible for anything to be the efficient cause of itself, since it would have to exist before itself, which is impossible. Nor in the case of efficient causes can the chain go back indefinitely, because in all chains of efficient causes, the first is the cause of the middle, and these of the last, whether they be one or many. If the cause is removed, the effect is removed. Hence if there is not a first cause, there will not be a last, nor a middle. But if the chain were to go back infinitely, there would be no first cause, and thus no ultimate effect, nor middle causes, which is admittedly false. Hence we must presuppose some first efficient cause, which all call God.
The third proof is taken from the natures of the merely possible and necessary. We find that certain things either may or may not exist, since they are found to come into being and be destroyed, and in consequence potentially, either existent or non-existent. But it is impossible for all things that are of this character to exist eternally, because what may not exist at length will not. If, then, all things were merely possible (mere accidents), eventually nothing among things would exist. If this is true, even now there would be nothing, because what does not exist does not take its beginning except through something that does exist. If then nothing existed, it would be impossible for anything to begin, and there would now be nothing existing, which is admittedly false. Hence not all things are mere accidents, but there must be one necessarily existing being. Now every necessary thing either has a cause of its necessary existence, or has not. In the case of necessary things that have a cause for their necessary existence, the chain of causes cannot go back infinitely, just as not in the case of efficient causes, as proved. Hence there must be presupposed something necessarily existing through its own nature, not having a cause elsewhere but being itself the cause of the necessary existence of other things, – which all call God.

The fourth proof arises from the degrees that are found in things. For there is found a greater and a less degree of goodness, truth, nobility, and the like. But more or less are terms spoken of various things as they approach in diverse ways toward something that is the greatest, just as in the case of hotter (more hot) which approaches nearer the greatest heat. There exists therefore something that is the truest, and best, and most noble, and in consequence, the greatest being. For what are the greatest truths are the greatest beings, as is said in the Metaphysics Bk. II. 2. What moreover is the greatest in
its way, in another way is the cause of all things of its own kind (or genus); thus fire, which is the greatest heat, is the cause of all heat, as is said in the same book (cf. Plato and Aristotle). Therefore there exists something that is the cause of the existence of all things and of the goodness and of every perfection whatsoever – and this we call God.

The fifth proof arises from the ordering of things for we see that some things which lack reason such as natural bodies are operated in accordance with a plan. It appears from this that they are operated always or the more frequently in this same way the closer they follow what is the Highest; whence it is clear that they do not arrive at the result by chance but because of a purpose. The things, moreover, that do not have intelligence do not tend toward a result unless directed by someone knowing and intelligent; just as an arrow is sent by an archer. Therefore there is something intelligent by which all natural things are arranged in accordance with a plan, – and this we call God.

In response to the first objection, then, I reply what Augustine says; that since God is entirely good, He would permit evil to exist in His works only if He were so good and omnipotent that He might bring forth good even from the evil. It therefore pertains to the infinite goodness of God that he permits evil to exist and from this brings forth good.

My reply to the second objection is that since nature is ordered in accordance with some defined purpose by the direction of some superior agent, those things that spring from nature must be dependent upon God, just as upon a first cause. Likewise what springs from a proposition must be traceable to some higher cause which is not the human reason or will, because this is changeable and defective and everything changeable and liable to non-existence is dependent upon
some unchangeable first principle that is necessarily self-existent as has been shown.

Oliver J. Thatcher, ed., The Library of Original Sources (Milwaukee: University Research Extension Co., 1901), 361-363. Located on the Internet Archive:
https://archive.org/stream/TheLibraryOfOriginalSourcesV04#page/n405/mode/2up

7. David Hume—Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion

David Hume was an eighteenth century Scottish philosopher who followed the precepts of empiricism and skepticism. Empiricism claims that knowledge comes from our sensory experiences, while skepticism calls into question whether certainty of knowledge actually exists. The excerpt presented here comes from his work Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, which is a dialogue between three characters—Philo, Cleanthes, and Demea—about the nature of God and the proofs of his existence. In this section Hume takes aim at the cosmological argument, and uses Philo to present counter-arguments in an attempt to disprove the idea that the nature of motion indicates that God exists.

But if so many difficulties attend the argument a posteriori, said Demea; had we not better adhere to that simple and sublime argument a priori, which, by offering to us infallible demonstration, cuts off at once all doubt and difficulty? By this argument, too, we may prove the infinity of the divine attributes, which, I am afraid, can never be ascertained with certainty from any other topic. For how can an effect, which either is finite, or, for aught we know, may be so; how can such an effect, I say, prove an infinite cause? The unity too of the divine nature, it is very difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to deduce merely from contemplating the works of nature; nor will the uniformity alone of the plan, even were it allowed, give us any assurance of that attribute. Whereas the argument a priori ....
You seem to reason, Demea, interposed Cleanthes, as if those advantages and conveniences in the abstract argument were full proofs of its solidity. But it is first proper, in my opinion, to determine what argument of this nature you choose to insist on; and we shall afterwards, from itself, better than from its useful consequences, endeavour to determine what value we ought to put upon it.

The argument, replied Demea, which I would insist on is the common one. Whatever exists must have a cause or reason of its existence; it being absolutely impossible for anything to produce itself, or be the cause of its own existence. In mounting up, therefore, from effects to causes, we must either go on in tracing an infinite succession, without any ultimate cause at all, or must at last have recourse to some ultimate cause, that is necessarily existent: Now that the first supposition is absurd may be thus proved. In the infinite chain or succession of causes and effects, each single effect is determined to exist by the power and efficacy of that cause which immediately preceded; but the whole eternal chain or succession, taken together, is not determined or caused by any thing: And yet it is evident that it requires a cause or reason, as much as any particular object, which begins to exist in time. The question is still reasonable, why this particular succession of causes existed from eternity, and not any other succession, or no succession at all. If there be no necessarily existent Being, any supposition, which can be formed, is equally possible; nor is there any more absurdity in nothing’s having existed from eternity, than there is in that succession of causes, which constitutes the universe. What was it, then, which determined something to exist rather than nothing, and bestowed being on a particular possibility, exclusive of the rest? External causes, there are supposed to be none. Chance is a word without a meaning. Was it nothing?
But that can never produce anything. We must, therefore, have recourse to a necessarily existent Being, who carries the reason of his existence in himself; and who cannot be supposed not to exist without an express contradiction. There is consequently such a Being, that is, there is a Deity.

I shall not leave it to Philo, said Cleanthes (though I know that the starting objections is his chief delight), to point out the weakness of this metaphysical reasoning. It seems to me so obviously ill-grounded, and at the same time of so little consequence to the cause of true piety and religion, that I shall myself venture to show the fallacy of it.

I shall begin with observing, that there is an evident absurdity in pretending to demonstrate a matter of fact, or to prove it by any arguments a priori. Nothing is demonstrable, unless the contrary implies a contradiction. Nothing, that is distinctly conceivable, implies a contradiction. Whatever we conceive as existent, we can also conceive as non-existent. There is no Being, therefore, whose non-existence implies a contradiction. Consequently there is no Being, whose existence is demonstrable. I propose this argument as entirely decisive, and am willing to rest the whole controversy upon it.

It is pretended that the Deity is a necessarily existent Being; and this necessity of his existence is attempted to be explained by asserting, that, if we knew his whole essence or nature, we should perceive it to be as impossible for him not to exist as for twice two not to be four. But it is evident, that this can never happen, while our faculties remain the same as at present. It will still be possible for us, at any time, to conceive the non-existence of what we formerly conceived to exist; nor can the mind ever lie under a necessity of supposing any object to remain always in being; in the same manner as we lie under a necessity of always conceiving twice two to be four. The words,
therefore, necessary existence, have no meaning; or, which is the same thing, none that is consistent.

But farther; why may not the material universe be the necessarily existent Being, according to this pretended explication of necessity? We dare not affirm that we know all the qualities of matter; and for aught we can determine, it may contain some qualities, which, were they known, would make its non-existence appear as great a contradiction as that twice two is five. I find only one argument employed to prove, that the material world is not the necessarily existent Being; and this argument is derived from the contingency both of the matter and the form of the world. “Any particle of matter,”? it is said, “may be conceived to be annihilated; and any form may be conceived to be altered. Such an annihilation or alteration, therefore, is not impossible.”? But it seems a great partiality not to perceive, that the same argument extends equally to the Deity, so far as we have any conception of him; and that the mind can at least imagine him to be non-existent, or his attributes to be altered. It must be some unknown, inconceivable qualities, which can make his non-existence appear impossible, or his attributes unalterable: And no reason can be assigned, why these qualities may not belong to matter. As they are altogether unknown and inconceivable, they can never be proved incompatible with it.

Add to this, that in tracing an eternal succession of objects, it seems absurd to inquire for a general cause or first Author. How can any thing, that exists from eternity, have a cause, since that relation implies a priority in time and a beginning of existence?

In such a chain too, or succession of objects, each part is caused by that which preceded it, and causes that which succeeds it. Where then is the difficulty? But the whole, you
say, wants a cause. I answer, that the uniting of these parts into a whole, like the uniting of several distinct counties into one kingdom, or several distinct members into one body, is performed merely by an arbitrary act of the mind, and has no influence on the nature of things. Did I show you the particular causes of each individual in a collection of twenty particles of matter, I should think it very unreasonable, should you afterwards ask me, what was the cause of the whole twenty. This is sufficiently explained in explaining the cause of the parts.

Though the reasonings, which you have urged, Cleaotthes, may well excuse me, said Philo, from starting any farther difficulties; yet I cannot forbear insisting still upon another topic. It is observed by arithmeticians, that the products of 9 compose always either 9 or some lesser product of 9; if you add together all the characters, of which any of the former products is composed. Thus, of 18, 27, 36, which are products of 9, you make 9 by adding 1 to 8, 2 to 7, 3 to 6. Thus 369 is a product also of 9; and if you add 3, 6, and 9, you make 18, a lesser product of 9. To a superficial observer, so wonderful a regularity may be admired as the effect either of chance or design; but a skilful algebraist immediately concludes it to be the work of necessity, and demonstrates, that it must for ever result from the nature of these numbers. Is it not probable, I ask, that the whole economy of the universe is conducted by a like necessity, though no human algebra can furnish a key which solves the difficulty? And instead of admiring the order of natural beings, may it not happen, that, could we penetrate into the intimate nature of bodies, we should clearly see why it was absolutely impossible, they could ever admit of any other disposition? So dangerous is it to introduce this idea of necessity into the
present question! And so naturally does it afford an inference directly opposite to the religious hypothesis!

But dropping all these abstractions, continued Philo; and confining ourselves to more familiar topics; I shall venture to add an observation, 3 that the argument a priori has seldom been found very convincing, except to people of a metaphysical head, who have accustomed themselves to abstract reasoning, and who finding from mathematics, that the understanding frequently leads to truth, through obscurity, and contrary to first appearances, have transferred the same habit of thinking to subjects where it ought not to have place. Other people, even of good sense and the best inclined to religion, feel always some deficiency in such arguments, though they are not perhaps able to explain distinctly where it lies. A certain proof, that men ever did, and ever will, derive their religion from other sources than from this species of reasoning.


8. William Paley—Natural Theology

Both Thomas Aquinas and the author cited below William Paley utilized the teleological argument to try and prove God exists. According to this proof the design of the natural world is so perfect and orderly that only a divine intelligence could have created it. Paley was an eighteenth century philosopher who wrote *Natural Theology*, from which the current selection is taken. Although Aquinas did propose the teleological argument in his Five Ways, Paley’s watchmaker argument is a more complete and robust version of the argument.

In crossing a heath, suppose I pitched my foot against a stone, and were asked how the stone came to be there: I might
possibly answer, that, for any thing I knew to the contrary, it had lain there forever; nor would it perhaps be very easy to show the absurdity of this answer. But suppose I had found a watch upon the ground, and it should be inquired how the watch happened to be in that place; I should hardly think of the answer which I had before given,—that, for any thing I knew, the watch might have always been there. Yet why should not this answer serve for the watch as well as for the stone? Why is it not as admissible in the second case, as in the first? For this reason, and for no other, viz. that, when we come to inspect the watch, we perceive (what we could not discover in the stone) that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose, e. g. that they are so formed and adjusted as to produce motion, and that motion so regulated as to point out the hour of the day; that, if the different parts had been differently shaped from what they are, of a different size from what they are, or placed after any other manner, or in any other order, than that in which they are placed, either no motion at all would have been carried on in the machine, or none which would have answered the use that is now served by it.

To reckon up a few of the plainest of these parts, and of their offices, all tending to one result:—We see a cylindrical box containing a coiled elastic spring, which by its endeavour to relax itself, turns round the box. We next observe a flexible chain (artificially wrought for the sake of flexure) communicating the action of the spring from the box to the fusee. We then find a series of wheels, the teeth of which catch in, and apply to, each other, conducting the motion from the fusee to the balance, and from the balance to the pointer: and at the same time, by the size and shape of those wheels, so regulating that motion, as to terminate in causing an index, by an equable and measured progression, to pass over a given
space in a given time. We take notice that the wheels are made of brass in order to keep them from rust; the springs of steel, no other metal being so elastic; that over the face of the watch there is placed a glass, a material employed in no other part of the work, but in the room of which, if there had been any other than a transparent substance, the hour could not be seen without opening the case. This mechanism being observed (it requires indeed an examination of the instrument, and perhaps some previous knowledge of the subject, to perceive and understand it; but being once, as we have said, observed and understood), the inference we think is inevitable, that the watch must have had a maker: that there must have existed, at some time, and at some place or other, an artificer or artificers who formed it for the purpose which we find it actually to answer: who comprehended its construction, and designed its use.

Nor would it, I apprehend, weaken the conclusion, that we had never seen a watch made; that we had never known an artist capable of making one; that we were altogether incapable of executing such a piece of workmanship ourselves, or of understanding in what manner it was performed; all this being no more than what is true of some exquisite remains of ancient art, of some lost arts, and, to the generality of mankind, of the more curious productions of modern manufacture. Does one man in a million know how oval frames are turned? Ignorance of this kind exalts our opinion of the unseen and unknown artist's skill, if he be unseen and unknown, but raises no doubt in our minds of the existence and agency of such an artist, at some former time, and in some place or other. Nor can I perceive that it varies at all the inference, whether the question arise concerning a human agent, or concerning an agent of a
different species, or an agent possessing, in some respects, a different nature.

Neither, secondly, would it invalidate our conclusion, that the watch sometimes went wrong, or that it seldom went exactly right. The purpose of the machinery, the design, and the designer, might be evident, and in the case supposed would be evident, in whatever way we accounted for the irregularity of the movement, or whether we could account for it or not. It is not necessary that a machine be perfect, in order to show with what design it was made: still less necessary, where the only question is, whether it were made with any design at all.

Nor, thirdly, would it bring any uncertainty into the argument, if there were a few parts of the watch, concerning which we could not discover, or had not yet discovered, in what manner they conduced to the general effect; or even some parts, concerning which we could not ascertain, whether they conduced to that effect in any manner whatever. For, as to the first branch of the case; if by the loss, or disorder, or decay, of the parts in question, the movement of the watch were found in fact to be stopped, or disturbed, or retarded, no doubt would remain in our minds as to the utility or intention of these parts, although we should be unable to investigate the manner according to which, or the connection by which, the ultimate effect depended upon their action or assistance; and the more complex is the machine, the more likely is this obscurity to arise. Then, as to the second thing supposed, namely, that there were parts which might be spared, without prejudice to the movement of the watch, and that we had proved this by experiment,—these superfluous parts, even if we were completely assured that they were such, would not vacate the reasoning which we had instituted concerning other parts. The
indication of contrivance remained, with respect to them, nearly as it was before...

...for every indication of contrivance, every manifestation of design, which existed in the watch, exists in the works of nature; with the difference, on the side of nature, of being greater and more, and that in a degree which exceeds all computation. I mean that the contrivances of nature surpass the contrivances of art, in the complexity, subtlety, and curiosity, of the mechanism; and still more, if possible, do they go beyond them in number and variety: yet, in a multitude of cases, are not less evidently mechanical, not less evidently contrivances, not less evidently accommodated to their end, or suited to their office, than are the most perfect productions of human ingenuity.

William Paley, Natural Theology (New York: American Tract Society, 1881), 9-12, 20. Located on the Internet Archive:

https://archive.org/stream/naturaltheology00pale#page/n23

9. David Hume-Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion

The selection below is another from David Hume’s Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. In this excerpt Cleanthes proposes the teleological argument to the other two characters, and Philo wastes no time in dissecting and disputing that argument in addition to Cleanthes’ claim that the works of God are just like the works of men.

Not to lose any time in circumlocutions, said Cleanthes, addressing himself to Demea, much less in replying to the pious declamations of Philo; I shall briefly explain how I conceive this matter. Look round the world: Contemplate the whole and every part of it: You will find it to be nothing but one great machine, subdivided into an infinite number of lesser machines, which again admit of subdivisions, to a degree beyond what human senses and faculties can trace and explain. All these various machines, and even their most minute parts,
are adjusted to each other with an accuracy, which ravishes into admiration all men, who have ever contemplated them. The curious adapting of means to ends, throughout all nature, resembles exactly, though it much exceeds, the productions of human contrivance; of human design, thought, wisdom, and intelligence. Since therefore the effects resemble each other, we are led to infer, by all the rules of analogy, that the causes also resemble; and that the Author of nature is somewhat similar to the mind of man; though possessed of much larger faculties, proportioned to the grandeur of the work, which he has executed. By this argument a posteriori, and by this argument alone, we do prove at once the existence of a Deity, and his similarity to human mind and intelligence.

I shall be so free, Cleanthes, said Demea, as to tell you, that from the beginning, I could not approve of your conclusion concerning the similarity of the Deity to men; still less can I approve of the mediums, by which you endeavour to establish it. What! No demonstration of the being of a God! No abstract arguments! No proofs a priori! Are these, which have hitherto been so much insisted on by philosophers, all fallacy, all sophism? Can we reach no farther in this subject than experience and probability? I will not say, that this is betraying the cause of a Deity: But surely, by this affected candour, you give advantage to atheists, which they never could obtain, by the mere dint of argument and reasoning.

What I chiefly scruple in this subject, said Philo, is not so much, that all religious arguments are by Cleanthes reduced to experience, as that they appear not to be even the most certain and irrefragable of that inferior kind. That a stone will fall, that fire will burn, that the earth has solidity, we have observed a thousand and a thousand times; and when any new instance of this nature is presented, we draw without hesitation the
accustomed inference. The exact similarity of the cases gives us a perfect assurance of a similar event; and a stronger evidence is never desired nor sought after. But wherever you depart, in the least, from the similarity of the cases, you diminish proportionally the evidence; and may at last bring it to a very weak analogy, which is confessedly liable to error and uncertainty. After having experienced the circulation of the blood in human creatures, we make no doubt that it takes place in Titius and Maevius: But from its circulation in frogs and fishes, it is only a presumption, though a strong one, from analogy, that it takes place in men and other animals. The analogical reasoning is much weaker, when we infer the circulation of the sap in vegetables from our experience that the blood circulates in animals; and those, who hastily followed that imperfect analogy, are found, by more accurate experiments, to have been mistaken.

If we see a house, Cleanthes, we conclude, with the greatest certainty, that it had an architect or builder; because this is precisely that species of effect, which we have experienced to proceed from that species of cause. But surely you will not affirm, that the universe bears such a resemblance to a house, that we can with the same certainty infer a similar cause, or that the analogy is here entire and perfect. The dissimilitude is so striking, that the utmost you can here pretend to is a guess, a conjecture, a presumption concerning a similar cause; and how that pretension will be received in the world, I leave you to consider.

It would surely be very ill received, replied Cleanthes; and I should be deservedly blamed and detested, did I allow that the proofs of a Deity amounted to no more than a guess or conjecture. But is the whole adjustment of means to ends in a house and in the universe so slight a resemblance? The
economy of final causes? The order, proportion, and arrangement of every part? Steps of a stair are plainly contrived, that human legs may use them in mounting; and this inference is certain and infallible. Human legs are also contrived for walking and mounting; and this inference, I allow, is not altogether so certain, because of the dissimilarity which you remark; but does it, therefore, deserve the name only of presumption or conjecture?

Good God! cried Demea, interrupting him, where are we?
Zealous defenders of religion allow, that the proofs of a Deity fall short of perfect evidence! And you, Philo, on whose assistance I depended, in proving the adorable mysteriousness of the divine nature, do you assent to all these extravagant opinions of Cleanthes? For what other name can I give them? Or why spare my censure, when such principles are advanced, supported by such an authority, before so young a man as Pamphilus?

You seem not to apprehend, replied Philo, that I argue with Cleanthes in his own way; and by showing him the dangerous consequences of his tenets, hope at last to reduce him to our opinion. But what sticks most with you, I observe, is the representation which Cleanthes has made of the argument a posteriori; and finding that that argument is likely to escape your Hold and vanish into air, you think it so disguised that you can scarcely believe it to be set in its true light. Now, however much I may dissent, in other respects, from the dangerous principles of Cleanthes, I must allow, that he has fairly represented that argument; and I shall endeavour so to state the matter to you, that you will entertain no farther scruples with regard to it.

Were a man to abstract from everything which he knows or has seen, he would be altogether incapable, merely from his
own ideas, to determine what kind of scene the universe must be, or to give the preference to one state or situation of things above another. For as nothing, which he clearly conceives, could be esteemed impossible or implying a contradiction, every chimera of his fancy would be upon an equal footing; nor could he assign any just reason, why he adheres to one idea or system, and rejects the others, which are equally possible.

Again; after he opens his eyes, and contemplates the world, as it really is, it would be impossible for him, at first, to assign the cause of any one event; much less, of the whole of things or of the universe. He might set his fancy a rambling; and she might bring him in an infinite variety of reports and representations. These would all be possible; but being all equally possible, he would never, of himself, give a satisfactory account for his preferring one of them to the rest. Experience alone can point out to him the true cause, of any phenomenon.

Now according to this method of reasoning, Demea, it follows (and is, indeed, tacitly allowed by Cleanthes himself) that order, arrangement, or the adjustment of final causes is not, of itself, any proof of design: but only so far as it has been experienced to proceed from that principle. For aught we can know a priori, matter may contain the source or spring of order originally, within itself, as well as mind does; and there is no more difficulty in conceiving, that the several elements, from an internal unknown cause, may fall into the most exquisite arrangement, than to conceive that their ideas, in the great, universal mind, from a like internal, unknown cause, fall into that arrangement. The equal possibility of both these suppositions is allowed. By experience we find (according to Cleanthes), that there is a difference between them. Throw several pieces of steel together, without shape or form; they will never arrange themselves so as to compose a watch: Stone, and
mortar, and wood, without an architect, never erect a house. But the ideas in a human mind, we see, by an unknown, inexplicable economy, arrange themselves so as to form the plan of a watch or house. Experience, therefore, proves, that there is an original principle of order in mind, not in matter. From similar effects we infer similar causes. The adjustment of means to ends is alike in the universe, as in a machine of human contrivance. The causes, therefore, must be resembling.

I was from the beginning scandalised, I must own, with this resemblance, which is asserted, between the Deity and human creatures; and must conceive it to imply such a degradation of the supreme Being as no sound theist could endure. With your assistance, therefore, Demea, I shall endeavour to defend what you justly call the adorable mysteriousness of the divine nature, and shall refute this reasoning of Cleanthes; provided he allows, that I have made a fair representation of it.

When Cleanthes had assented, Philo, after a short pause, proceeded in the following manner.

That all inferences, Cleanthes, concerning fact, are founded on experience, and that all experimental reasonings are founded on the supposition, that similar causes prove similar effects, and similar effects similar causes; I shall not, at present, much dispute with you. But observe, I entreat you, with what extreme caution all just reasoners proceed in the transferring of experiments to similar cases. Unless the cases be exactly similar, they repose no perfect confidence in applying their past observation to any particular phenomenon. Every alteration of circumstances occasions a doubt concerning the event; and it requires new experiments to prove certainly, that the new circumstances are of no moment or importance. A change in bulk, situation, arrangement, age, disposition of the air, or surrounding bodies; any of these particulars may be attended
with the most unexpected consequences: And unless the objects be quite familiar to us, it is the highest temerity to expect with assurance, after any of these changes, an event similar to that which before fell under our observation. The slow and deliberate steps of philosophers, here, if anywhere, are distinguished from the precipitate march of the vulgar, who, hurried on by the smallest similitude, are incapable of all discernment or consideration.

But can you think, Cleanthes, that your usual phlegm and philosophy have been preserved in so wide a step as you have taken, when you compared to the universe houses, ships, furniture, machines; and from their similarity in some circumstances inferred a similarity in their causes? Thought, design, intelligence, such as we discover in men and other animals, is no more than one of the springs and principles of the universe, as well as heat or cold, attraction or repulsion, and a hundred others, which fall under daily observation. It is an active cause, by which some particular parts of nature, we find, produce alterations on other parts. But can a conclusion, with any propriety, be transferred from parts to the whole? Does not the great disproportion bar all comparison and inference? From observing the growth of a hair, can we learn any thing concerning the generation of a man? Would the manner of a leaf's blowing, even though perfectly known, afford us any instruction concerning the vegetation of a tree?

But allowing that we were to take the operations of one part of nature upon another for the foundation of our judgment concerning the origin of the whole (which never can be admitted) yet why select so minute, so weak, so bounded a principle as the reason and design of animals is found to be upon this planet? What peculiar privilege has this little agitation of the rain which we call thought, that we must thus
make it the model of the whole universe? Our partiality in our own favour does indeed present it on all occasions: But sound philosophy ought carefully to guard against so natural an illusion.

So far from admitting, continued Philo, that the operations of a part can afford us any just conclusion concerning the origin of the whole, I will not allow any one part to form a rule for another part, if the latter be very remote from the former. Is there any reasonable ground to conclude, that the inhabitants of other planets possess thought, intelligence, reason, or anything similar to these faculties in men? When nature has so extremely diversified her manner of operation in this small globe; can we imagine, that she incessantly copies herself throughout so immense a universe? And if thought, as we may well suppose, be confined merely to this narrow comer, and has even there so limited a sphere of action; with what propriety can we assign it for the original cause of all things? The narrow views of a peasant, who makes his domestic economy the rule for the government of kingdoms, is in comparison a pardonable sophism.


10. Gottfried Liebniz-The Philosophical Works

In addition to creating calculus at the same time as Isaac Newton, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz was also a seventeenth and early eighteenth century philosopher. He believed that the universe in which man lived was the best of all possible universes God could have created, and in the selection below gives us a response to a critical question philosophers and theologians dealt with during the Middle Ages and beyond-the
question of suffering. Leibniz’s answer below has become a standard answer to that question.

Objection. Whoever does not choose the best is lacking in power, or in knowledge, or in goodness.

God did not choose the best in creating this world.

Therefore, God has been lacking in power, or in knowledge, or in goodness.

Answer. I deny the minor, that is, the second premise of this syllogism; and our opponent proves it by this

Prosyllogism. Whoever makes things in which there is evil, which could have been made without any evil, or the making of which could have been omitted, does not choose the best.

God has made a world in which there is evil; a world, I say, which could have been made without any evil, or the making of which could have been omitted altogether.

Therefore, God has not chosen the best.

Answer. I grant the minor of this prosyllogism; for it must be confessed that there is evil in this world which God has made, and that it was possible to make a world without evil, or even not to create a world at all, for its creation has depended on the free will of God; but I deny the major, that is, the first of the two premises of the prosyllogism, and I might content myself with simply demanding its proof; but in order to make the matter clearer, I have wished to justify this denial by showing that the best plan is not always that which seeks to avoid evil, since it may happen, that the evil be accompanied by a greater good. For example, a general of an army will prefer a great victory with a slight wound to a condition without wound and without victory. We have proved this more fully in the large work by making it clear, by instances taken from mathematics and elsewhere, that an imperfection in the part may be required for a greater perfection in the whole. In this I have followed the
opinion of St. Augustine, who has said a hundred times, that
God has permitted evil in order to bring about good, that is, a
greater good; and that of Thomas Aquinas, that the permitting
of evil tends to the good of the universe. I have shown that the
ancients called Adam’s fall felix culpa, a happy sin, because it
had been retrieved with immense advantage by the incarnation
of the Son of God, who has given to the universe something
nobler than anything that ever would have been among
creatures except for it. And in order to a clearer understanding,
I have added, following many good authors, that it was in
accordance with order and the general good that God allowed
to certain creatures the opportunity of exercising their liberty,
even when he foresaw that they would turn to evil, but which he
could so well rectify; because it was not fitting that, in order to
hinder sin, God should always act in an extraordinary manner.
To overthrow this objection, therefore, it is sufficient to show
that a world with evil might be better than a world without
evil; but I have gone even farther, in the work, and have even
proved that this universe must be in reality better than every
other possible universe.

George Martin Duncan, The Philosophical Works of
Leibnitz (New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse and Taylor, 1890),
194-195. Located on the Internet Archive:
https://archive.org/stream/philosophicalwo00duncgoog#page/n206
Chapter 11: The Late Middle Ages 1300-1453

If the High Middle Ages constitute two steps forward, the Late Middle Ages certainly qualifies as a step back. During this period of over a century a series of catastrophes hit Europe and severely interrupted the progress Europe had been making to that point. Disease, war, economic setbacks, and social fragmentation all characterized the Late Middle Ages. The most serious, and notable, of the calamities that afflicted Europe was the Black Death, a disease that originated in China and spread through Asia and the Middle East with traveling Mongol hordes and via trade routes between the Asia and Europe, both over land and sea. When the disease hit Europe in the middle of the 14th century no one was prepared for what would happen. Population dramatically declined, not to recover until centuries later, entire villages were wiped off the map, and people began acting in the most despicable ways toward one another. The Black Death was terrifying in its symptoms, its spread, its relentlessness, and in its consequences. While the Plague was haunting Europe, the two most powerful kingdoms, England and France, were engaged in the devastating Hundred Years’
War which would be waged on and off for nearly all of the 14th century and the first half of the 15th. Initially fought over rights to a corner of southwestern France, the war exploded into an all-out dynastic conflict which saw England under Henry V take control of the entirety of northern France. Armies rampaged across the country side, villages and cities were damaged and destroyed, and despite long truces in the midst of conflict there seemed to be no way to settle affairs once and for all. Add to all of this major social revolts in England, where thousands of peasants marched on London; France, where thousands more revolted against economic conditions; and Italy, where woolworkers rebelled for greater rights. Not even the Catholic Church escaped this trying century and a half. For over seven decades the papacy would reside not in Rome, its traditional home, but in the city of Avignon, controlled by French kings. Upon returning to Rome late in the 14th century the papacy promptly split in two, a period known as the Great Schism, with two popes, one Italian and one French, each claiming to be the true pope. This divide would last until 1419 and led many to either abandon the church and seek salvation through other means or join the call for a council, rather than a single pope, to lead.

The first document in this chapter is from Italian writer Giovanni Boccaccio, whose major work *Decameron* captured the social panic and upheaval that followed quickly once the Black Death settled into a city. The second document tells the story of how the Jewish population of Europe became scapegoats during the Plague years, as people desperately tried to find a cause for the disease, a reason why it was infecting their lives. Document 3 looks at the economic impact of the Plague in England and the response from the king—a desperate attempt to re-establish the rules and conditions that had existed before
England was visited by the Black Death. The next two documents delve into one of the major social upheavals of the time period, the English Peasants’ Revolt. The first document, from Jean Froissart’s *Chronicle*, explains how the revolt began, while the second document, from the *Anonimalle Chronicle*, details how the revolt ended. Document 6 once again comes from Froissart, this time outlining some of the initial English victories of the Hundred Years’ War against France. The seventh document presents excerpts from the two primary treaties of the Hundred Years’ War, the Treaty of Bretigny from 1360 and the Treaty of Troyes from 1420. The final two documents cover some of the problems the Catholic Church was experiencing during this time. Document 8 is an excerpt from French cardinals who were upset by the election of the Italian Urban VI to the papacy, a manifesto that began the Great Schism. The final document for this chapter is from Marsiglio of Padua, a proponent of the idea that an ecumenical council of church leaders should collectively lead the flock rather than a single, all powerful pope. The text describes the various powers of the church community, represented by the council, as well as the limitations on the powers of both popes and bishops.

1. **Giovanni Boccaccio—Decameron**

Giovanni Boccaccio was a fourteenth century writer and poet who authored the excerpt presented below, the Decameron, a series of short stories told by characters who have tried to escape the ravages of the Black Death. The selection comes from the introduction in which Boccaccio sets the scene and describes for us the onset of the Plague and the various reactions of the people of Italy.

I say, then, that the years of the beatific incarnation of the Son of God had reached the tale of one thousand three hundred and forty eight, when in the illustrious city of Florence, the
fairest of all the cities of Italy, there made its appearance that deadly pestilence, which, whether disseminated by the influence of the celestial bodies, or sent upon us mortals by God in His just wrath by way of retribution for our iniquities, had had its origin some years before in the East, whence, after destroying an innumerable multitude of living beings, it had propagated itself without respite from place to place, and so calamitously, had spread into the West.

In Florence, despite all that human wisdom and forethought could devise to avert it, as the cleansing of the city from many impurities by officials appointed for the purpose, the refusal of entrance to all sick folk, and the adoption of many precautions for the preservation of health; despite also humble supplications addressed to God, and often repeated both in public procession and otherwise by the devout; towards the beginning of the spring of the said year the doleful effects of the pestilence began to be horribly apparent by symptoms that showed as if miraculous.

Not such were they as in the East, where an issue of blood from the nose was a manifest sign of inevitable death; but in men a women alike it first betrayed itself by the emergence of certain tumors in the groin or the armpits, some of which grew as large as a common apple, others as an egg, some more, some less, which the common folk called *gavoccioli*. From the two said parts of the body this deadly gavocciolo soon began to propagate and spread itself in all directions indifferently; after which the form of the malady began to change, black spots or livid making their appearance in many cases on the arm or the thigh or elsewhere, now few and large, then minute and numerous. And as the gavocciolo had been and still were an infallible token of approaching death, such also were these spots on whomsoever they showed themselves. Which maladies
seemed set entirely at naught both the art of the physician and the virtue of physic; indeed, whether it was that the disorder was of a nature to defy such treatment, or that the physicians were at fault – besides the qualified there was now a multitude both of men and of women who practiced without having received the slightest tincture of medical science – and, being in ignorance of its source, failed to apply the proper remedies; in either case, not merely were those that covered few, but almost all within three days from the appearance of the said symptoms, sooner or later, died, and in most cases without any fever or other attendant malady.

Moreover, the virulence of the pest was the greater by reason the intercourse was apt to convey it from the sick to the whole, just as fire devours things dry or greasy when they are brought close to it, the evil went yet further, for not merely by speech or association with the sick was the malady communicated to the healthy with consequent peril of common death; but any that touched the clothes the sick or aught else that had been touched, or used by these seemed thereby to contract the disease.

So marvelous sounds that which I have now to relate, that, had not many, and I among them, observed it with their own eyes, I had hardly dared to credit it, much less to set it down in writing, though I had had it from the lips of a credible witness.

I say, then, that such was the energy of the contagion of the said pestilence, that it was not merely propagated from man to mail, but, what is much more startling, it was frequently observed, that things which had belonged to one sick or dead of the disease, if touched by some other living creature, not of the human species, were the occasion, not merely of sickening, but of an almost instantaneous death. Whereof my own eyes (as I said a little before) had cognisance, one day among others,
by the following experience. The rags of a poor man who had
died of the disease being strewn about the open street, two hogs
came thither, and after, as is their wont, no little trifling with
their snouts, took the rags between their teeth and tossed them
to and fro about their chaps; whereupon, almost immediately,
they gave a few turns, and fell down dead, as if by poison, upon
the rags which in an evil hour they had disturbed.

In which circumstances, not to speak of many others of a
similar or even graver complexion, divers apprehensions and
imaginations were engendered in the minds of such as were
left alive, inclining almost all of them to the same harsh
resolution, to wit, to shun and abhor all contact with the sick
and all that belonged to them, thinking thereby to make each
his own health secure. Among whom there were those who
thought that to live temperately and avoid all excess would
count for much as a preservative against seizures of this kind.
Wherefore they banded together, and dissociating themselves
from all others, formed communities in houses where there
were no sick, and lived a separate and secluded life, which they
regulated with the utmost care, avoiding every kind of luxury,
but eating and drinking moderately of the most delicate viands
and the finest wines, holding converse with none but one
another, lest tidings of sickness or death should reach them,
and diverting their minds with music and such other delights
as they could devise. Others, the bias of whose minds was in the
opposite direction, maintained, that to drink freely, frequent
places of public resort, and take their pleasure with song and
revel, sparing to satisfy no appetite, and to laugh and mock at
no event, was the sovereign remedy for so great an evil: and
that which they affirmed they also put in practice, so far as they
were able, resorting day and night, now to this tavern, now to
that, drinking with an entire disregard of rule or measure, and
by preference making the houses of others, as it were, their inns, if they but saw in them aught that was particularly to their taste or liking; which they, were readily able to do, because the owners, seeing death imminent, had become as reckless of their property as of their lives; so that most of the houses were open to all comers, and no distinction was observed between the stranger who presented himself and the rightful lord. Thus, adhering ever to their inhuman determination to shun the sick, as far as possible, they ordered their life. In this extremity of our city’s suffering and tribulation the venerable authority of laws, human and divine, was abased and all but totally dissolved for lack of those who should have administered and enforced them, most of whom, like the rest of the citizens, were either dead or sick or so hard bested for servants that they were unable to execute any office; whereby every man was free to do what was right in his own eyes.

Not a few there were who belonged to neither of the two said parties, but kept a middle course between them, neither laying the same restraint upon their diet as the former, nor allowing themselves the same license in drinking and other dissipations as the latter, but living with a degree of freedom sufficient to satisfy their appetite and not as recluses. They therefore walked abroad, carrying in the hands flowers or fragrant herbs or divers sorts of spices, which they frequently raised to their noses, deeming it an excellent thing thus to comfort the brain with such perfumes, because the air seemed be everywhere laden and reeking with the stench emitted by the dead and the dying, and the odours of drugs.

Some again, the most sound, perhaps, in judgment, as they were also the most harsh in temper, of all, affirmed that there was no medicine for the disease superior or equal in efficacy to flight; following which prescription a multitude of men and
women, negligent of all but themselves, deserted their city, their houses, their estates, their kinsfolk, their goods, and went into voluntary exile, or migrated to the country parts, as if God in visiting men with this pestilence in requital of their iniquities would not pursue them with His wrath wherever they might be, but intended the destruction of such alone as remained within the circuit of the walls of the city; or deeming perchance, that it was now time for all to flee from it, and that its last hour was come.

Of the adherents of these diverse opinions not all died, neither did all escape; but rather there were, of each sort and in every place many that sickened, and by those who retained their health were treated after the example which they themselves, while whole, had set, being everywhere left to languish in almost total neglect. Tedious were it to recount, how citizen avoided citizen, how among neighbors was scarce found any that showed fellow-feeling for another, how kinsfolk held aloof, and never met, or but rarely; enough that this sore affliction entered so deep into the minds of men a women, that in the horror thereof brother was forsaken by brother nephew by uncle, brother by sister, and oftentimes husband by wife: nay, what is more, and scarcely to be believed, fathers and mothers were found to abandon their own children, untended, unvisited, to their fate, as if they had been strangers. Wherefore the sick of both sexes, whose number could not be estimated, were left without resource but in the charity of friends (and few such there were), or the interest of servants, who were hardly to be had at high rates and on unseemly terms, and being, moreover, one and all, men and women of gross understanding, and for the most part unused to such offices, concerned themselves no further than to supply the immediate and expressed wants of the sick, and to watch them die; in
which service they themselves not seldom perished with their gains. In consequence of which dearth of servants and dereliction of the sick by neighbors, kinsfolk and friends, it came to pass—a thing, perhaps, never before heard of—that no woman, however dainty, fair or well-born she might be, shrank, when stricken with the disease, from the ministrations of a man, no matter whether he were young or no, or scrupled to expose to him every part of her body, with no more shame than if he had been a woman, submitting of necessity to that which her malady required; wherefrom, perchance, there resulted in after time some loss of modesty in such as recovered. Besides which many succumbed, who with proper attendance, would, perhaps, have escaped death; so that, what with the virulence of the plague and the lack of due attendance of the sick, the multitude of the deaths, that daily and nightly took place in the city, was such that those who heard the tale—not to say witnessed the fact—were struck dumb with amazement. Whereby, practices contrary to the former habits of the citizens could hardly fail to grow up among the survivors.

It had been, as to-day it still is, the custom for the women that were neighbors and of kin to the deceased to gather in his house with the women that were most closely connected with him, to wail with them in common, while on the other hand his male kinsfolk and neighbors, with not a few of the other citizens, and a due proportion of the clergy according to his quality, assembled without, in front of the house, to receive the corpse; and so the dead man was borne on the shoulders of his peers, with funeral pomp of taper and dirge, to the church selected by him before his death. Which rites, as the pestilence waxed in fury, were either in whole or in great part disused, and gave way to others of a novel order. For not only did no crowd of women surround the bed of the dying, but many passed
from this life unregarded, and few indeed were they to whom were accorded the lamentations and bitter tears of sorrowing relations; nay, for the most part, their place was taken by the laugh, the jest, the festal gathering; observances which the women, domestic piety in large measure set aside, had adopted with very great advantage to their health. Few also there were whose bodies were attended to the church by more than ten or twelve of their neighbors, and those not the honorable and respected citizens; but a sort of corpse-carriers drawn from the baser ranks, who called themselves becchini and performed such offices for hire, would shoulder the bier, and with hurried steps carry it, not to the church of the dead man’s choice, but to that which was nearest at hand, with four or six priests in front and a candle or two, or, perhaps, none; nor did the priests distress themselves with too long and solemn an office, but with the aid of the becchini hastily consigned the corpse to the first tomb which they found untenanted. The condition of the lower, and, perhaps, in great measure of the middle ranks, of the people showed even worse and more deplorable; for, deluded by hope or constrained by poverty, they stayed in their quarters, in their houses where they sickened by thousands a day, and, being without service or help of any kind, were, so to speak, irredeemably devoted to the death which overtook them. Many died daily or nightly in the public streets; of many others, who died at home, the departure was hardly observed by their neighbors, until the stench of their putrefying bodies carried the tidings; and what with their corpses and the corpses of others who died on every hand the whole place was a sepulchre.

It was the common practice of most of the neighbors, moved no less by fear of contamination by the putrefying bodies than by charity towards the deceased, to drag the corpses out of the houses with their own hands, aided, perhaps, by a porter, if a
porter was to be had, and to lay them in front of the doors, where anyone who made the round might have seen, especially in the morning, more of them than he could count; afterwards they would have biers brought up or in default, planks, whereon they laid them. Nor was it once twice only that one and the same bier carried two or three corpses at once; but quite a considerable number of such cases occurred, one bier sufficing for husband and wife, two or three brothers, father and son, and so forth. And times without number it happened, that as two priests, bearing the cross, were on their way to perform the last office for someone, three or four biers were brought up by the porters in rear of them, so that, whereas the priests supposed that they had but one corpse to bury, they discovered that there were six or eight, or sometimes more. Nor, for all their number, were their obsequies honored by either tears or lights or crowds of mourners rather, it was come to this, that a dead man was then of no more account than a dead goat would be to-day.

https://archive.org/stream/decameron01boccuoft#page/4

2. Jacob von Königshofen-Cremation of the Strasbourg Jewry

Jacob von Königshofen was a German historian who lived and wrote during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. He wrote an important chronicle of German history that influenced later historians. In the excerpt below Königshofen recounts an event that happened during the height of the Black Death in German and Swiss towns that involved their Jewish populations. The document is a good window into how the Plague affected all aspects of society during the fourteenth century.

Copy and paste the link below into your web browser to access this document:
3. Ordinance of Laborers

The Ordinance of Laborers was issued by England’s King Edward III in 1349 with a follow up document, the Statute of Laborers, issued two years later. The Ordinance was a reaction to the economic effects of the Black Death as it tore its way through England. Contained in the excerpt below are provisions against workers, businesses and beggars in the streets. This document helps round out how impactful the Black Death truly was in Europe, affecting economics in such a way that a major European king needed to get involved.

The king to the sheriff of Kent, greeting. Because a great part of the people, and especially of workmen and servants, late died of the pestilence, many seeing the necessity of masters, and great scarcity of servants, will not serve unless they may receive excessive wages, and some rather willing to beg in idleness, than by labor to get their living; we, considering the grievous incommodities, which of the lack especially of ploughmen and such laborers may hereafter come, have upon deliberation and treaty with the prelates and the nobles, and learned men assisting us, of their mutual counsel ordained:

That every man and woman of our realm of England, of what condition he be, free or bond, able in body, and within the age of threescore years, not living in merchandise, nor exercising any craft, nor having of his own whereof he may live, nor proper land, about whose tillage he may himself occupy, and not serving any other, if he in convenient service, his estate considered, be required to serve, he shall be bounden to serve him which so shall him require; and take only the wages, livery, mead, or salary, which were accustomed to be given in the places where he oweth to serve, the twentieth year of our reign of England, or five or six other common years next before.
Provided always, that the lords be preferred before other in their bondmen or their land tenants, so in their service to be retained; so that nevertheless the said lords shall retain no more than be necessary for them; and if any such man or woman, being so required to serve, will not the same do, that proved by two true men before the sheriff or the constables of the town where the same shall happen to be done, he shall anon be taken by them or any of them, and committed to the next jail, there to remain under strait keeping, till he find surety to serve in the form aforesaid.

Item, if any reaper, mower, or other workman or servant, of what estate or condition that he be, retained in any man’s service, do depart from the said service without reasonable cause or license, before the term agreed, he shall have pain of imprisonment. And that none under the same pain presume to receive or to retain any such in his service.

Item, that no man pay, or promise to pay, any servant any more wages, liveries, mead, or salary than was wont, as afore is said; nor that any in other manner shall demand or receive the same, upon pain of doubling of that, that so shall be paid, promised, required, or received, to him which thereof shall feel himself grieved, pursuing for the same; and if none such will pursue, then the same to be applied to any of the people that will pursue; and such pursuit shall be in the court of the lord of the place where such case shall happen.

Item, if the lords of the towns or manors presume in any point to come against this present ordinance either by them, or by their servants, then pursuit shall be made against them in the counties, wapentakes, tithings, or such other courts, for the treble pain paid or promised by them or their servants in the form aforesaid; and if any before this present ordinance hath covenanted with any so to serve for more wages, he shall not be
bound by reason of the same covenant, to pay more than at any other time was wont to be paid to such person; nor upon the said pain shall presume any more to pay.

Item, that saddlers, skinners, white-tawers, cordwainers, tailors, smiths, carpenters, masons, tilers, [shipwrights], carter, and all other artificers and workmen, shall not take for their labor and workmanship above the same that was wont to be paid to such persons the said twentieth year, and other common years next before, as afore is said, in the place where they shall happen to work; and if any man take more, he shall be committed to the next jaill, in manner as afore is said.

Item, that butchers, fishmongers, hostlers, breweres, bakers, puters, and all other sellers of all manner of victual, shall be bound to sell the same victual for a reasonable price, having respect to the price that such victual be sold at in the places adjoining, so that the same sellers have moderate gains, and not excessive, reasonably to be required according to the distance of the place from whence the said victuals be carried; and if any sell such victuals in any other manner, and thereof be convict in the manner and form aforesaid, he shall pay the double of the same that he so received, to the party damnified, or, in default of him, to any other that will pursue in this behalf: and the mayors and bailiffs of cities, boroughs, merchant-towns, and others, and of the ports and places of the sea, shall have power to inquire of all and singular which shall in anything offend the same, and to levy the said pain to the use of them at whose suit such offenders shall be convict; and in case that the same mayors or bailiffs be negligent in doing execution of the premises, and thereof be convict before our justices, by us to be assigned, then the same mayors and bailiffs shall be compelled by the same justices to pay the treble of the thing so sold to the party damnified, or to any other in default of
him that will pursue; and nevertheless toward us they shall be grievously punished.

Item, because that many valiant beggars, as long as they may live of begging, do refuse to labor, giving themselves to idleness and vice, and sometime to theft and other abominations; none upon the said pain of imprisonment shall, under the color of pity or alms, give anything to such, which may labor, or presume to favor them toward their desires, so that thereby they may be compelled to labor for their necessary living.

We command you, firmly enjoining, that all and singular the premises in the cities, boroughs, market towns, seaports, and other places in your bailiwick, where you shall think expedient, as well within liberties as without, you do cause to be publicly proclaimed, and to be observed and duly put in execution aforesaid; and this by no means omit, as you regard us and the common weal of our realm, and would save yourself harmless. Witness the king at Westminster, the 18th day of June. By the king himself and the whole council.

Like writs are directed to the sheriffs throughout England.

The king to the reverend father in Christ W. by the same grace bishop of Winchester, greeting. “Because a great part of the people,” as before, until “for their necessary living,” and then thus: And therefore we entreat you that the premises in every of the churches, and other places of your diocese, which you shall think expedient, you do cause to be published; directing the parsons, vicars, ministers of such churches, and others under you, to exhort and invite their parishioners by salutary admonitions, to labor, and to observe the ordinances aforesaid, as the present necessity requireth: and that you do likewise moderate the stipendiary chaplains of your said diocese, who, as it is said, do now in like manner refuse to serve without an excessive salary; and compel them to serve for
the accustomed salary, as it behooveth them, under the pain of suspension and interdict. And this by no means omit, as you regard us and the common weal of our said realm. Witness, etc. as above. By the king himself and the whole council.

Like letters of request are directed to the several bishops of England, and to the keeper of the spiritualities of the archbishopric of Canterbury, during the vacancy of the see, under the same date.

Albert Beebe White and Wallace Notestein, Source Problems in English History (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1915), 141-146. Located on the Internet Archive:
https://archive.org/stream/sourceproblemsin00whituoft#page/140

4. Jean Froissart—Beginning of the English Peasants’ Revolt

Jean Froissart’s Chronicles are one of the most relied on histories of the later Middle Ages, although very little is definitely known about the author. We do know that Froissart wrote poetry and courtly romances in addition to history. He also travelled widely in England, France, Wales, and other places in an effort to gather accurate information for his Chronicles. In the excerpt presented below Froissart discusses the English Peasants’ Revolt, a major event in the late fourteenth century that resulted from the Black Death and attempts to limit workers through laws such as the Ordinance of Laborers.

Copy and paste the link below into your web browser to access this document:
http://faculty.nipissingu.ca/muhlberger/FROISSART/PEASANTS.HTM

5. Anonimalle Chronicle—English Peasants’ Revolt

Little is known regarding the origin of the document excerpted below, the Anonimalle Chronicle, other than that it was produced in the Benedictine abbey St. Mary’s and is composed of separate descriptions of various events such as the English Peasants’ Revolt,
subject of the current excerpt. The selection here discusses the meeting held between England’s king, Richard II, only fourteen years old, and Wat Tyler, the leader of the revolt, as well as what happened afterwards.

Then the King caused a proclamation to be made that all the commons of the country who were still in London should come to Smithfield, to meet him there; and so they did.

And when the King and his train had arrived there they turned into the Eastern meadow in front of St. Bartholomew’s, which is a house of canons: and the commons arrayed themselves on the west side in great battles. At this moment the Mayor of London, William Walworth, came up, and the King bade him go to the commons, and make their chieftain come to him. And when he was summoned by the Mayor, by the name of Wat Tighler of Maidstone, he came to the King with great confidence, mounted on a little horse, that the commons might see him. And he dismounted, holding in his hand a dagger which he had taken from another man, and when he had dismounted he half bent his knee, and then took the King by the hand, and shook his arm forcibly and roughly, saying to him, “Brother, be of good comfort and joyful, for you shall have, in the fortnight that is to come, praise from the commons even more than you have yet had, and we shall be good companions.” And the King said to Walter, “Why will you not go back to your own country?” But the
other answered, with a great oath, that neither he nor his fellows would depart until they had got their charter such as they wished to have it, and had certain points rehearsed and added to their charter which they wished to demand. And he said in a threatening fashion that the lords of the realm would rue it bitterly if these points were not settled to their pleasure. Then the King asked him what were the points which he wished to have revised, and he should have them freely, without contradiction, written out and sealed. Thereupon the said Walter rehearsed the points which were to be demanded; and he asked that there should be no law within the realm save the law of Winchester, and that from henceforth there should be no outlawry in any process of law, and that no lord should have lordship save civilly, and that there should be equality among all people save only the King, and that the goods of Holy Church should not remain in the hands of the religious, nor of parsons and vicars, and other churchmen; but that clergy already in possession should have a sufficient sustenance from the endowments, and the rest of the goods should be divided among the people of the parish. And he demanded that there should be only one bishop in England and only one prelate, and all the lands and tenements now held by them should be confiscated, and divided among the commons, only reserving for them a reasonable sustenance. And he demanded that there should be
no more villeins in England, and no serfdom or villeinage, but that all men should be free and of one condition. To this the King gave an easy answer, and said that he should have all that he could fairly grant, reserving only for himself the regality of his crown. And then he bade him go back to his home, without making further delay.

During all this time that the King was speaking, no lord or counsellor dared or wished to give answer to the commons in any place save the King himself. Presently Wat Tighler, in the presence of the King, sent for a flagon of water to rinse his mouth, because of the great heat that he was in, and when it was brought he rinsed his mouth in a very rude and disgusting fashion before the King’s face. And then he made them bring him a jug of beer, and drank a great draught, and then, in the presence of the King, climbed on his horse again. At this time a certain valet from Kent, who was among the King’s retinue, asked that the said Walter, the chief of the commons, might be pointed out to him. And when he saw him, he said aloud that he knew him for the greatest thief and robber in all Kent…. And for these words Watt tried to strike him with his dagger, and would have slain him in the King’s presence; but because he strove so to do, the Mayor of London, William Walworth, reasoned with the said Watt for his violent behaviour and despite, done in the King’s presence, and arrested him. And because he arrested him, he said Watt stabbed the Mayor with
his dagger in the stomach in great wrath. But, as it pleased God, the Mayor was wearing armour and took no harm, but like a hardy and vigorous man drew his cutlass, and struck back at the said Watt, and gave him a deep cut on the neck, and then a great cut on the head. And during this scuffle one of the King’s household drew his sword, and ran Watt two or three times through the body, mortally wounding him. And he spurred his horse, crying to the commons to avenge him, and the horse carried him some four score paces, and then he fell to the ground half dead. And when the commons saw him fall, and knew not how for certain it was, they began to bend their bows and to shoot, wherefore the King himself spurred his horse, and rode out to them, commanding them that they should all come to him to Clerkenwell Fields.

Meanwhile the Mayor of London rode as hastily as he could back to the City, and commanded those who were in charge of the twenty four wards to make proclamation round their wards, that every man should arm himself as quickly as he could, and come to the King in St. John’s Fields, where were the commons, to aid the King, for he was in great trouble and necessity.... And presently the aldermen came to him in a body, bringing with them their wardens, and the wards arrayed in bands, a fine company of well-armed folks in great strength. And they enveloped the commons like sheep within a pen, and after that the Mayor had set the wardens
of the city on their way to the King, he returned with a company of lances to Smithfield, to make an end of the captain of the commons. And when he came to Smithfield he found not there the said captain Watt Tighler, at which he marvelled much, and asked what was become of the traitor. And it was told him that he had been carried by some of the commons to the hospital for poor folks by St. Bartholomew’s, and was put to bed in the chamber of the master of the hospital. And the Mayor went thither and found him, and had him carried out to the middle of Smithfield, in presence of his fellows, and there beheaded. And thus ended his wretched life. But the Mayor had his head set on a pole and borne before him to the King, who still abode in the Fields. And when the King saw the head he had it brought near him to abash the commons, and thanked the Mayor greatly for what he had done. And when the commons saw that their chieftain, Watt Tyler, was dead in such a manner, they fell to the ground there among the wheat, like beaten men, imploring the King for mercy for their misdeeds. And the King benevolently granted them mercy, and most of them took to flight. But the King ordained two knights to conduct the rest of them, namely the Kentishmen, through London, and over London Bridge, without doing them harm, so that each of them could go to his own home.

Afterwards the King sent out his messengers into divers parts, to capture the malefactors and put
them to death. And many were taken and hanged at London, and they set up many gallows around the City of London, and in other cities and boroughs of the south country. At last, as it pleased God, the King seeing that too many of his liege subjects would be undone, and too much blood split, took pity in his heart, and granted them all pardon, on condition that they should never rise again, under pain of losing life or members, and that each of them should get his charter of pardon, and pay the King as fee for his seal twenty shillings, to make him rich. And so finished this wicked war.


6. Jean Froissart-On the Hundred Years’ War

The excerpt below is another from the medieval chronicler Jean Froissart and his Chronicles. The document here summarizes two of the major battles in the early going of the Hundred Years’ War between England and France. The Battles of Crécy and Poitiers were both fought on French soil during the reign of England’s Edward III and both were won by the English. As you read this document pay attention to how the armies were arranged, how England prevailed, and how captured prisoners were treated.

The Battle of Crécy (1346)

The Englishmen, who were in three battles lying on the ground to rest them, as soon as they saw the Frenchmen approach, they rose upon their feet fair and easily without any haste and arranged their battles. The first, which was the prince’s battle, the archers there stood in manner of a herse
and the men of arms in the bottom of the battle. The earl of Northampton and the earl of Arundel with the second battle were on a wing in good order, ready to comfort the prince’s battle, if need were.

The lords and knights of France came not to the assembly together in good order, for some came before and some came after in such haste and evil order, that one of them did trouble another. When the French king saw the Englishmen, his blood changed, and [he] said to his marshals: “Make the Genoways go on before and begin the battle in the name of God and Saint Denis.” There were of the Genoways crossbows about a fifteen thousand, but they were so weary of going afoot that day a six leagues armed with their crossbows, that they said to their constables: “We be not well ordered to fight this day, for we be not in the case to do any great deed of arms: we have more need of rest.” These words came to the earl of Alencon, who said: “A man is well at ease to be charged with such a sort of rascals, to be faint and fail now at most need.” Also the same season there fell a great rain and a eclipse with a terrible thunder, and before the rain there came flying over both battles a great number of crows for fear of the tempest coming. Then anon the air began to wax clear, and the sun to shine fair and bright, the which was right in the Frenchmen’s eyes and on the Englishmen’s backs. When the Genoways were assembled together and began to approach, they made a great [shout] and cry to abash the Englishmen, but they stood still and stirred not for all that: then the Genoways again the second time made another leap and a fell cry, and stept forward a little, and the Englishmen removed not one foot: thirdly, again they leapt and cried, and went forth till they came within shot; then they shot fiercely with their crossbows. Then the English archers stept forth one pace and let fly their arrows so wholly [together] and so thick, that it
seemed snow. When the Genoways felt the arrows piercing through heads, arms, and breasts, many of them cast down their crossbows and did cut their strings and returned discomfited. When the French king saw them fly away, he said: “Slay these rascals, for they shall let and trouble us without reason.” Then ye should have seen the men at arms dash in among them and killed a great number of them: and ever still the Englishmen shot whereas they saw thickest press; the sharp arrows ran into the men of arms and into their horses, an many fell, horse and men, among the Genoways, and when they were down, they could not relieve again, the press was so thick that on overthrew another. And also among the Englishmen there were certain rascals that went afoot with great knives, and they went in among the men of arms, and slew and murdered many as they lay on the ground, both earls, barons, knights, and squires, whereof the king of England was after displeased, for he had rather they had been taken prisoners.

The valiant king of Bohemia called Charles of Luxembourg, son to the noble emperor Henry of Luxembourg, for all that he was nigh blind, when he understood the order of the battle, he said to the about him: “Where is the lord Charles my son?” His men said: “Sir we cannot tell; we think he be fighting.” Then he said: “Sirs, ye are my men, my companions and friends in this journey: I require you bring me so far forward, that I may strike one stroke with my sword.” They said they would do his commandment, and to the intent that they should not lose him in the press, they tied all their reins of their bridles each to other and set the king before to accomplish his desire, and so they went on their enemies. The lord Charles of Bohemia his son, who wrote himself king of Almaine and bare the arms, he came in good order to the battle; but when he saw that the matter went awry on their party, he departed, I cannot tell you
which way. The king his father was so far forward that he strake a stroke with his sword, yea and more than four, and fought valiantly and so did his company; and they adventured themselves so forward, that they were there all slain; and the next day they were found in the place about the king, and all their horses tied each to other.

[The contingent led by the king’s son, the Black Prince, was hard pressed in the fighting.] Then the second battle of the Englishment came to succour the prince’s battle, the which was time, for they had as then much ado and they with the prince sent a messenger to the king, who was on a little windmill hill. Then the knight said to the king: “Sir, the earl of Warwick and the earl of Oxford, sir Raynold Cobham and other, such as be about the prince your son, are fiercely fought withal and are sore handled; wherefore they desire you that you and your battle will come and aid them; for if the Frenchmen increase, as they doubt they will, your son and they shall have much ado.” Then the king said: “Is my son dead or hurt or on the earth felled?” “No, sir,” quoth the knight, “but he is hardly matched; wherefore he hath need of your aid.” “Well,” said the king, “return to him and to them that sent you hither, and say to them that they send no more to me for any adventure that falleth, as long as my son is alive: and also say to them that they suffer him this day to win his spurs; for if God be pleased, I will this journey be his and the honour thereof, and to them that be about him.”

The Battle of Poitiers 1356

Oftentimes the adventure of amours and of war are more fortunate and marvellous than any man can think or wish. Truly this battle, the which was near to Poitiers in the fields of Beauvoir and Maupertuis, was right great and perilous, and many deeds of arms there was done the which all came not to
knowledge. The fighters on both sides endured much pain: king John with his own hands did that day marvels in arms: he had an axe in his hands wherewith he defended himself and fought in the breaking of the press. Near to the king there was taken the earl of Tancarville, sir Jaques of Bourbon car] of Ponthieu, and the lord John of Artois earl of Eu, and a little above that under the banner of the captal of Buch was taken sir Charles of Artois and divers other knights and squires. The chase endured to the gates of Poitiers: there were many slain and beaten down, horse and man, for they of Poitiers closed their gates and would suffer none to enter; wherefore in the street before the gate was horrible murder, men hurt and beaten down....

Then there was a great press to take the king, and such as knew him cried, “Sir, yield you, or else ye are but dead.” There was a knight of Saint-Omer’s, retained in wages with the king of England, called sir Denis Morbeke, who had served the Englishmen five year before, because in his youth he had forfeited the realm of France for a murder that he did at Saint-Omer’s. It happened so well for him, that he was next to the king when they were about to take him: he stept forth into the press, and by strength of his body and arms he came to the French king and said in good French, “Sir, yield you.” The king beheld the knight and said: “To whom shall I yield me? Where is my cousin the prince of Wales? If I might see him, I would speak with him.” Denis answered and said: “Sir, he is not here; but yield you to me and I shall bring you to him.” “Who be you?” quoth the king. “Sir,” he, “I am Denis of Morbeke, a knight of Artois; but I serve the king of England because I am banished the realm of France and I have forfeited all that I had there.” Then the king gave him his right gauntlet, saying “There I yield me to you.” was a great press about the king, for every man enforced him to say “I have taken him,” so that the king could
not go forward with his young son the lord Philip with him because of the press...

[The Black Prince sent two lords to search for the French king.] These two lords took their horses and departed from the prince rode up a hill to look about them: then they perceived a flock of men of arms coming together right wearily: there was the French king afoot in great peril, for Englishmen and Gascons were his masters; they had taken him from sir Denis Morbeke perforce, and such as were most of force said, “I have taken him”; “Nay,” quoth another, “I have taken him”; so they strave which should have him. Then the French king, to eschew that peril, said: “Sirs, strive not: lead men courteously, and my son, to my cousin the prince, and strive not for my taking, for I am so great a lord to make you all rich.” The king’s words somewhat appeased them; howbeit ever as they went they made riot and brawled for the taking of the king. When the twoforesaid lords saw and heard that noise and strife among them they came to them and said: “Sirs, what is the matter that ye strive for?” “Sirs,” said one of them, “it is for the French king, who is here taken prisoner, and there be more than ten knights and squires that challengeth the taking of him and of his son. “Then the two lords entered into the press and caused every man to draw aback, and commanded them in the prince’s name on pain of their heads to make no more noise nor to approach the king no nearer, without they were commanded. Then every man gave room to the lords, and they alighted and did their reverence to the king, and so brought him and his son in peace and rest to the prince of Wales.

The same day of the battle at night the prince made a supper in his lodging to the French king and to the most part of the great lords that were prisoners. The prince made the king and his son, the lord James of Bourbon, the lord John d’Artois, the
earl of Tancarville the earl of Estampes, the earl of Dammartin, the earl of Joinville the lord of Partenay to sit all at one board, and other lords, knights and squires at other tables; and always the prince served before the king as humbly as he could, and would not sit at the king’s board for any desire that the king could make, but he said he was not sufficient to sit at the table with so great a prince as the king was. But then he said to the king, “Sir, for God’s sake make none evil nor heavy cheer, though God this day did not consent to follow your will; for, sir, surely the king my father shall bear you as much honour and amity as he may do, and shall accord with you so reasonably that ye shall ever be friends together after. And, sir, methink ye ought to rejoice, though the journey be not as ye would have had it, for this day ye have won the high renown of prowess and have passed this day in valiantness all other of your party. Sir, I say not this to mock you, for all that be on our party, that saw every man’s deeds, are plainly accorded by true sentence to give you the prize and chaplet.” Therewith the Frenchmen began to murmur and said among themselves how the prince had spoken nobly, and that by all estimation he should prove a noble man, if God send him life and to persevere in such good fortune.

https://archive.org/stream/chroniclesfrois00macagoog#page/n144

7. Treaties of Bretigny and Troyes

*During the Hundred Years’ War there were two treaties that stand out for the impact they would have on the future progress of the war. The first is the Treaty of Brétigny-Calais, signed in 1360, four years after the English scored a victory at the Battle of Poitiers. The second*
is the Treaty of Troyes, signed five years after a tremendous English victory over a much larger force at the Battle of Agincourt during the reign of Henry V. Excerpts from each treaty are presented below.

**Treaty of Bretigny 1360**

1. The king of England shall hold for himself and his heirs, for all time to come, in addition to that which he holds in Guienne and Gascony, all the possessions which are enumerated below, to be held in the same manner that the king of France and his sons, or any of their ancestors, have held them...

7. And likewise the said king and his eldest son shall give order, by their letters patent to all archbishops and other prelates of the holy Church, and also to counts, viscounts, barons, nobles, citizens, and others of the cities, lands, countries, islands, and places before mentioned, that they shall be obedient to the king of England and to his heirs and at their ready command, in the same manner in which they have been obedient to the kings and to the crown of France. And by the same letters they shall liberate and absolve them from all homage, pledges, oaths, obligations, subjections, and promises made by any of them to the kings and to the crown of France in any manner.

13. It is agreed that the king of France shall pay to the king of England three million gold crowns, of which two are worth an obol of English money.

30. It is agreed that honest alliances, friendships, and confederations shall be formed by the two kings of France and England and their kingdoms, not repugnant to the honor or the conscience of one king or the other. No alliances which they have, on this side or that, with any person of Scotland or Flanders, or any other country, shall be allowed to stand in the way.

**Treaty of Troyes 1420**
6. After our death, and from that time forward, the crown and kingdom of France, with all their rights and appurtenances, shall be vested permanently in our son [son-in-law], King Henry, and his heirs.

7. The power and authority to govern and to control the public affairs of the said kingdom shall, during our life-time, be vested in our son, King Henry, with the advice of the nobles and the wise men who are obedient to us, and who have consideration for the advancement and honor of the said kingdom.

24. . . . [It is agreed] that the two kingdoms shall be governed from the time that our said son, or any of his heirs, shall assume the crown, not divided between different kings at the same time, but under one person, who shall be king and sovereign lord of both kingdoms; observing all pledges and all other things, to each kingdom its rights, liberties or customs, usages and laws, not submitting in any manner one kingdom to the other.

29. In consideration of the frightful and astounding crimes and misdeeds committed against the kingdom of France by Charles, the said Dauphin, it is agreed that we, our son Henry, and also our very dear son Philip, duke of Burgundy, will never treat for peace or amity with the said Charles.

https://archive.org/stream/sourcebookofmedi00oggfuoft#page/440/mode/2up

8. Manifesto of the Revolting Cardinals

As if the onset of the Black Death and the Hundred Years’ War weren’t enough to terrorize fourteenth century Europe, serious problems with the Catholic Church arose to disrupt the lives of many
Christians across the continent. First there was the Avignon Papacy, a period of over seventy years during which popes resided not in Rome, but in the French controlled city of Avignon. Following on the heels of its return to Rome the church was rocked by the Great Schism, a period during which there were at first two, then three popes, each vying for power and issues taxes and rules on the laity. The document below comes from the year 1378, after the election of an Italian pope upon the return of the Papacy to Rome, and the discord created by a number of French cardinals who were not satisfied with said election.

After the apostolic seat was made vacant by the death of our lord pope Gregory XI, who died in March, we assembled in conclave for the election of a pope, as is the law and custom, in the papal palace, in which Gregory had died. . . . Officials of the city with a great multitude the people, for the most part armed and called together for this purpose by the ringing of bells, surrounded the palace in a threatening manner and even entered it and almost filled it. To the terror caused by their presence they added threats that unless we should at once elect a Roman or an Italian they would kill us. They gave us no time to deliberate but compelled us unwillingly, through violence and fear, to elect an Italian without delay. In order to escape – danger which threatened us from such a mob, we elected Bartholomew, archbishop of Bari, thinking that he would have enough conscience not to accept the election, since every one knew that it was made under such wicked threats. But he was unmindful of his own salvation and burning with ambition, and so, to the great scandal of the clergy and of the Christian people, and contrary to the laws of the church, he accepted this election which was offered him, although not all cardinals were present at the election, and it was extorted from us by the threats and demands of the officials and people of the city. And although such an election is null and void, and the danger from
the people still threatened us. He was enthroned and crowned, and called himself pope and apostolic. But according to the holy fathers and to the law, of the church, he should be called apostate, anathema, Antichrist, and the mocker and destroyer of Christianity.


https://archive.org/stream/asourcebookform06mcneoog#page/n350

9. Marsiglio of Padua—Defender of the Peace

The excerpt below comes from a work called *Defensor Pacis*, or Defender of Peace, written by Marsiglio of Padua around 1324. Marsiglio was an Italian scholar who studied medicine in Italy and philosophy at the University of Paris. The work included here sought to refute papal power in both church and state affairs and called for the Catholic Church to be run by council rather than a single individual, placing Marsiglio and his writing at the center of movement called Conciliarism that arose due to the struggles the church experienced during the fourteenth century.

1. The one divine canonical Scripture, the conclusions that necessarily follow from it, and the interpretation placed upon it by the common consent of Christians, are true, and belief in them is necessary to the salvation of those to whom they are made known.

2. The general council of Christians or its majority alone has the authority to define doubtful passages of the divine law, and to determine those that are to be regarded as articles of the Christian faith, belief in which is essential to salvation; and no partial council or single person of any position has the authority to decide these questions.

3. The gospels teach that no temporal punishment or penalty
should be used to compel observance of divine commandments.

4. It is necessary to salvation to obey the commandments of the new divine law [the New Testament] and the conclusions that follow necessarily from it and the precepts of reason; but it is not necessary to salvation to obey all the commandments of the ancient law [the Old Testament].

5. No mortal has the right to dispense with the commands or prohibitions of the new divine law; but the general council and the Christian “legislator” alone have the right to prohibit things which are permitted by the new law, under penalties in this world or the next, and no partial council or single person of any position has that right.

6. The whole body of citizens or its majority alone is the human “legislator.”

7. Decretals and decrees of the bishop of Rome, or of any other bishops or body of bishops, have no power to coerce anyone by secular penalties or punishments, except by the authorization of the human “legislator.”

8. The “legislator” alone or the one who rules by its authority has the power to dispense with human laws.

9. The elective principality or other office derives its authority from the election of the body having the right to elect, and not from the confirmation or approval of any other power.

10. The election of any prince or other official, especially one who has the coercive power, is determined solely by the expressed will of the “legislator.”

11. There can be only one supreme ruling power in a state or kingdom.

12. The number and the qualifications of persons who hold state offices and all civil matters are to be determined solely by
the Christian ruler according to the law or approved custom [of the state].

13. No prince, still more, no partial council or single person of any position, has full authority and control over other persons, laymen or clergy, without the authorization of the “legislator.”

14. No bishop or priest has coercive authority or jurisdiction over any layman or clergyman, even if he is a heretic.

15. The prince who rules by the authority of the “legislator” has jurisdiction over the persons and possessions of every single mortal of every station, whether lay or clerical, and over every body of laymen or clergy.

16. No bishop or priest or body of bishops or priests has the authority to excommunicate anyone or to interdict the performance of divine services, without the authorization of the “legislator.”

17. All bishops derive their authority in equal measure immediately from Christ, and it cannot be proved from the divine law that one bishop should be over or under another, in temporal or spiritual matters.

18. The other bishops, singly or in a body, have the same right by divine authority to excommunicate or otherwise exercise authority over the bishop of Rome, having obtained the consent of the “legislator,” as the bishop of Rome has to excommunicate or control them.

19. No mortal has the authority to permit marriages that are prohibited by the divine law, especially by the New Testament. The right to permit marriages which are prohibited by human law belongs solely to the “legislator” or to the one who rules by its authority.

20. The right to legitimize children born of illegitimate union so that they may receive inheritances, or other civil or
ecclesiastical offices or benefits, belongs solely to the “legislator.”

21. The “legislator” alone has the right to promote to ecclesiastical orders, and to judge of the qualifications of persons for these offices, by a coercive decision, and no priest or bishop has the right to promote anyone without its authority.

22. The prince who rules by the authority of the laws of Christians, has the right to determine the number of churches and temples, and the number of priests, deacons, and other clergy who shall serve in them.

23. “Separable” ecclesiastical offices may be conferred or taken away only by the authority of the “legislator”; the same is true of ecclesiastical benefices and other property devoted to pious purposes.

24. No bishop or body of bishops has the right to establish notaries or other civil officials.

25. No bishop or body of bishops may give permission to teach or practice in any profession or occupation but this right belongs to the Christian “legislator” or to the one who rules by its authority.

26. In ecclesiastical offices and benefices those who have received consecration as deacons or priests, or have been otherwise irrevocably dedicated to God, should be preferred to those who have not been thus consecrated.

27. The human “legislator” has the right to use ecclesiastical temporalities for the common public good and defence after the needs of the priests and clergy, the expenses of divine worship and the necessities of the poor have been satisfied.

28. All properties established for pious purposes or for works of mercy, such as those that are left by will for the making of a crusade, the redeeming of captives, or the support of the poor, and similar purposes, may be disposed of by the prince alone.
according to the decision of the “legislator” and the purpose of
the testator or giver.

29. The Christian “legislator” alone has the right to forbid or
permit the establishment of religious orders or houses.

30. The prince alone, acting in accordance with the laws of
the “legislator,” has the authority to condemn heretics,
delinquents, and all others who should endure temporal
punishment, to inflict bodily punishment upon them, and to
exact fines from them.

31. No subject who is bound to another by a legal oath may be
released from his obligation by any bishop or priest, unless the
“legislator” has decided by a coercive decision that there is just
cause for it.

32. The general council of all Christians alone has the
authority to create a metropolitan bishop or church and to
reduce him or it from that position.

33. The Christian “legislator” or the one who rules by its
authority over Christian states, alone has the right to convoke
either a general or local council of priests, bishops, and other
Christians, by coercive power; and no man may be compelled by
threats of temporal or spiritual punishment to obey the decrees
of a council convoked in any other way.

34. The general council of Christians or the Christian
“legislator” alone has the authority to ordain fasts and other
prohibitions of the use of food; the council or “legislator” alone
may prohibit the practice of mechanical arts or teaching which
divine law permits to be practiced on any day, and the
“legislator” or the one who rules by its authority alone may
constrain men to obey the prohibition by temporal penalties.

35. The general council of Christians alone has the authority
to canonize anyone or to order anyone to be adored as a saint.

36. The general council of Christians alone has the authority
to forbid the marriage of priests, bishops, and other clergy, and to make other laws concerning ecclesiastical discipline, and that council or the one to whom it delegate its authority alone may dispense with these laws.

37. It is always permitted to appeal to the “legislator” from a coercive decision rendered by a bishop or priest with the authorization of the “legislator.”

38. Those who are pledged to observe complete poverty may not have in their possession any immovable property, unless it be with the fixed intention of selling it as soon as possible and giving the money to the poor; they may not have such rights in either movable or immovable property as would enable them, for example, to recover them by a coercive decision from any person who should take or try to take them away.

39. The people as a community and as individuals according to their several means, are required by divine law to support the bishops and other clergy authorized by the gospel, so that they may have food and clothing and the other necessaries of life; but the people are not required to pay tithes or other taxes beyond the amount necessary for such support.

40. The Christian “legislator” or the one who rules by its authority has the right to compel bishops and other clergy who live in the province under its control and whom it supplies with the necessities of life, to perform divine services and administer the sacrament.

41. The bishop of Rome and any other ecclesiastical or spiritual minister may be advanced to a “separable” ecclesiastical office only by the Christian “legislator” or the one who rules by its authority, or by the general council of Christians; and they may be suspended from or deprived of office by the same authority.
Medieval History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), 318-323. Located on the Internet Archive:
https://archive.org/stream/asourcebookform02mcnegoog#page/n340/mode/2up
Chapter 12: The Renaissance

Despite the ravages of plague and warfare across Europe in the 14th and 15th centuries, a movement began that would change the nature of many aspects of society; that movement would became known as the Renaissance. Beginning in Italy in the early 1300s and taking hold in the rest of Europe much later, the Renaissance was a burst of creative energy that impacted nearly everything from art to diplomacy. The impetus for the movement was trade; as Italian port cities such as Genoa and Venice profited from renewed trade and Italy's position at the cross roads of the eastern and western worlds allowed it to connect the two, many Italian leaders felt the need to put their wealth on display by becoming patrons of artists, architects, and philosophers. New industries such as mining and metallurgy developed, and banking became a more professional and sophisticated trade. In terms of society, the Renaissance redefined what it meant to be a noble, with the expectation that war would be only one of many things aristocrats would study. For peasants and townspeople distinct classes began to emerge, from city leaders known as patricians
to the artisans that worked in towns and the poverty stricken laborers seeking after odds jobs. During the Renaissance the Italian peninsula was broken into a number of larger and smaller principalities, with the most powerful being Naples, the Papal States, Venice, Florence, and Milan. Competition between these five and others often broke out into open warfare, meaning that although Italy was becoming home to some of the most famous artists around it was also a violent and dangerous place to be. The incessant warfare would lead to innovations in the practice of diplomacy that would later be copied by Europe’s other kingdoms, and Niccolò Machiavelli would theorize a new way for princes to run their states free from any sort of morality. The philosophy of the Renaissance can be summed up in one word-humanism. The primary focus of many thinkers was on human beings and their abilities, their place in the universe, and their uniqueness among all creatures. History began to focus less on divine intervention in events and more on how the actions taken by certain individuals drove the historical process forward. Education still focused on the liberal arts, but the underlying assumption was that said education would allow man to become more. The most notable facets of the Renaissance came in the evolution of art. Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, and a host of others came to prominence with dramatic displays of talent depicting the human figure and the natural world. As for the Catholic Church, despite its resolution to the Avignon Papacy and the Great Schism, there was still trouble. Popes, who had regained pre-eminency over councils, were often more concerned about worldly affairs and corrupt. Some blatantly promoted members of their own family to important positions in the church, while others spent lavish sums to patronize artists. In the end, this
behavior contributed to the climate of distrust and anger that would produce Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation.

The first document in this chapter is from Baldasar Castiglione, an Italian author whose most famous work, *The Book of the Courtier*, is the best expression of the new attitude toward nobles and what characteristics, skills, and education they should have, as well as to what end they should have them. Next is the first of two documents from Machiavelli, this one from his *Discourses*, in which he demonstrates for us the Renaissance preoccupation with all things Greek and Roman. Here Machiavelli will discuss the era of the Roman Republic and the lengths to which it would go to defend its liberty. Document 3 comes from a count named Giovanni Pico and explains the main things that make man the most fortunate of God’s creations. The fourth document is once again from Machiavelli, this time from his most notable work, *The Prince*, in which Machiavelli challenges the accepted way princes should rule and establishes what, at the time, were quite shocking principles by which they should handle their affairs. Finally Petrus Paulus Vergerius examines a liberal arts education, extolling the virtues of reading, history, logic, music, and other subjects that constitute a liberal education.

1. Baldasar Castiglione-Book of the Courtier

*The Renaissance was a time of great change for much of Europe. Economics changed, society changed, education changed, even the idea of nobility changed. The document excerpted below, the Book of the Courtier, is a fictional dinner party wherein a group of friends discusses the characteristics of the perfect noble, and in so doing lay out for us the way the Renaissance viewed the idea of nobility. The author of the work, Baldasar Castiglione, was a count, a diplomat, and a courtier himself. As you read this selection keep in mind the idea and role of*
nobility during the Middle Ages and compare and contrast that idea with the thoughts presented here.

I wish, then, that this Courtier of ours should be nobly born and of gentle race; because it is far less unseemly for one of ignoble birth to fail in worthy deeds, than for one of noble birth, who, if he strays from the path of his predecessors, stains his family name, and not only fails to achieve but loses what has been achieved already; for noble birth is like a bright lamp that manifests and makes visible good and evil deeds, and kindles and stimulates to virtue both by fear of shame and by hope of praise. And since this splendour of nobility does not illumine the deeds of the humbly born, they lack that stimulus and fear of shame, nor do they feel any obligation to advance beyond what their predecessors have done; while to the nobly born it seems a reproach not to reach at least the goal set them by their ancestors. And thus it nearly always happens that both in the profession of arms and in other worthy pursuits the most famous men have been of noble birth, because nature has implanted in everything that hidden seed which gives a certain force and quality of its own essence to all things that are derived from it, and makes them like itself: as we see not only in the breeds of horses and of other animals, but also in trees, the shoots of which nearly always resemble the trunk; and if they sometimes degenerate, it arises from poor cultivation. And so it is with men, who if rightly trained are nearly always like those from whom they spring, and often better; but if there be no one to give them proper care, they become like savages and never reach perfection.

“But to come to some details, I am of opinion that the principal and true profession of the Courtier ought to be that of arms; which I would have him follow actively above all else, and be known among others as bold and strong, and loyal to
whomsoever he serves. And he will win a reputation for these good qualities by exercising them at all times and in all places, since one may never fail in this without severest censure. And just as among women, their fair fame once sullied never recovers its first lustre, so the reputation of a gentleman who bears arms, if once it be in the least tarnished with cowardice or other disgrace, remains forever infamous before the world and full of ignominy. Therefore the more our Courtier excels in this art, the more he will be worthy of praise; and yet I do not deem essential in him that perfect knowledge of things and those other qualities that befit a commander; since this would be too wide a sea, let us be content, as we have said, with perfect loyalty and unconquered courage, and that he be always seen to possess them. For the courageous are often recognized even more in small things than in great; and frequently in perils of importance and where there are many spectators, some men are to be found, who, although their hearts be dead within them, yet, moved by shame or by the presence of others, press forward almost with their eyes shut, and do their duty God knows how. While on occasions of little moment, when they think they can avoid putting themselves in danger without being detected, they are glad to keep safe. But those who, even when they do not expect to be observed or seen or recognized by anyone, show their ardour and neglect nothing, however paltry, that may be laid to their charge, – they have that strength of mind which we seek in our Courtier.

“Not that we would have him look so fierce, or go about blustering, or say that he has taken his cuirass to wife, or threaten with those grim scowls that we have often seen in Berto; because to such men as this, one might justly say that which a brave lady jestingly said in gentle company to one whom I will not name at present;” who, being invited by her
out of compliment to dance, refused not only that, but to listen to the music, and many other entertainments proposed to him, – saying always that such silly trifles were not his business; so that at last the lady said, ‘What is your business, then?’ He replied with a sour look, ‘To fight.’ Then the lady at once said, ‘Now that you are in no war and out of fighting trim, I should think it were a good thing to have yourself well oiled, and to stow yourself with all your battle harness in a closet until you be needed, lest you grow more rusty than you are;’ and so, amid much laughter from the bystanders, she left the discomfited fellow to his silly presumption.

I would have him more than passably accomplished in letters, at least in those studies that are called the humanities, and conversant not only with the Latin language but with the Greek, for the sake of the many different things that have been admirably written therein. Let him be well versed in the poets, and not less in the orators and historians, and also proficient in writing verse and prose, especially in this vulgar tongue of ours; for besides the enjoyment he will find in it, he will by this means never lack agreeable entertainment with ladies, who are usually fond of such things. And if other occupations or want of study prevent his reaching such perfection as to render his writings worthy of great praise, let him be careful to suppress them so that others may not laugh at him, and let him show them only to a friend whom he can trust: because they will at least be of this service to him, that the exercise will enable him to judge the work of others. For it very rarely happens that a man who is not accustomed to write, however learned he may be, can ever quite appreciate the toil and industry of writers, or taste the sweetness and excellence of style, and those latent niceties that are often found in the ancients.

“I think then that the aim of the perfect Courtier, which has
not been spoken of till now, is so to win for himself, by means of the accomplishments ascribed to him by these gentlemen, the favour and mind of the prince whom he serves, that he may be able to say, and always shall say, the truth about everything which it is fitting for the prince to know, without fear or risk of giving offence thereby; and that when he sees his prince’s mind inclined to do something wrong, he may be quick to oppose, and gently to make use of the favour acquired by his good accomplishments, so as to banish every bad intent and lead his prince into the path of virtue. And thus, possessing the goodness which these gentlemen have described, together with readiness of wit and pleasantness, and shrewdness and knowledge of letters and many other things, – the Courtier will in every case be able deftly to show the prince how much honour and profit accrue to him and his from justice, liberality, magnanimity, gentleness, and the other virtues that become a good prince; and on the other hand how much infamy and loss proceed from the vices opposed to them. Therefore I think that just as music, festivals, games, and the other pleasant accomplishments are as it were the flower, in like manner to lead or help one’s prince towards right, and to frighten him from wrong, are the true fruit of Courtiership.

“And since the merit of well-doing lies chiefly in two things, one of which is the choice of an end for our intentions that shall be truly good, and the other ability to find means suitable and fitting to conduce to that good end marked out, – certain it is that that man’s mind tends to the best end, who purposes to see to it that his prince shall be deceived by no one, shall hearken not to flatterers or to slanderers and liars, and shall distinguish good and evil, and love the one and hate the other.

“Methinks, too, that the accomplishments ascribed to the Courtier by these gentlemen may be a good means of arriving
at that end; and this because among the many faults which to-
day we see in many of our princes, the greatest are ignorance and self-esteem. And the root of these two evils is none other
than falsehood: which vice is deservedly hateful to God and to
men, and more injurious to princes than any other; because
they have greatest lack of that whereof they most need to have
abundance – I mean of someone to tell them the truth and to
put them in mind of what is right: for their enemies are not
moved by love to perform these offices, but are well pleased
to have them live wickedly and never correct themselves; on
the other hand, their enemies dare not accuse them openly, for
fear of being punished. Then of their friends there are few who
have free access to them, and those few are chary of censuring
them for their errors as freely as in the case of private persons,
and to win grace and favour often think of nothing but how
to suggest things that may delight and please their fancy, al-
though the same be evil and dishonourable; thus from being
friends these men become flatterers, and to derive profit from
their intimacy, always speak and act complaisantly, and for
the most part make their way by means of falsehoods, which beget
ignorance in the prince’s mind, not only of outward things but
of himself; and this may be said to be the greatest and most
monstrous falsehood of all, for the ignorant mind deceives
itself and lies inwardly to itself.

“From this it follows that, besides never hearing the truth
about anything whatever, rulers are intoxicated by that licence
which dominion carries with it, and by the abundance of their
enjoyments are drowned in pleasures, and so deceive
themselves and have their minds so corrupted, – always finding
themselves obeyed and almost adored with such reverence and
praise, without the least censure or even contradiction, – that
from this ignorance they pass to boundless self-esteem, so that
they then brook no advice or persuasion from others. And since they think that to know how to rule is a very easy thing, and that to succeed therein they need no other art or training than mere force, they bend their mind and all their thoughts to the maintenance of that power which they have, esteeming that true felicity lies in being able to do what one likes.

“Therefore some princes hate reason and justice, thinking that it would be a kind of bridle and a means of reducing them to bondage, and of lessening the pleasure and satisfaction which they have in ruling, if they were willing to follow it; and that their dominion would not be perfect or complete if they were constrained to obey duty and honour, because they think that he who obeys is no true ruler. Therefore, following these principles and allowing themselves to be transported by self-esteem, they become arrogant, with haughty looks and stern behaviour, with splendid dress, gold and gems, and by letting themselves be almost never seen in public they think to win authority among men and to be held almost as gods. And to my thinking they are like the colossi that last year were made at Rome the day of the festival in the Piazza d’Agone, which outwardly showed a likeness to great men and horses in a triumph, and within were full of tow and rags. But princes of this sort are much worse, in that the colossi keep upright merely by their great weight; while the princes, since they are ill balanced within and placed haphazard on uneven bases, fall to their ruin by reason of their own weight, and from one error run into many; for their ignorance, together with the false belief that they cannot err and that the power which they have proceeds from their own wisdom, leads them to seize states boldly by fair means or foul, whenever they can.

“But if they were resolved to know and to do that which they ought, they would be as set on not ruling as they are set on
ruling; for they would perceive how monstrous and pernicious a thing it is when subjects, who are to be governed, are wiser than the princes who are to govern.

“You see that ignorance of music, of dancing, of horsemanship, is not harmful to any man; nevertheless, he who is no musician is ashamed and dares not sing in the presence of others, or dance if he knows not how, or ride if he has not a good seat. But from not knowing how to govern people there spring so many woes, deaths, destructions, burnings, ruins, – that it may be said to be the deadliest pest that is to be found on earth. And yet some princes who are very ignorant of government are not ashamed to undertake to govern, I will not say in the presence of four or of six men, but before all the world, for their rank is set so high that all eyes gaze on them, and hence not only their great but their least defects are always noted. Thus it is written that Cimon was accused of loving wine, Scipio of loving sleep, Lucullus of loving feasts. But would to God that the princes of our time might couple their sins with as many virtues as did those ancients; who, although they erred in some respects, yet did not avoid the reminders and advice of anyone who seemed to them competent to correct those errors, but rather sought with all solicitude to order their lives after the precepts of excellent men: as Epaminondas after that of Lysis the Pythagorean, Agesilaus after that of Xenophon, Scipio after that of Pansetius, and countless others.

“But if some of our princes were to happen upon a stern philosopher or any man who was willing openly and artlessly to show them the frightful face of true virtue, and to teach them what good behaviour is and what a good prince’s life ought to be, I am certain that they would loathe him like an asp, or in sooth deride him as a thing most vile.

“I say, then, that since princes are to-day so corrupted by evil
customs and by ignorance and mistaken self-esteem, and since it is so difficult to give them knowledge of the truth and lead them on to virtue, and since men seek to enter into their favour by lies and flatteries and such vicious means, — the Courtier, by the aid of those gentle qualities that Count Ludovico and messer Federico have given him, can with ease and should try to gain the good will and so charm the mind of his prince, that he shall win free and safe indulgence to speak of everything without being irksome. And if he be such as has been said, he will accomplish this with little trouble, and thus be able always to disclose the truth about all things with ease; and also to instill goodness into his prince's mind little by little, and to teach continence, fortitude, justice, temperance, by giving a taste of how much sweetness is hidden by the little bitterness that at first sight appears to him who withstands vice; which is always hurtful and displeasing, and accompanied by infamy and blame, just as virtue is profitable, blithe and full of praise. And thereto he will be able to incite his prince by the example of the famous captains and other eminent men to whom the ancients were wont to make statues of bronze and of marble and sometimes of gold, and to erect the same in public places, both for the honour of these men and as a stimulus to others, so that they might be led by worthy emulation to strive to reach that glory too.

“In this way the Courtier will be able to lead his prince along the thorny path of virtue, decking it as with shady leafage and strewing it with lovely flowers to relieve the tedium of the weary journey to one whose strength is slight; and now with music, now with arms and horses, now with verses, now with love talk, and with all those means whereof these gentlemen have told, to keep his mind continually busied with worthy pleasures, yet always impressing upon him also, as I have said, some virtuous
practice along with these allurements, and playing upon him with salutary craft; like cunning doctors, who often anoint the edge of the cup with a sweet cordial, when they wish to give some bitter-tasting medicine to sick and over-delicate children.

“If, therefore, the Courtier put the veil of pleasure to such a use, he will reach his aim in every time and place and exercise, and will deserve much greater praise and reward than for any other good work that he could do in the world. For there is no good thing that is of such universal advantage as a good prince, nor any evil so universally noxious as a bad prince: hence, too, there is no punishment so harsh and cruel as to be a sufficient penalty for those wicked courtiers who use their gentle and pleasant ways and fine accomplishments to a bad end, and therewith seek their prince’s favour, in order to corrupt him and entice him from the path of virtue and lead him into vice; for such as these may be said to taint with deadly poison not a single cup from which one man alone must drink, but the public fountain used by all men.”


2. Niccolo Machiavelli-Discourses

Niccolò Machiavelli is one of the best know political theorists of western history. Machiavelli was an official with political responsibilities during the era of Florence’s republic before being exiled when the Medici family returned to power in 1512. Machiavelli wrote many works including poems, plays, and political tracts. His most famous work is The Prince, which discussed the obtaining and maintaining of political power, and is part of why he is considered the father of political science. The excerpt below comes from his
Discourses, and discusses how the ancient Romans viewed liberty and tyranny.

Nothing required so much effort on the part of the Romans to subdue the nations around them, as well as those of more distant countries, as the love of liberty which these people cherished in those days; and which they defended with so much obstinacy, that nothing but the exceeding valour of the Romans could ever have subjugated them. For we know from many instances to what danger they exposed themselves to preserve or recover their liberty, and what vengeance they practised upon those who had deprived them of it. The lessons of history teach us also, on the other hand, the injuries people suffer from servitude. And whilst in our own times there is only one country in which we can say that free communities exist, in those ancient times all countries contained numerous cities that enjoyed entire liberty. In the times of which we are now speaking, there were in Italy from the mountains that divide the present Tuscany from Lombardy, down to the extreme point, a number of independent nations, such as the Tuscans, the Romans, the Samnites and many others, that inhabited the rest of Italy. Nor is there ever any mention of there having been other kings besides those that reigned in Rome, and Porsenna, king of the Tuscans, whose line became extinct in a manner not mentioned in history. But we do see that, at the time when the Romans went to besiege Veii, Tuscany was free, and so prized her liberty and hated the very name of king, that when the Veienti had created a king in their city for its defence, and applied to the Tuscans for help against the Romans, it was resolved, after repeated deliberations, not to grant such assistance to the Veienti so long as they lived under that king; for the Tuscans deemed it not well to engage in the defence of those who had voluntarily subjected themselves to the rule of
one man. And it is easy to understand whence that affection for liberty arose in the people, for they had seen that cities never increased in dominion or wealth unless they were free. And certainly it is wonderful to think of the greatness which Athens attained within the space of a hundred years after having free herself from the tyranny of Pisistratus; and still more wonderful is it to reflect upon the greatness which Rome achieved after she was rid of her kings. The cause of this is manifest, for it is not individual prosperity, but the general good, that makes cities great; and certainly the general good is regarded nowhere but in republics, because whatever they do is for the common benefit, and should it happen to prove an injury to one or more individuals, those for whose benefit the thing is done are so numerous that they can always carry the measure against the few that are injured by it. But the very reverse happens where there is a prince whose private interests are generally in opposition to those of the city, whilst the measures taken for the benefit of the city are seldom deemed personally advantageous by the prince. This state of things soon leads to a tyranny, the least evil of which is to check the advance of the city in its career of prosperity, so that it grows neither in power nor wealth, but on the contrary rather retrogrades. And if fate should have it that the tyrant is enterprising, and by his courage and valour extends his dominions, it will never be for the benefit of the city, but only for his own; for he will never bestow honours and office upon the good and brave citizens over whom he tyrannises, so that he may not have occasion to suspect and fear them. Nor will he make the states which he conquers subject or tributary to the city of which he is the despot, because it would not be to his advantage to make that city powerful, but it will always be for his interest to keep the state disunited, so that each place and country shall recognise
him only as master; thus he alone, and not his country, profits by his conquests. Those who desire to have this opinion confirmed by many other arguments, need but read Xenophon’s treatise *On Tyranny*.

It is no wonder, then, that the ancients hated tyranny and loved freedom, and that the very name of liberty should have been held in such esteem by them; as was shown by the Syracusans when Hieronymus, the nephew of Hiero, was killed. When his death became known to his army, which was near Syracuse, it caused at first some disturbances, and they were about committing violence upon his murderers; but when they learnt that the cry of liberty had been raised in Syracuse, they were delighted, and instantly returned to order. Their fury against the tyrannicides was quelled, and they thought only of how a free government might be established in Syracuse. Nor can we wonder that the people indulge in extraordinary revenge against those who have robbed them of their liberty; of which we could cite many instances; but will quote only one that occurred in Corcyra, a city in Greece, during the Peloponnesian war. Greece was at that time divided into two parties, one of which adhered to the Athenians, and the other to the Spartans, and a similar division of parties existed in most of the Greek cities. It happened that in Corcyra the nobles, being the stronger party, seized upon the liberties of the people; but with the assistance of the Athenians the popular party recovered its power, and having seized the nobles, they tied their hands behind their backs, and threw them into a prison large enough to hold them all. They thence took eight or ten at a time, under pretence of sending them into exile in different directions; but instead of that they killed them with many cruelties. When the remainder became aware of this, they resolved if possible to escape such an ignominious death; and
having armed themselves as well as they could, they resisted those who attempted to enter the prison; but when the people heard this disturbance, they pulled down the roof and upper portion of the prison, and suffocated the nobles within under its ruins. Many such notable and horrible cases occurred in that country, which shows that the people will avenge their lost liberty with more energy than when it is merely threatened.

Reflecting now as to whence it came that in ancient times the people were more devoted to liberty than in the present, I believe that it resulted from this, that men were stronger in those days, which I believe to be attributable to the difference of education, founded upon the difference of their religion and ours. For as our religion teaches us the truth and the true way of life, it causes us to attach less value to the honours and possessions of this world; whilst the pagans, esteeming those things as the highest good, were more energetic and ferocious in their actions. We may observe this also in most of their institutions, beginning with the magnificence of their sacrifices as compared with the humility of ours, which are gentle solemnities rather than magnificent ones, and have nothing of energy or ferocity in them, whilst in theirs there was no lack of pomp and show, to which was superadded the ferocious and bloody nature of the sacrifice by the slaughter of many animals; and the familiarity with this terrible sight assimilated the nature of men to their sacrificial ceremonies. Besides, this, the pagan religion deified only men who had achieved great glory, such as commanders of armies and chiefs or republics, whilst ours glorifies more the humble and contemplative men than the men of action. Our religion, moreover, places the supreme happiness in humility, lowliness and a contempt for worldly objects, whilst the other, on the contrary, places the supreme good in grandeur of soul, strength
of body, and all such other qualities as render men formidable; and if our religion claims of us fortitude of soul, it is more to enable us to suffer than to achieve great deeds.

These principles seem to me to have made men feeble, and caused them to become an easy prey to evil-minded men, who can control them more securely, seeing that the great body of men, for the sake of gaining Paradise, are more disposed to endure injuries than to avenge them. And although it would seem that the world has become effeminate and Heaven disarmed, yet this arises unquestionably from the baseness of men, who have interpreted our religion according to the promptings of indolence rather than those of virtue. For if we were to reflect that our religion permits us to exalt and defend our country, we should see that according to it we ought also to love and honour our country, and prepare ourselves so as to be capable of defending her. It is this education, then, and this false interpretation of our religion, that is the cause of there not being so many republics nowadays as there were anciently; and that there is no longer the same love of liberty amongst the people now as there was then. I believe, however, that another reason for this will be found in the fact that the Roman Empire, by force of arms, destroyed all the republics and free cities; and although that empire was afterwards itself dissolved, yet these cities could not reunite themselves nor reorganise their civil institutions, except in a very few instances.


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3. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola-Oration on the Dignity of Man
Giovanni Pico, count of Mirandola in Italy, was a philosopher centrally connected to the Renaissance idea of humanism. The work excerpted here, the Oration on the Dignity of Man, was written to accompany another work, the 900 Theses, which was a series of arguments about theology, philosophy, and other subjects that Pico wished to defend against anyone who disagreed. The Oration is an excellent example of the belief of Renaissance thinkers in the uniqueness of mankind in the universe.

I HAVE read in the records of the Arabians, reverend Fathers, that Abdala the Saracen, when questioned as to what on this stage of the world, as it were, could be seen most worthy of wonder, replied: “There is nothing to be seen more wonderful than man.”? In agreement with this opinion is the saying of Hermes Trismegistus: “A great miracle, Asclepius, is man.”?But when I weighed the reason for these maxims, the many grounds for the excellence of human nature reported by many men failed to satisfy me – that man is the intermediary between creatures, the intimate of the gods, the king of the lower beings, by the acuteness of his senses, by the discernment of his reason, and by the light of his intelligence the interpreter of nature, the interval between fixed eternity and fleeting time, and (as the Persians say) the bond, nay, rather, the marriage song of the world, on David’s testimony but little lower than the angels. Admittedly great though these reasons be, they are not the principal grounds, that is, those which may rightfully claim for themselves the privilege of the highest admiration. For why should we not admire more the angels themselves and the blessed choirs of heaven? At last it seems to me I have come to understand why man is the most fortunate of creatures and consequently worthy of all admiration and what precisely is that rank which is his lot in the universal chain of Being – a rank to be envied not only by brutes but even by the stars
and by minds beyond this world. It is a matter past faith and a wondrous one. Why should it not be? For it is on this very account that man is rightly called and judged a great miracle and a wonderful creature indeed.

But hear, Fathers, exactly what this rank is and, as friendly auditors, conformably to your kindness, do me this favor. God the Father, the supreme Architect, had already built this cosmic home we behold, the most sacred temple of His godhead, by the laws of His mysterious wisdom. The region above the heavens He had adorned with Intelligences, the heavenly spheres He had quickened with eternal souls, and the excrementary and filthy parts of the lower world He had filled with a multitude of animals of every kind. But, when the work was finished, the Craftsman kept wishing that there were someone to ponder the plan of so great a work, to love its beauty, and to wonder at its vastness. Therefore, when everything was done (as Moses and Timaeus bear witness), He finally took thought concerning the creation of man. But there was not among His archetypes that from which He could fashion a new offspring, nor was there in His treasure-houses anything which He might bestow on His new son as an inheritance, nor was there in the seats of all the world a place where the latter might sit to contemplate the universe. All was now complete; all things had been assigned to the highest, the middle, and the lowest orders. But in its final creation it was not the part of the Father's power to fail as though exhausted. It was not the part of His wisdom to waver in a needful matter through poverty of counsel. It was not the part of His kindly love that he who was to praise God's divine generosity in regard to others should be compelled to condemn it in regard to himself.

At last the best of artisans ordained that that creature to whom He had been able to give nothing proper to himself
should have joint possession of whatever had been peculiar to each of the different kinds of being. He therefore took man as a creature of indeterminate nature and, assigning him a place in the middle of the world, addressed him thus: “Neither a fixed abode nor a form that is thine alone nor any function peculiar to thyself have we given thee, Adam, to the end that according to thy longing and according to thy judgment thou mayest have and possess what abode, what form, and what functions thou thyself shalt desire. The nature of all other beings is limited and constrained within the bounds of laws prescribed by Us. Thou, constrained by no limits, in accordance with thine own free will, in whose hand We have placed thee, shalt ordain for thyself the limits of thy nature. We have set thee at the world’s center that thou mayest from thence more easily observe whatever is in the world. We have made thee neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of choice and with honor, as though the maker and molder of thyself, thou mayest fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish. Thou shalt have the power, out of thy soul’s judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms, which are divine.”

O supreme generosity of God the Father, O highest and most marvelous felicity of man! To him it is granted to have whatever he chooses, to be whatever he wills. Beasts as soon as they are bom (so says Lucilius) bring with them from their mother’s womb all they will ever possess. Spiritual beings, either from the beginning or soon thereafter, become what they are to be forever and ever. On man when he came into life the Father conferred the seeds of all kinds and the germs of every way of life. Whatever seeds each man cultivates will grow to maturity and bear in him their own fruit. If they be vegetative, he will
be like a plant. If sensitive, he will become brutish. If rational, he will grow into a heavenly being. If intellectual, he will be an angel and the son of God. And if, happy in the lot of no created thing, he withdraws into the center of his own unity, his spirit, made one with God, in the solitary darkness of God, who is set above all things, shall surpass them all. Who would not admire this our chameleon? Or who could more greatly admire aught else whatever? It is man who Asclepius of Athens, arguing from his mutability of character and from his self-transforming nature, on just grounds says was symbolized by Proteus in the mysteries.

Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and John Herman Randall, Jr., eds., *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 223-225. Located on the Internet Archive:


### 4. Niccolo Machiavelli-The Prince

The selection below is an excerpt from Niccolò Machiavelli’s most famous work, *The Prince*. The book is about how princes should exercise and maintain their power, even if it requires acting in unsavory ways and committing unscrupulous acts in order to do so. The Prince was very influential in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and its call for pragmatism and at times immorality led to the term “Machiavellian” to be attached to those who ruled in a fashion similar to that describe by Machiavelli. The present selection tells us of Machiavelli’s thoughts on princes doing bad in order to do good, what a prince should use to guide their decisions, and why being feared is better than being loved.

That Which Concerns a Prince on the Subject of the Art of War
A Prince ought to have no other aim or thought, nor select anything else for his study, than war and its rules and discipline; for this is the sole art that belongs to him who rules, and it is of such force that it not only upholds those who are born princes, but it often enables men to rise from a private station to that rank. And, on the contrary, it is seen that when princes have thought more of ease than of arms they have lost their states. And the first cause of your losing it is to neglect this art; and what enables you to acquire a state is to be master of the art. Francesco Sforza, though being martial, from a private person became Duke of Milan; and the sons, through avoiding the hardships and troubles of arms, from dukes became private persons. For among other evils which being unarmed brings you, it causes you to be despised, and this is one of those ignominies against which a prince ought to guard himself, as is shown later on...

Concerning Things for Which Men, and Especially Princes, are Blamed

It remains now to see what ought to be the rules of conduct for a prince toward subject and friends. And as I know that many have written on this point, I expect I shall be considered presumptuous in mentioning it again, especially as in discussing it I shall depart from the methods of other people. But it being my intention to write a thing which shall be useful to him to apprehends it, it appears to me more appropriate to follow up the real truth of a matter than the imagination of it; for many have pictured republics and principalities which in fact have never been known or seen, because how one lives is so far distant from how one ought to live, that he who neglects what is done for what ought to be done, sooner effects his ruin than his preservation; for a man who wishes to act entirely up
to his professions of virtue soon meets with what destroys him among so much that is evil.

Hence, it is necessary for a prince wishing to hold his own to know how to do wrong, and to make use of it or not according to necessity. Therefore, putting on one side imaginary things concerning a prince, and discussing those which are real, I say that all men when they are spoken of, and chiefly princes for being more highly placed, are remarkable for some of those qualities which bring them either blame or praise; and thus it is that one is reputed liberal, another miserly...; one is reputed generous, one rapacious; one cruel, one compassionate; one faithless, another faithful.... And I know that every one will confess that it would be most praiseworthy in a prince to exhibit all the above qualities that are considered good; but because they can neither be entirely possessed nor observed, for human conditions do not permit it, it is necessary for him to be sufficiently prident that he may know how to avoid the reproach of those vices which would lose him his state...

Concerning Cruelty and Clemency, and Whether it is Better to be Loved than Feared

Upon this a question arises: whether it is better to be loved than feared or feared than loved? It may be answered that one should wish to be both, but, because it is difficult to unite them in one person, it is much safer to be feared than loved, when, of the two, either must be dispensed with. Because this is to be asserted in general of men, that they are ungrateful, fickle, false, cowardly, covetous, and as long as you succeeded they are yours entirely; they will offer you their blood, property, life, and children, as is said above, when the need is far distant; but when it approaches they turn against you. And that prince who, relying entirely on their promises, has neglected other precautions, is ruined; because friendships that are obtained...
by payments, and not by nobility or greatness of mind, may
indeed be earned, but they are not secured, and in time of need
cannot be relied upon; and men have less scruple in offending
one who is beloved than one who is feared, for love is preserved
by the link of obligation which, owing to the baseness of men,
is broken at every opportunity for their advantage; but fear
preserved you by a dread of punishment which never fails.

Nevertheless a prince ought to inspire fear in such a way that,
if he does not win love, he avoids hatred; because he can endure
very well being feared whilst he is not hated, which will always
be as long as he abstains from the property of his citizens and
subjects and from their women...

Sons Ltd, 1908), 115, 121-123, 134-135. Located on the Internet
Archive:
https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.202547/
2015.202547.The-Prince#page/n141

5. Petrus Paulus Vergerius-De ingenues moribus et
liberalibus studii

In 1472, Petrus Paulus Vergerius’ work De ingenies moribus et
liberalibus studii, a treatise on the subjects that make up the liberal
arts and their usefulness to individuals and to society, was printed.
Vergerius studied rhetoric and law, and served the Holy Roman
Emperor Sigismund from 1417 to his death in either 1444 or 1445. In the
excerpt below Vergerius discusses the benefits of reading, poetry, logic,
music, and a host of other liberal studies.

We call those studies liberal which are worthy of a free man;
those studies by which we attain and practice virtue and
wisdom; that education which calls forth, trains and develops
those highest gifts of body and of mind which ennoble men,
and which are rightly judged to rank next in dignity to virtue
only. For to a vulgar temper gain and pleasure are the one aim
of existence, to a lofty nature, moral worth and fame. It is, then, of the highest importance that even from infancy this aim, this effort, should constantly be kept alive in growing minds. For I may affirm with fullest conviction that we shall not have attained wisdom in our later years unless in our earliest we have sincerely entered on its search. Nor may we for a moment admit, with the unthinking crowd, that those who give early promise fail in subsequent fulfillment. This may, partly from physical causes, happen in exceptional cases. But there is no doubt that nature has endowed some children with so keen, so ready an intelligence, that without serious effort they attain to a notable power of reasoning and conversing upon grave and lofty subjects, and by aid of right guidance and sound learning reach in manhood the highest distinction. On the other hand, children of modest powers demand even more attention, that their natural defects may be supplied by art. But all alike must in those early years,

Dum faciles animi iuvenum, dum mobilis aetas

whilst the mind is supple, be inured to the toil and effort of learning. Not that education, in the broad sense, is exclusively the concern of youth. Did not Cato think it honorable to learn Greek in later life? Did not Socrates, greatest of philosophers, compel his aged fingers to the lute?

Our youth of to-day, it is to be feared, is backward to learn; studies are accounted irksome. Boys hardly weaned begin to claim their own way, at a time when every art should be employed to bring them under control and attract them to grave studies. The Master must judge how far he can rely upon emulation, rewards, encouragement; bow far be must have recourse to stern measures. Too much leniency is objectionable; so also is too great severity, for we must avoid all that terrifies a boy. In certain temperaments-those in which
a dark complexion denotes a quiet but strong personality—restraint must be cautiously applied. Boys of this type are mostly highly gifted and can bear a gentle hand. Not seldom it happens that a finely tempered nature is thwarted by circumstances, such as poverty at home, which compels a promising youth to forsake learning for trade: though, on the other hand, poverty is less dangerous to lofty instincts than great wealth. Or again, parents encourage their sons to follow a career traditional in their family, which may divert them from liberal studies: and the customary pursuits of the city in which we dwell exercise a decided influence on our choice. So that we may say that a perfectly unbiased decision in these matters is seldom possible, except to certain select natures, who by favor of the gods, as the poets have it, are unconsciously brought to choose the right path in life. The myth of Hercules, who, in the solitude of his wanderings, learned to accept the strenuous life and to reject the way of self-indulgence, and so attain the highest, is the significant setting of this profound truth. For us it is the best that can befall, that either the circumstances of our life, or the guidance and exhortations of those in charge of us, should mould our natures whilst they are still plastic.

In your own case, Ubertinus, you had before you the choice of training in Arms or in Letters. Either holds a place of distinction amongst the pursuits which appeal to men of noble spirit; either leads to fame and honor in the world. It would have been natural that you, the scion of a House ennobled by its prowess in arms, should have been content to accept your father’s permission to devote yourself wholly to that discipline. But to your great credit you elected to become proficient in both alike: to add to the career of arms traditional in your family, an equal success in that other great discipline of mind and character, the study of Literature.
There was courage in your choice. For we cannot deny that there is still a horde—as I must call them—of people who, like Licinius the Emperor [Roman Emperor, ruled 81-96 CE], denounce learning and the Arts as a danger to the State and hateful in themselves. In reality the very opposite is the truth. However, as we look back upon history we cannot deny that learning by no means expels wickedness, but may be indeed an additional instrument for evil in the hands of the corrupt. To a man of virtuous instincts knowledge is a help and an adornment; to a Claudius or a Nero it was a means of refinement in cruelty or in folly. On the other hand, your grandfather, Jacopo da Carrara, who, though a patron of learning, was not himself versed in Letters, died regretting that opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of higher studies had not been given him in youth; which shows us that, although we may in old age long for it, only in early years can we be sure of attaining that learning which we desire. So that it is no light motive to youthful diligence that we thereby provide ourselves with precious advantages against on-coming age, a spring of interest for a leisured life, a recreation for a busy one. Consider the necessity of the literary art to one immersed in reading and speculation: and its importance to one absorbed in affairs. To be able to speak and write with elegance is no slight advantage in negotiation, whether in public or private concerns. Especially in administration of the State, when intervals of rest and privacy are accorded to a prince, how must he value those means of occupying them wisely which the knowledge of literature affords to him! Think of Domitian: son of Vespasian though he was, and brother of Titus, he was driven to occupy his leisure by killing flies! What a warning is here conveyed of the critical judgments which posterity passes upon Princes! They live in a light in which nothing can long remain
hid. Contrast with this the saying of Scipio: “Never am I less idle, less solitary, than when to outward seeming I am doing nothing or am alone”: evidence of a noble temper, worthy to be placed beside that recorded practice of Cato, who, amid the tedious business of the Senate, could withdraw himself from outward distraction and find himself truly alone in the companionship of his books.

Indeed the power which good books have of diverting our thoughts from unworthy or distressing themes is another support to my argument for the study of letters. Add to this their helpfulness on those occasions when we find ourselves alone, without companions and without preoccupations—what can we do better than gather our books around us? In them we see unfolded before us vast stores of knowledge, for our delight, it may be, or for our inspiration. In them are contained the records of the great achievements of men; the wonders of Nature; the works of Providence in the past, the key to her secrets of the future. And, most important of all, this Knowledge is not liable to decay. With a picture, an inscription, a coin, books share a kind of immortality. In all these memory is, as it were, made permanent; although, in its freedom from accidental risks, Literature surpasses every other form of record.

Literature indeed exhibits not facts alone, but thoughts, and their expression. Provided such thoughts be worthy, and worthily expressed, we feel assured that they will not die: although I do not think that thoughts without style will be likely to attract much notice or secure a sure survival. What greater charm can life offer than this power of making the past, the present, and even the future, our own by means of literature? How bright a household is the family of books! we may cry, with Cicero. In their company is no noise, no greed, no self-will: at
a word they speak to you, at a word they are still: to all our requests their response is ever ready and to the point. Books indeed are a higher—a wider, more tenacious-memory, a store-house which is the common property of us all.

I attach great weight to the duty of handing down this priceless treasure to our sons unimpaired by any carelessness on our part. How many are the gaps which the ignorance of past ages has willfully caused in the long and noble roll of writers! Books—in part or in their entirety—have been allowed to perish. What remains of others is often sorely corrupt, mutilated, or imperfect. It is hard that no slight portion of the history of Rome is only to be known through the labors of one writing in the Greek language: it is still worse that this same noble tongue, once well nigh the daily speech of our race, as familiar as the Latin language itself, is on the point of perishing even amongst its own sons, and to us Italians is already utterly lost, unless we except one or two who in our time are tardily endeavoring to rescue something—if it be only a mere echo of it—from oblivion.

We come now to the consideration of the various subjects which may rightly be included under the name of “Liberal Studies.” Amongst these I accord the first place to History, on grounds both of its attractiveness and of its utility, qualities which appeal equally to the scholar and to the statesman. Next in importance ranks Moral Philosophy, which indeed is, in a peculiar sense, a “Liberal Art,” in that its purpose is to teach men the secret of true freedom. History, then, gives us the concrete examples of the precepts inculcated by philosophy. The one shows what men should do, the other what men have said and done in the past, and what practical lessons we may draw therefrom for the present day. I would indicate as the third main branch of study, Eloquence, which indeed holds a
place of distinction amongst the refined Arts. By philosophy we learn the essential truth of things, which by eloquence we so exhibit in orderly adornment as to bring conviction to differing minds. And history provides the light of experienced cumulative wisdom fit to supplement the force of reason and the persuasion of eloquence. For we allow that soundness of judgment, wisdom of speech, integrity of conduct are the marks of a truly liberal temper.

We are told that the Greeks devised for their sons a course of training in four subjects: letters, gymnastic, music and drawing. Now, of these drawing has no place amongst our liberal studies; except in so far as it is identical with writing, (which is in reality one side of the art of Drawing), it belongs to the Painter’s profession: the Greeks, as an art-loving people, attached to it an exceptional value.

The Art of Letters, however, rests upon a different footing. It is a study adapted to all times and to all circumstances, to the investigation of fresh knowledge or to the re-casting and application of old. Hence the importance of grammar and of the rules of composition must be recognized at the outset, as the foundation on which the whole study of Literature must rest: and closely associated with these rudiments, the art of Disputation or Logical argument. The function of this is to enable us to discern fallacy from truth in discussion. Logic, indeed, as setting forth the true method of learning, is the guide to the acquisition of knowledge in whatever subject. Rhetoric comes next, and is strictly speaking the formal study by which we attain the art of eloquence; which, as we have just stated, takes the third place amongst the studies specially important in public life. It is now, indeed, fallen from its old renown and is well nigh a lost art. In the Law-Court, in the Council, in the popular Assembly, in exposition, in persuasion,
in debate, eloquence finds no place now-a-days: speed, brevity, homeliness are the only qualities desired. Oratory, in which our forefathers gained so great glory for themselves and for their language, is despised: but our youth, if they would earn the repute of true education, must emulate their ancestors in this accomplishment.

After Eloquence we place Poetry and the Poetic Art, which though not without their value in daily life and as an aid to oratory, have nevertheless their main concern for the leisure side of existence.

As to Music, the Greeks refused the title of “Educated” to anyone who could not sing or play. Socrates sets an example to the Athenian youth, by himself learning to play in his old age; urging the pursuit of music not as a sensuous indulgence, but as an aid to the inner harmony of the soul. In so far as it is taught as a healthy recreation for the moral and spiritual nature, music is a truly liberal art, and, both as regards its theory and its practice, should find a place in education.

Arithmetic, which treats of the properties of numbers, Geometry, which treats of the properties of dimensions, lines, surfaces, and solid bodies, are weighty studies because they possess a peculiar element of certainty. The science of the Stars, their motions, magnitudes and distances, lifts us into the clear calm of the upper air. There we may contemplate the fixed stars, or the conjunctions of the planets, and predict the eclipses of the sun and the moon. The knowledge of Nature-animate and inanimate-the laws and the properties of things in heaven and in earth, their causes, mutations and effects, especially the explanation of their wonders (as they are popularly supposed) by the unraveling of their causes-this is a most delightful, and at the same time most profitable, study for youth. With these may be joined investigations concerning
the weights of bodies, and those relative to the subject which mathematicians call “Perspective.”

I may here glance for a moment at the three great professional Disciplines: Medicine, Law, Theology. Medicine, which is applied science, has undoubtedly much that makes it attractive to a student. But it cannot be described as a Liberal study. Law, which is based upon moral philosophy, is undoubtedly held in high respect. Regarding Law as a subject of study, such respect is entirely deserved: but Law as practiced becomes a mere trade. Theology, on the other hand, treats of themes removed from our senses, and attainable only by pure intelligence.

The principal “Disciplines” have now been reviewed. It must not be supposed that a liberal education requires acquaintance with them all: for a thorough mastery of even one of them might fairly be the achievement of a lifetime. Most of us, too, must learn to be content with modest capacity as with modest fortune. Perhaps we do wisely to pursue that study which we find most suited to our intelligence and our tastes, though it is true that we cannot rightly understand one subject unless we can perceive its relation to the rest. The choice of studies will depend to some extent upon the character of individual minds. For whilst one boy seizes rapidly the point of which he is in search and states it ably, another, working far more slowly, has yet the sounder judgment and so detects the weak spot in his rival’s conclusions. The former, perhaps, will succeed in poetry, or in the abstract sciences; the latter in real studies and practical pursuits. Or a boy may be apt in thinking, but slow in expressing himself; to him the study of Rhetoric and Logic will be of much value. Where the power of talk alone is remarkable I hardly know what advice to give. Some minds are strong on the side of memory: these should be apt for history. But it is of
importance to remember that in comparison with intelligence memory is of little worth, though intelligence without memory is, so far as education is concerned, of none at all. For we are not able to give evidence that we know a thing unless we can reproduce it.

Again, some minds have peculiar power in dealing with abstract truths, but are defective on the side of the particular and the concrete, and so make good progress in mathematics and in metaphysics. Those of just opposite temper are apt in Natural Science and in practical affairs. And the natural bent should be recognized and followed in education. Let the boy of limited capacity work only at that subject in which he shows he can attain some result.

Respecting the general place of liberal studies, we remember that Aristotle would not have them absorb the entire interests of life: for he kept steadily in view the nature of man as a citizen, an active member of the State. For the man who has surrendered himself absolutely to the attractions of Letters or of speculative thought follows, perhaps, a self-regarding end and is useless as a citizen or as prince.

William Harrison Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre and other Humanist Educators* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), 102-110. Located on the Internet Archive:

https://archive.org/stream/vittorinodafelt01woodgoog#page/n122