

HERMENEUTICS OF THE WORD POLITEIA*Politeia Sözcüğünün Hermenötiği***BURÇİN AYDOĞDU*****Öz**

Hukuk felsefesinin ve siyaset biliminin temel kavramı olan Politeia sözcüğü devlet, anayasa, cumhuriyet gibi muhtelif anlamlarda kullanılan bir terimdir. Söz konusu sözcüğün çok sayıda anlama sahip olması ilk bakışta kafa karıştırıcı gibi görünse bile hermenötik açıdan ilk çağdaki hukuk, etik ve siyaset anlayışını kavramaya ışık tutabilir. Bu amaçla, bu çalışma günümüze kadar gelebilmiş olan ilk çağ eserlerinde Politeia terimine izafe edilmiş olan her anlamı ele almak ve söz konusu anlamlar arasındaki muhtemel hermenötik bağlantıları kurmak suretiyle meseleyi derinlemesine analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu yöntem sayesinde Politeia teriminin sahip olduğu anlamların tamamının aydınlatılmasıyla kalınmaması, ilk çağdaki hukuki ve siyasi anlayışın kavranmasının kolaylaşması umulmaktadır.


Anahtar Kelimeler: Politeia, Res Publica, Devlet, Cumhuriyet, Anayasa

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Abstract

Politeia (Πολιτεία in Hellenic) as a fundamental concept of legal philosophy and political philosophy can be interpreted in various meanings such as state, constitution, republic, citizenship etc. Though the fact that this term has a broad scale of meaning might, prima facie, seem confusing, such nature of the concept can, considering its hermeneutics, hold light to ancient conception of law, ethics and politics. To this end, this study aims a thorough analysis of the concept by handling every meaning attached to the term Politeia in ancient texts that survive today and suggesting possible hermeneutic connections between those meanings. It is expected that this method would not only clarify the entire possible meanings of the term Politeia but would help understanding ancient legal and political conceptions of the ancient times.

Keywords: Politeia, Res Publica, State, Republic, Constitution

INTRODUCTION

Aristotle's work Ἀθηναίων πολιτεία (Athēnaiōn Politeia), meaning Athenians' Politeia is translated into English as Constitution of Athens¹ or Athenian Constitution² where the term Politeia corresponds to the term 'Constitution'. In some other translations it is translated as 'Staat Der Athener' (Athenians' State)³, where the term Politeia corresponds to the term 'State'. On the other hand, while Plato's distinct work Politeia is commonly translated into German as Der Staat⁴, which means 'the state', it is, on the other hand, commonly translated into English as The Republic⁵. These are the complications that are found only in first two, prominent, works of ancient legal/political philosophy.

¹ Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens and Related Texts*, trans. Kurt von Fritz and Ernst Kapp (Riverside: Free Press, 1970).

² Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution* (Start Publishing LLC, 2000).

³ Aristotle, *Staat Der Athener*. Vol. 88, trans. A. E. Raubitschek (Classical Association of the Middle West and South, 1993).

⁴ Platon, *Der Staat / Politeia: Griechisch - Deutsch*. (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, Inc., 2011. Accessed April 19, 2023. ProQuest Ebook Central), 892.

⁵ Carolina Arajo, *Cooperative Flourishing in Plato's 'Republic': A Theory of Justice* (Bloomsbury, 2022), 1.

Extending the examination to other classical ancient would bring much more intermeshing results. It wouldn't be reasonable to suggest these interpretative diversities emerge from the translators' or languages' approach differences, only, as these translations have been used and adopted by the respective popular and academic literatures for centuries. It is a better way of considering the variety issue, to discuss these meanings in a multidimensional perspective that seeks out the commonsense among these conceptions rather than denying the accuracy of the translations.

I. HERMENEUTICS AS A WAY OF INTERPRETING ANCIENT CONCEPTS

Every author reflects the culture, in which the author was born, raised and thought. The culture that influences the conceptions of ancient people quite is different from today's culture⁶, even for those that live in the same geography. Meanings attached to words don't only imply a naming for a concrete or abstract object; they also imply how the society, by whose convention the language is formed, sees that concrete or abstract object in terms of sympathy, hate, prejudice, expectation and potential. A neutral word in ancient times may gain quite an insulting meaning in medieval or modern era, though it is the very same word, such as 'idiot', as explained below. Similarly, a term whose scope is quite limited in ancient era, may refer to much larger scope in followings era like imperator, meaning commander in Roman republican era⁷, refers to rulers that rule over kings, centuries later. These semantic shifts are not mere linguistic evolutions. They are consequences of the social changes, cultural renovations and political developments⁸, all of which lead to alternations in legal considerations.

Politeia, a term employed by Plato in his quest to finding what is 'Good' and, from that point of view, to discover how justice can rule⁹, by the time became a term that stands for one of the fundamental keys to legitimacy of collectivist, rather

⁶ Thomas M. Seeböhm, *Hermeneutics: method and methodology* (Netherlands: Springer Netherlands, 2004), 15.

⁷ Jonathan Edmondson, *Augustus* (Edinburgh University Press 24 Mar 2014), 34.

⁸ Hans Henrich Hock, *Principles of Historical Linguistics* (Germany: De Gruyter, 2020), 300-301.

⁹ Noburu Notomi, "Freedom and the State in Plato's Politeia (Republic): Reconsidering the concept of 'politeia'." *JASCA (Japan Studies in Classical Antiquity)* 3 (2017), 66.

than liberal, way of governing people.¹⁰ Even in the same years, by same author and in the same book¹¹, this term was used in different meanings, which are construed differently in other languages.¹²

These semantic variations evidence that some concepts, which are apprehended separately in modern point of view, were considered identical in ancient culture. This notional identity of abstract concepts offer several clues about the culture of the time, such as elementariness of their legal thought, the generalizing approach of the time, or compatibility, for the time, of certain concepts that are, today, taken incompatible. They also provide clues on how a legal idea was grounded, using the limited cultural instruments of the time, through etymology. Though these findings cannot be qualified certain scientific evidence of the route followed by the social development, they can be helpful as instruments to mind-opening perspectives with the concern of understanding ancient thought, with minimal misleading influence of the modern culture, modern prejudices on ancient way of life in particular.

II. ANALYZING THE CONCEPT OF POLITEIA

A. Politeia Meaning Polity, Policy and Politics

Hellenic word Politeia comes from Polis¹³, which refers to the city-states of the time. It is worth to mention that notion of state, in the sense we understand today, was not common in the ancient culture.¹⁴ The cities were bound by conquest or alliances, rather than the national unity motivations of modern era, let alone ethnic similarity. Therefore, the root of the word Politeia was related to being governed

¹⁰ Érvíń László, *Individualism, Collectivism, and Political Power: A Relational Analysis of Ideological Conflict* (Springer Netherlands, 1963. ProQuest Ebook Central), 43.

¹¹ Eckart Schütrumpf, *The Earliest Translations of Aristotle's Politics and the Creation of Political Terminology* (Brill, 2014. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/klu/detail.action?docID=6517332>), 42-44.

¹² Notomi, *Plato's Politeia*, 57-58.

¹³ John Lewis, *Early Greek Lawgivers (Classical World)* (Londra: Bloomsbury Academic, 2007), 46.

¹⁴ Johann Kaspar Bluntschli, *The Theory of the State* (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 1999), 20.

by a state; a state limited to a city or extended to other cities by ancient ways of domination.¹⁵

The living English word polity is derived from the word 'polis' and actually it is nothing but an exact modern English remnant of the ancient word Politeia.¹⁶ It has several meanings.¹⁷ With a general view, its meanings can be summarized as a form of government or governmental process that is formed by an organized group of people. This is an equivalent of Politeia that holds an overly broad definition that covers the meaning of Politeia in many contexts.¹⁸

Firstly, Plato suggests, in his book Politeia, that a state must be like a human body, all organs of which are controlled by the head. With a view to that emphasis on unity of the community under one administration, there is no doubt that Plato's Politeia had a nature of a polity. Any organization that fails being a polity, lacks meeting the capabilities of a Politeia, sought by Plato in his book.

Policy is also derived from the Hellenic word 'Polis'.¹⁹ However, unlike the word polity, policy has a specific meaning that refers to a way of managing a political issue by a government with a certain sense of stance.²⁰ Plato's book Politeia explains how a government, headed by philosopher kings, must behave to the rest of the society and other countries and those policies, too, are a part of the system he designed as an ideal Politeia. Constitution of Athenians, written by Aristotle (or one of his students), also mentions the policies adopted by the former 'politeia' of the city and those were included in the description of old, unwritten constitutions of Athens.

¹⁵ Andrius Bielskis, "Towards the conception of post-modern politics: the Aristotelian polis vs. the modern nation-state." *Filosofija. Sociologija* 3-4 (2008), 82.

¹⁶ Kevin Cherry, "Lawgivers, Virtue, and the Mixed Regime: Reflections on Richard Bodéüs's the Political Dimensions of Aristotle's Ethics." *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review/Revue canadienne de philosophie* 59.1 (2020), 41.

¹⁷ Kari Palonen, "Four times of politics: Policy, polity, politicking, and politicization." *Alternatives* 28.2 (2003), 179-181.

¹⁸ Lois Eveleth, "Plato and the Justice That Is Harmony." (2022), 11.

¹⁹ Olivera Z. Mijuskovic, "Aristotle's concept of the state." *Socrates* 4.4 (2016), 14.

²⁰ Robert Hoppe, "Policy, governing and politicality." *European policy analysis* 5.2 (2019), 152.

Politics is also derived from the Hellenic word polis.²¹ However, it can be said that the word politics is highly relevant to the Hellenic word Politiká (Πολιτικά), which is the name of the Aristotle's notable work. Though, politics in scientific sense is defined as striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state,²² its semantic sense being equivalent to Politeia rather refers to guiding people to render them their better selves, i.e. politics for an idealist philosopher.²³

In conclusion, it is possible to interpret the ancient Hellenic word Politeia as including the ideas of polity, policy, and politics. This view is well supported by the term's extensive historical context and use by eminent philosophers like Plato and Aristotle. We can grasp the breadth and complexity of ancient Hellenic political thinking and its continuing influence on contemporary political debate by recognizing the diverse nature of Politeia.

B. Politeia Meaning the Opposite of Idioteia

From this root, emerges the word Politeia, which refers to things or title that belong to a certain community under the same government, i.e., held publicly.²⁴

On the other hand, the ancient word *idioteia* is a derivative of the word *idios*²⁵, which means 'self'. As a matter of fact, ancient authorities considered those who are not related to public offices as people that are concerned in their self-interest.²⁶ According to ancient philosophers, expressing their ideas on such distinction, the barbarian people, and the artisans, traders, farmers were the part of the group that

²¹ Tilo Schabert, *Boston politics: the creativity of power* (Germany: W. de Gruyter, 1989), 273.

²² Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (United Kingdom: Routledge, 1991), 78.

²³ Peter Murphy, "Civility and Radicalism", *The Social Philosophy of Agnes Heller* (Netherlands: Rodopi, 1994), 178.

²⁴ V. Harte & M. Lane. "Introduction", *Politeia in Greek and Roman philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 8.

²⁵ John Ogilvie, *A Smaller English Dictionary* (2023), 186.

²⁶ Aryeh Kasher, *The Jews in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt: The Struggle For Equal Rights* (Germany: J.C.B. Mohr, 1985), 360.

are focused on their self-interest, unlike those holding governmental offices and concern the public interest and they were in need of being educated.²⁷

In parallel, Cicero carried this terminology to Latin language with the word Private and Public, which both make pretty sense even today. Therefore; with a view to their roots in being concerned about the police community as a whole and being concerned about one's own self, *idioteiuein* (derived from *idioteia*) refers to the private sector, whereas Politeia refers to the public sector.²⁸ In this perspective, it is easy to confirm that all almost all concepts attached to the word Politeia, including state, governmental duties, community life and social lifestyle have a reference to the public things, whereas almost all concepts attached to the word *idioteia*, including self-concern, wealth, individualism have a reference to the private things. This is why it is possible to think the word Politeia refers to anything public, which is also a sound ground for Cicero's Latin translation referring to Plato's books title: [De] 'Re Public', i.e. [On] Public Things, as explained below.

C. Politeia Meaning Citizenship and Civic Status

It is worth to note that political concepts experience semantic shifts during the discussions of enlightenment period²⁹ and citizenship in the sense of age of enlightenment refers to the collective identity of the people governed by a republic, i.e., people governing themselves, rather than being subject of a monarchy. It doesn't necessarily refer to being part of a society that is governed by a democracy.

The word Politeia derives from the word Polis, a city-state, but it must be added that the people living in the city-state were referred to as Polites³⁰, and the

²⁷ Mark F. Montebello, "Plato on" sociability" and its educational transmission." (1992), 3.

²⁸ Richard Mulgan, "Aristotle and the value of political participation." *Political Theory* 18.2 (1990), 196-197.

²⁹ Caroline Laske. *Law, Language and Change: A Diachronic Semantic Analysis of Consideration in the Common Law* (Brill, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/klu/detail.action?docID=6359673>), 105.

³⁰ Notomi, *Plato's Politeia*, 66. Polites is the oldest word among those handled here; it is used in Homeros' *Illiad*, the olders written text in Hellenic language. See John Victor Luce, "The" Polis" in *Homer and Hesiod*." *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature* (1978), 8.

word Politeia is also a derivative of the work Polite, which can be interpreted as Civilian or Citizen. On this ground, the word Politeia can be interpreted as a literal English correspondent of the work citizenship.³¹

Politeia refers to the situation, where people are governed as citizens, because their autonomy comes from their 'being a member of a 'polis' community. Being a primal member of a city-state, governed with public, collective concerns, can be construed as citizenship or civic status, as well.³² As the structures of ancient city-states changed, being citizen of a Polis was not only a matter of being so, but also becoming so. In particular, obtaining citizenship of Rome became an important matter, so that the conception of civic status arose.³³

In conclusion, Politeia's etymological ties to the Greek city-state, or Polis, and its relationship to the word Polites highlight the value of civic engagement and the responsibility that residents play in determining the political landscape of their times. As a result, Politeia offers the fundamental idea that permeates all facets of political theory, such as citizen rights and obligations, and the systems and procedures that the direct social interactions.

D. Politeia Meaning State

What makes it a state, is the fundamental question that should be asked to discover the sense, in which Politeia refers to state, by its meaning earned in the age of enlightenment. State would not be one of the first meanings that comes to mind when talking about Politeia if conception of state was as loose as it was in the ancient times. What makes the modern concept of state be covered by Politeia is the enlightenment notion that a government that fails observing its fundamental duties against people will lose its legitimacy and an organized power dominating people without such legitimacy cannot be called a state. Plato's effort to find a grounding for dominance of a state, regardless of its factual power, even existence, is the most outstanding notion that allows construing Politeia as state.³⁴

³¹ Alessandro Saccal, "A Probabilistic Analysis of Governmental Forms." (2022), 2.

³² John J. Mulhern, "Politeia as Citizenship in Aristotle." (2012), 41.

³³ Geoff Kennedy, "Cicero, Roman republicanism and the contested meaning of libertas." *Political Studies* 62.3 (2014), 500.

³⁴ Kasher, *The Jews*, 360.

The fact that Plato's book *Politeia* was interpreted as 'state' is the most considerable evidence of the fact that the concept *Politeia* refers to 'state'.³⁵ It is important to note that the word *Politeia* matches with meaning of state in the modern sense is much better than the ancient sense. As explained above, the ancient sense of state was a different concept in terms of structure, geographical boundaries etc., but the most considerable of the differences is the relation between a government and its citizens.³⁶

E. *Politeia* Meaning Constitution and Regime

Athenians' *Politeia* tell about constitutional history of ancient Athens. In one regard, it is about the Athenian people's lifestyle, as the rules governing the Polis affects the whole society. However, the books, as a whole, telling about generations of people, describes a transformation of a form of government, including the democracy experiences. In this regard, the book is about the constitution³⁷, though not written. Similarly, *Lacedaemons Politeia*, written by Xenophon, tells about the daily lifestyle of the citizens of ancient Sparta (*Lacedaemonia*, geographically), which is shaped by the social and political rules, allegedly enacted by legendary king Lykurgos. Considering the fact that Xenophon's book tells about absence of private property in Sparta, the status of the *Heliots*, a kind of slave of the same, the monetary restrictions applied to the Spartans and the system of government, in particular the *ephors* that had a serious say in the governments despite the existence of *diarchy*, are all signs of a constitution settled for generations.³⁸

Therefore, both Athenians' *Politeia* and *Lacedaemonian' Politeia* are about unwritten constitutions³⁹ of the two city-states of the time. In both title, the word *Politeia* refers to the concept of constitution as both forms of government are bound by certain rules. It can be said that the *Politeia* of Athenians and that of

³⁵ Christopher Sverre Norborg, *From Plato to Hitler: Interpretations of History* (United States of America: Burgess Publishing Company, 1940), 3.

³⁶ Kasher, *The Jews*, 364.

³⁷ Fred Dallmayr, *The Promise of Democracy: Political Agency and Transformation* (United States of America: State University of New York Press, 2010), 199.

³⁸ Alberto Esu, "Divided Power And Εὐνομία: Deliberative Procedures in Ancient Sparta." *The Classical Quarterly* 67.2 (2017): 355.

³⁹ Alberto Esu, *Divided Power*, 353.

Lacedaemonian offer important insights into the unwritten constitutions of ancient Sparta and Athens, respectively. These works demonstrate how the political and social structures of the era affected citizens' daily lives. We learn more about the complexity of these city-states' political systems and the relevance of their distinctive constitutions by exploring the deliberative processes and governing principles within them. Furthermore, the term "Politeia" is used in both titles, emphasizing the importance of established laws and rules in forming these historical societies' identities and systems of government. This further stresses the issue of constitution.⁴⁰ For this reason, it can be said that the word Politeia is interpreted as constitution not only in context of Athens or Sparta, but any such Polis, too, such as Rome.⁴¹

With a view to ancient roots of the word constitution, one can see Cicero used the term 'Constitutio'. Though Cicero contributed much to Latin terminology of political philosophy, but the term Constitutio he used in his constitution studies does not have the same meaning with today's term constitution. Rather, it refers to the process of enactment.⁴² Even though, the modern term constitution can be traced back to Cicero's works and its usage in Roman republican era, and there are visible connections that enacting laws and other normative sources of law is relevant to the rule of law and that notion brings along the conception of constitutionality.⁴³

In a broader sense, the Politeia can be interpreted as regime, because regime means form of government, i.e., the way people are ruled, regardless of law-abiding nature of the government or steadiness of the governmental institutions. The two works that survive today are about the regimes of two constitutional city-states, but we know Aristotle's students wrote 158 Politeia's of their time.⁴⁴ Considering the ancient political conditions, one can estimate that not all these Politeia's are institutionalized regimes that abide by certain fundamental

⁴⁰ Kasher, *The Jews*, 364.

⁴¹ Kashner, *The Jews*, 362.

⁴² Giovanni Sartori, "Constitutionalism: a preliminary discussion." *American Political Science Review* 56.4 (1962), 853.

⁴³ Graham Maddox, "A Note on the Meaning of 'Constitution'." *American Political Science Review* 76.4 (1982), 806.

⁴⁴ Richard Kraut, *Aristotle: Political Philosophy* (Spain: Oxford University Press, 2002), 11.

principles of governing. Therefore, it is more probable that the word Politeia was not used for only constitutional governmental forms as we apprehend today, but all other forms of government that has an observable system of rules.⁴⁵

F. Politeia as the Origin of Res Publica and Republic

Cicero's 'De Re Publica' is from Plato's Politeia.⁴⁶ The book is on Roman conception of Res Publica.⁴⁷ In this study, Res Public and Republic are not taken as identical terms, as Res Publica is a Latin conception of Plato's ideal state, whether or not a true republic, but the latter refers to a certain type of government, which can be attributed to certain period of Roman history, but has a broader meaning before modern era and a strict meaning in the modern era.⁴⁸

Being inspired from Plato's Politeia, Cicero attempted to write a book on ideal form of government, according to the political conditions of his period. His ideal form on government, 'Res Publica' was a mixture of democracy and aristocracy with a 'first citizen' in the lead, though not on the throne. That projected 'first citizen' namely Princeps was later used by Augustus after factual end of the republic, but as a part of the new system, which was called 'Res Publica'.⁴⁹

The term 'Res Publica' and 'Republic' continued to be used in the centuries ahead, not necessarily in the modern sense, but for referring to a kind of state with a certain establishment. For instance, Jean Bodin's *Les six livres de la République* uses the word 'republic' but view a view to its content, one can see the book's author is not against monarch; on the contrary it emphasizes the role of the magistrate as ruler.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Aryeh Kashner, *The Jews*, 362.

⁴⁶ Tom Stevenson, "Readings of Scipio's Dictatorship in Cicero's De Re Publica (6.12)." *The Classical Quarterly* 55.1 (2005), 143.

⁴⁷ Sean McConnell, "Magnitudo Animi and Cosmic Politics in Cicero's De re Publica" *The Classical Journal* 113.1 (2017), 47.

⁴⁸ Louise Hodgson, *Res Publica and The Roman Republic: 'Without Body or Form'* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 19-20.

⁴⁹ Fergus Millar, "Triumvirate and principate." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 63 (1973), 50-54.

⁵⁰ Emma Claussen, *Politics and 'Politiques' in Sixteenth Century France: A Conceptual History* (India: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 96-97.

The modern term republic gained its meaning because of the Humanism movements in academic sphere literature and American and French revolutions in the political arena.⁵¹ Still, the word Politeia can be interpreted as 'Res Publica' as it is a projection for an ideal form of government with a certain establishment. Also, the word Politeia can be interpreted as 'Republic' in the modern sense because the Aristotle's 'Politeia' was certainly not a pure democracy, but an oligarchy giving a right to say to the society. The reason Plato's Politeia was translated into English was probably because of Cicero's choice of Latin wording in reference to Plato's Politeia, and the conception of 'Republic' as a political term that stands for types of governments with certain establishment or legitimacy, as explained above.

Therefore, it can be said that the Hellenic term Politeia forms the basis for all meanings the Latin term 'Res Publica' and Republic gained over time.

G. Politeia in Modern Hellenic Language - Politeia Meaning 'The Times'

The original name of famous novel Zorba the Greek is Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά, which can be translated as The Life and Politeia of Alexis Zorba.⁵² The word Politeia in this context, as a book title, is translated and as 'the times' i.e. The Life and Times of Alexis Zorba.⁵³ It is worth to remind that such modern interpretation of Politeia in that way is not unique to this particular novel's title. It is used in other literary works, especially in biographies, too.⁵⁴

Considering the book is about life of a person, who maintains an bold and firm stance against life and the novel does not only tell what he did (i.e. the life), but also was he was into (i.e. the times), it is possible to construe that the modern Hellenic word Politeia, in this particular context, refers to the challenges he faced as a result of being part of a society. A society, which had different attitude when

⁵¹ G. Adolf Koch, *Republican Religion: The American Revolution and the Cult of Reason* (United Kingdom: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009), xi-xii.

⁵² Michael Herzfeld, *Subversive Archaism: Troubling Traditionalists and the Politics of National Heritage* (United States of America: Duke University Press, 2021), 98.

⁵³ Wook-Dong Kim, *Kazantzakis's Zorba the Greek: Five Readings* (United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019), 75.

⁵⁴ For instance, see Hoffmann, E. T. A. *Bíos Kai Politeía Tou Gátou Moúr* (Greece: Erató, 1997).

compared to him. That difference, uniqueness of his character in the society makes sense with a view to his fights in life.

CONCLUSION

Discussing the different notions, constructions, perceptions and penetration of Politeia, there are several jurisprudential and ethical observations that can be inferred from the semantic shifts for interpretation of the term.

First, the handled notions of the term show that there was an ancient social understanding, according to which people concerned in public matters are different than those who are concerned in their own interest. These two groups of people have different approach to matters. It can also be inferred that being concerned in public interests is more virtuous and civilized manner of living than taking care of one's own interest only. Therefore, the discussions above imply that public affairs cannot be conducted by those whose concern is their private interest. Continuation and adoption, in higher levels, of this judgment is the reason the word 'idiot' came to today's insulting meaning by time, but it has not always been a neutral adjective, either.⁵⁵

Secondly; the idea that the type of government, where people govern themselves is a state in its true sense, appears to have been quite influential by time, because the term citizenship and civic status, which is originally unique to the regime of republic in strict modern sense, was considered the same with Politeia, which could originally be referring to regime of a polis, where the subjects are ruled by a monarch. Though the Roman republic had in fact ended in the first century B.C. and the imperial 'polity', replacing it, took the power from citizens of Rome, the state was still called a 'republic' and the primal status of the individuals was still referred to by the term Politeia in the sense of Roman citizenship.

The foregoing ancient approach may be caused by the Roman nostalgia of republican era for its achievements, more than people's accepting it as the ideal regime. Still, the meaning attached to the terms citizenship and republic during the enlightenment era, is more probably under the renaissance influence suggesting that a true republic is more virtuous than an absolute monarchy.

⁵⁵ A. W. Sparkes, "Idiots, Ancient and Modern.", *Politics* Vol 23, Issue 1 (1988), 101.

The third semantic analysis confirms the fact that not all ancient states were unconstitutional, but there were several constitutional states with unwritten constitution. This infers from the fact that, certain history records telling how Spartan, Athenian or Roman people were ruled can be considered an explanation of their states, but more specifically, their constitution. The term *constitutio* used by Cicero also supports the suggestion that there were ancient governments that were subject to unwritten rules above their own written laws. Though modifiability of these unwritten, constitutional rules varies, it is still possible to say this is a clear distinction as there are ancient peoples, such as ancient German, Scythian or Thracian people, about whom there is no record of such common social legal order.

Lastly, the foregoing analysis imply that being part of a public life is greater a challenge, when compared to a lifestyle that disregards the public life. The later sense that describes the challenges faced by Christian saints and the miseries experienced by Alexis Zorba. The choice of the word politeia for expressing the duration of life, in which they suffered, is an implication that they were not people that were seeking their own interests, but they were civil people that tried to be 'good' in the sense that does not ignore the existence of the community, in which they live as individuals.

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