

THE PAGAN FOUNDATIONS OF A REPUBLICAN TRADITION IN ROME AND ITS INFLUENCES ON MACHIAVELLIAN THOUGHT*

AS BASES PAGÃS DE UMA TRADIÇÃO REPUBLICANA EM ROMA E SUAS INFLUÊNCIAS NO PENSAMENTO MAQUIAVELIANO

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ABSTRACT

In this article we will seek to discuss the ways in which the Roman people forged their origins, establishing the foundations of their republican tradition from a pagan influence from peoples of antiquity, centrally Etruscans and Greeks; as well as the way Machiavelli resumed this tradition in his writings. Our itinerary will constitute a first demonstration of the influences received by the Roman people of great civilizations that preceded them, both in power and splendor and culture, namely Etruscans and Greeks. These influences can be detected in political, moral, religious, military and architectural aspects. The second step will be to present the foundations of the republican tradition of classical Rome, mainly through its political and moral foundations, putting the traits that gave it their identity, as well as the possible unfolding of the influences received. Finally, we will point out how the pagan aspects, inherited by the Romans of the people who preceded them, were assimilated by Machiavelli in their resumption of a republicanism with pre-Christian bases.

KEYWORDS: Machiavelli; republicanism; Rome; classical antiquity.

RESUMO

Neste artigo buscaremos discutir as formas pelas quais o povo romano forjou suas origens, estabelecendo as bases de sua tradição republicana a partir de uma influência pagã advinda de povos da antiguidade, centralmente etruscos e gregos; bem como a maneira como Maquiavel retoma tal tradição em seus escritos. Nosso itinerário se constituirá de uma primeira demonstração das influências recebidas pelo povo romano de grandes civilizações que o antecederam, tanto em poderio quanto em esplendor e cultura, a saber, os etruscos e gregos. Essas influências podem ser detectadas em aspectos políticos, morais, religiosos, bélicos e arquitetônicos. O segundo passo será apresentar as bases da tradição republicana da Roma clássica, principalmente por vias de seus fundamentos políticos e morais, colocando em relevo os traços que lhe deram sua identidade, bem como os possíveis desdobramentos das influências recebidas. Por fim, apontaremos como os aspectos pagãos, herdados pelos romanos dos povos que os antecederam, foram assimilados por Maquiavel em sua retomada de um republicanismo com bases pré-cristãs.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Maquiavel; Roma; republicanismo; antiguidade clássica.

* Artigo recebido em 27/01/2024 e aprovado para publicação em 20/04/2024

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INTRODUCTION

Several areas of research are dedicated to the study of what was one of the greatest empires of classical antiquity, the Roman Empire. One can list in this roll areas such as archaeology, history, philology, literature, anthropology and even philosophy. However, for us, distant readers more than two millennia of this great civilization, using the resources that such sciences provide us, it is necessary to make an effort to purify what has been settled in the numerous interpretations of this tradition. For the purpose for which we are interested, the pursuit of the Roman tradition of a clear explanation of its ethical and political aspects, founding of its republican tradition, is not necessary to make an effort of archaeological or philological deepening.

If it is not possible to embrace the complete universe of the numerous works and research on the subject, we will assist the supports that can point to the flourishing of the precepts of Roman society within the stipulated parameters. In general terms, the itinerary to be followed in the search for the demonstration of the cultural anchorages that supported Roman society, will be made by the presentation of three basic points, namely: the origins and influences that occurred in the formation of the incipient Roman people; its republican establishment, as a political and military power; finally, the values and precepts that gave the mortar of support of their culture and the formation of their tradition.

Such points will be divided into two topics, the first dealing with the way the influence of ancient pagan cultures forged the model in which the Roman culture itself emerges. We will highlight the influences coming from Etruscan culture and Greek culture, both pre-Christian cultures. This is a predominant factor in understanding how Roman republicanism, when resumed by Machiavelli, will be discrepant of a republican tradition of Christian basis. In turn, the second topic will deal with the proper aspects of the republican model built by Rome, as well as its values and foundations. Roman republicanism was characterized by being both satisfactorily stable, even with internal disputes, as well as expansionist, aspects that will be widely exploited by Machiavelli in his work. Finally, in the third topic, we will seek to present the way Machiavelli emphasizes the proper aspects of Roman republicanism, especially those that came from the pagan influences of the civilizations presented, both Etruscans and Greeks. Machiavelli will be the author who will promulgate the resumption of a pre-Christian republican tradition, which presents values, precepts, rituals and foundations of the pagan tradition, as post, represented by Rome, but debtor of great peoples of antiquity.

This movement undertaken by Machiavelli will be in a frank confrontation with the tradition embraced by the so – called “Italian humanists”, which also expressed a strong dependence on the Christian tradition and all its developments in political and social life. This study is important for political philosophy, centrally to republican discussion, as it presents the need to understand the foundations of tradition resumed by Machiavelli and its developments in the constitution of a political theory different from that in Christendom. Weighted the reasons that motivate us to continue this study, we will go to its execution, hoping to achieve the proposed objectives.

1 THE ORIGINS OF ROME: THE INFLUENCES OF ETRUSCANS AND GREEKS

Roman civilization was built, arduously and long, as the result of a movement that involved clashes and syncretism with other civilizations as important as it in ancient history. Etruscans, Greeks, and various other peoples were part of the tumultuous scenario of the Italic Peninsula until at least the 3rd century BC. The two great civilizations, the Greeks and the Etruscans, were undoubtedly the great influencers of the incipient constitution of Roman civilization. It is quite pertinent what instructs us Paratore (1983, p. 9) on these influences, as follows: “Although retaining the ethnic individuality itself, Rome was first subjected to the mastery and civilization of the Etruscan: perhaps its name is Etruscan, and Etruscan are some fundamental aspects of their theological heritag”. The Etruscan people were extremely important for the constitution of the civilizing models present in the Mediterranean, however, their power was not enough to rival the growing Greek influence. As Paratore (1983, p. 9) also points out: “[...] the struggle between Etruscans and Greeks in Italy was an inevitable diffusion of the civilization of the most evolved people: the Greeks”. The years in which Rome received the Etruscan and Greek influences were the same in which their internal disputes in the Italic territory were more fierce.

It is a fact that these two powers were the main threats to the Latin peoples, however, it cannot be neglected the fact that the various tribes and peoples of the peninsula faced themselves in constant disputes. Many historical references are obstructed by folkloric and mythical reports contained in the main old texts, which give news about the foundation of the city of Rome and its true process of flowering. Qualify the historical references of these mythical and folkloric accounts is a task that is indelibly necessary, not only to understand the degree of expansion of Roman inventiveness from its influences, as to understand the vision

of classic Rome in the periods of the medieval and the Renaissance. It is also necessary to keep in mind that the understanding we have today from all the historical path taken by Rome on its ascension is immeasurably richer and more accurate than the medieval and Renaissance humanists had, for example.

Seeking to understand the historical spiral that put in dispute two great civilizations during the formation and rise of an even greater is the first step in understanding and explaining the central points that enabled the emergence of the Roman tradition. We will begin by resolving the points of this understanding from the role of Etruscan civilization, soon after, we will take the Greek influence.

The Etruscan expansion on the Italic Peninsula was concisely and well directed. “Before the end of the seventh century BC, the Etruscans ensured the passage of the Tiber occupying the site of Rome: this served them as a bridge head towards *Latium* and southern Italy” (Aymard; Auboyer, 1954, p. 21). Despite this framework of clear oppression by a foreign power, the Roman people were constituted in order to assimilate various aspects of Etruscan culture. The fact that it is not a civilization founded by monarchical foundations or from other culturally configured peoples made Rome bring together, in its formation process, the strengths of Etruscan tradition. Accepting all individuals who wanted to be part of his society, Rome demonstrates well the open character that marks its construction. On this question instructs us Pereira (2002, p. 19):

The tradition that Romulus had created in the capitol a place of asylum for all kinds of fugitives, including slaves, the abduction of the Sabinas, intended to obtain the wives they needed, and subsequent covenant with the people to which they belonged, are seen as a characteristic saga of a people who had erected the power widening their citizenship and continually admitting new elements.

Etruscan influences were in view of strong syncretism, however, the formation of the Roman tradition, as a society, expressed the formation of a unique model. In the context of religion, we can point out that the increase brought by the Etruscans is more directed to rituals and the appreciation of the concrete aspects of religion that throws their fervor into understanding the signs sent by the gods. It is true that the religious traditions of the Mediterranean are, in essence, different from those Semitic and Arabs traditions in general. However, Etruscan religion has the even greater differential of not being centrally based on the figure of the oracles, its ritualistic characteristic values more the interpretation of the presages and auguries. The theme of the presages and auguries is quite recurrent in Roman

history and in their religion, especially in the most important political and military events. This will be one of the characteristics highlighted by Machiavelli in dealing with the theme of religion in the process of Roman political stability. Therefore, it is quite interesting to understand where the Romans took such a religious understanding for themselves, let's take the opinion of Aymard and Auboyer (1954, p. 23-24):

The originality of the Etruscans, at least among Western peoples – because the approach is essential to the religion of Mesopotamia – comes from the humiliated, crushed and total submission of man to the will of superior forces animated by mysterious designs. In his weakness, man has only one resource: trying to detect this will in order to act only if it promises to be favorable and, in doubt or not, do everything to make it such. Hence the importance given, not to the oracles, but to the presages. Everything, in theory, is a presage, as long as it is seen and interpreted, because a universal sympathy unites the smallest aspects of the world.

This disposition will be fundamental in the Roman apprehension of religion and the way rituals are used in preparing for combat and political decisions. One of the most important aspects in this religious configuration is the connection that the people had with the nature around them and the phenomena that surrounded them. Differentiating this disposition within the scenario of Semitic and Mediterranean religions, as we said, gives us the impression that the Romans inherited from Etruscans a greater taste for the “materiality” of religion. In other words, a greater ability to use religion not only in contexts where the need for social order was imposed, but also in the understanding of natural processes and the ordering of society itself in the sphere of nature.

The Etruscan contribution to the Romans also occurred by structural and architectural advances, it can be said that the Romans knew how to use the technology that the Etruscans had. The structures of Etruscan cities were undoubtedly more effective and demonstrated the reason for their expansion over the various territories of the Mediterranean. Some researchers have defended the extreme contribution of Etruscan society to the formation of power and Roman stability, especially in view of impulse through its technology and social structure. We can mention Jean Bayet, his position is very clear in pointing the Etruscan as a strong reason for the incipient wealth that the Romans have achieved, as follows:

Owners of Campania, in the 6th century BC, the Etruscans were also from Rome and, thanks to it, undoubtedly dominated Lazio, who separated their two zones of domination. The consequences of these events were extremely important. First, a considerable prosperity in Rome: this is the heritage of cities in transit, establishing ports and free commissions. And, moreover, the vigorous rise of Etruscan

civilization: buildings, fine arts, mentality, except language without doubt; Everything in Rome was Etruscan (Bayet, 1996, p. 25).

It is correct to say that the technological impulse brought by the Etruscans founded the pillars of various Roman arts used in urbanization and optimization of cities, but, moreover, it left the inheritance of the constant search for excellence in strengthening cities. The urban space became the place of reflection of the mood that raised the people, the grandeur of buildings is the same as sought in religious rituals, the obsession with efficacy and strength is reflected in social feelings such as *Severitas*. The public space was an environment in which the citizen was forged, according to Pereira (2002, p. 441): “The meaning of order is revealed in the ability to plan for large crowds, as is the case of the Forum, where they are centered on a Vast area the main activities (religious, administrative, judicial, commercial), in the attention given to the supply of water and the streets...”

Regarding the military aspect, we can assert that the Etruscan influence on the Romans has been more restricted than in the areas we have indicate. In view of the fact that we indicate how religion, based on auguries and presages, could be used in the preparation for combat, as well as public space reflected order and discipline. Roman war strategies, military formations and war power were not constructed primarily on experiences brought from other cultural ones, such a contribution was forged in the process of strengthening their own society. Admittedly, military exchange, composed of struggle tactics, weapons and stratagems are inevitable, but the Roman model owes its originality to the internal arrangement that took place in view of its formation. It can be argued that the military maturity of the Romans was at the same pace and instant of political maturation, either by the best organization or the way wars were driven by the technological increase, as Potter (2004, p. 66) points out:

The transition from the Roman army of inability to lethal efficiency was the result of one of the most significant military revolutions in European history. A military revolution is defined by the transformation of the military and civil administration of a state, allowing a high degree of coordination between them.

The political and social provisions that boosted the Roman army will later be the differential between this civilization and those that maintained military traditions less adaptable to the open context of society. Etruscan values, whether in view of religious understandings, or through urban structures technologies and even military exchange, was an important part of the construction of a Roman tradition, especially in its republican bases. The

most formal aspects of such a contribution will be more clearly nuanced when we can outline the properly Roman values and their marks that indicate the Etruscan contributions that have been indicated so far.

However, as indicated earlier, it is still necessary to understand the place of the Greeks in the construction of the incipient Roman society, its contribution and inheritance. This will be done in the molds we have so far used to highlight in Roman history the inherited traits of Etruscan civilization. When we approach the Greek influence on the construction of the Roman tradition we have to distinguish two periods. The first, of which we will be concerned at this initial moment, is directed to the Greek influence perceived in the period of foundation and sedimentation of Roman society. The second period, which we will not have time to comment, is the one in which Roman society is no longer just a minimally cohesive block and ready to be shaped in a large republic, on the contrary it is an expansionist and poignant power. In both periods, it will be necessary to tune the various aspects that are tangent and change, aspects that we will try to demonstrate, accompanied the rise and fall of this great empire.

“Rome only managed to breathe and affirm independence itself, when the Etruscans, under the blows of the defeats inflicted by the Greeks, began to retreat from southern Italy” (Paratore, 1983, p. 9). However, this did not mean a movement of total autonomy, the Greek influence hovered still not only as a cultural or social contribution, its military influence remained in southern Italy. It was interested in Greece the total control of the Italic Peninsula, mainly because of the trade that involved the various Greek cities around the Mediterranean, as Pereira (2002, p. 46) tells us: “The contact of the Romans with the Greeks began earlier than usual. The existence of trade relations is documented by the presence of Greek vessels since the archaic time”. This scenario has changed as the Roman power grows, due to the increase of its contingent, and the strengthening of its political organizations. In fact, the great expansion of Rome, in the process of becoming an empire, occurred due to its march over areas previously dominated by the Greeks.

Several cultural, social and political aspects of Roman society are perceived from the Greek presence in the Mediterranean scenario, as well as the Romans, the other peoples of the region were also affected by the Greek presence. If we return to the case of Etruscans, we can say that syncretism, especially religious, is something that demonstrates the degree of Greek presence and influence in the region for centuries. Numerous gods of the Greek pantheon were assimilated by the Etruscan religion and later by the Roman religion. However, unlike

the Etruscan, the Greek religion was directed by the intervention of the gods through oracles. Not that the presages were neglected, but the very nature of rationality of the symbolic construction of the Greek religion emphasized the “verbalization” of the religious message. One aspect, however, that became integrated into the Roman religious system was the cult of ancestors and the appreciation of tradition through this cult. One cannot hide the fact that the Greeks, more than the Etruscans, had a religious worship system closer to family and community ties.

If we claim that Roman society has assimilated the Etruscan religion the appreciation for presages and their use in war and social organization, we can also affirm the assimilation of the Greek rituals of valuing tradition through the cult of ancestors, which first arises with traits of a religion based on family values and extended to society. About this point Coulanges (1903, p. 38) gives us an important information:

The cult of the dead represents the cult of the ancestors. [...] From there it was that in Greece and Rome, the son had a duty to make libations and sacrifices to his father's amulets and those of all his grandparents. Missing this duty was the most severe wickedness of how many could be committed, because the interruption of worship, depriving from his place to the series of dead, annihilated his happiness. This negligence took proportions of true parricide multiplied by as many times as the ancestors in the family.

These observations are extremely useful for better understanding the values that constituted the Roman tradition of *mos maiorum*, the entire basis of Roman education and its action in the ethical-political organization of society. With regard to the other aspects of the influence of Greek culture in the construction of an incipient Roman tradition, we can allude to the strong appeal of the arts, literature and the warfare that certainly became present. However, in the initial period of configuration of the Roman people, the organization of their society and in the establishment of their values, the formal aspects of a spirit more accurate by the arts are not yet developing. Despite all the trade we have already indicated between Romans and Greeks, the properly Roman artistic production should still suffer other influences until it reaches its point of maturation.

Greek influences on the formation of a Roman tradition are more centered on the foundations constituting cultural structures, religious contributions and military benefits. It should be noted that even during the period in which Roman society was configured in its own traits, the other Italic regions remained deeply immersed in Greek dependence. “An extremely important cultural fact is the adaptation of the Greek alphabet, from the model of

the island of Eubeia, precisely from the place of origin of the early Greeks who settled permanently in Italy” (Pereira, 2002, p. 48).

Roman history will continue to intertwine into Greek history, as we have said, until the end of the Empire. This intertwining will be stronger, however, as regards the most formal thinking, both within the laws and in literature and rhetoric. This is the second period, which we refer to at the beginning of the topic. Philosophy will take a seat in the main places of formation of political and ethical thinking of the most prominent Roman thinkers, especially in the final period of the Republic. We emphasize that we take as a guideline, unlike some commentators of the republican tradition established in Rome, this assertion that Greek influence from formal and philosophical foundations becomes more visible and punctual in the final decades of the republican period. Several commentators, in presenting the foundations of the republican tradition expressed in the texts of Polybio and Cicero, overvalue the Greek influence and its theoretical contribution from the principle of the Republic. Cardoso (2013, p. 17) seems to be one of these commentators, let's look at your opinion:

However, what matters here is not so much to remember this context and cultural environment in which the Roman political thinking has been settled, but, above all, to settle that republican Rome, its history, institutions and values were thought, or represented, with concepts, categories and Greek analytical instruments, for they were Greek or ‘Hellenized Romans’ who interpreted and thought them, who built what we identified as the Roman republican ideas.

Certainly we do not completely support this view, even being aware that Greek influence has been in many ways, we argue that the republican character of the Roman tradition is the result of an original and deep political-social arrangement. This movement will be better analyzed when we look at the founding aspects of this Roman tradition, aspects already solidified in society and the lives of individuals. The influences we have so far enumerate are those that occurred in the interval between the Roman liberation of the Etruscan presence and its process of establishment as a society autonomously instituted. The Roman tradition, autonomous and singular, will be more sharply expressed in the values that have become its support, such a tradition will have as its central point the exaltation of political life, the participation of individuals and the constant appreciation of action.

2 THE ROMAN REPUBLICAN TRADITION: FUNDAMENTALS AND VALUES

The processes that led Rome to become the great republic of antiquity demonstrate the changeable and transitory character of the internal and external social relations themselves, at the heart of a political set. From this political movement, drawn on historical lines, one can establish some central points of such social relations, especially from the values, ethical and political, that drive and stabilize them. We do not intend to present a complete historiography of the values that were constituted as basic in the Roman tradition, before, we intended to present the dynamic process by which they established themselves and their representation in political construction.

The very emergence of a republic such as Rome, as it was constituted from the beginning, show the degree of importance of the influences it had and the apprehension of the resources of these influences. Paratore (1983, p. 8) highlights the particularity of the Roman Foundation, as follows:

The history of the progressive rise of Rome, a small town that, first of all, had to ensure against threats from its own neighbors, is a unique miracle in the history of humanity: all the other great empires were the work of a people who inhabited a vast territory solidly organized under a monarchical regime; Only Rome was the work of a city, organized in a representative regime (that of Athens was ephemeral and limited extension).

This “historical anomaly”, the possibility of a republic starting from apparently disconnected and fragile parts is what draws the most attention in Roman history. However, in addition to this first perception, it is necessary to understand the rooting of values and precepts that directed the Roman Republic to an expansion never seen in the ancient world. Political contributions that have given solidity to Roman society are noticeable from the meaning of their value cultural bases, both cultural and political feelings, which shaped the actions of individuals in the social context.

From this accurate perspective taken from the political-cultural organization of the Romans, one can understand the foundations of the one who has become the dominant tradition in the republican period and will undergo few changes and influences until the end of the imperial period. We will not be concerned with this second period, the Roman imperial period, much less will determine in the factors that caused its collapse. We are interested in understanding, as said, the ethical-political bases of the constitution of the Roman tradition in

its most fundamental aspects. This interest is given the purpose of presenting the points in which the values that authors such as Machiavelli are represented later, explicitly and implicitly, in their rereading of such tradition.

It is necessary to realize that in the Roman tradition revived in the work of Machiavelli, the points that distinguish it from the tradition that imposed it after the ascension of Christendom and the ethical-political change brought by it are highlighted. The conception of individual, law, and political organization will be deeply affected in the world built by Christendom, and the ancient tradition of the present political action in the Roman world is also dramatically altered. It is possible to state that an established tradition can be understood from some specific aspects: the education of individuals; the disposition of religion and other social institutions that favor a world understanding that is directed to an end; a cultural appreciation of individuals that demonstrate the effectiveness of values stipulated by both education and religion and institutions.

These three pillars are interconnected by the values, ethical and political, which give foundation and solidity to their social arrangement emanating. In this scenario, it can be intuited that the true constitutive identity of a tradition lies in the junction of these social devices, the political characteristics that arise from such identity are the civilizing heritage of the people that promulgates it. The Roman people promulgated a tradition with extreme political identity, both for their own values and by the scope of the civilizing level it has achieved. The issue is to surface, by conceptual pathways, the constitutive assumptions of this tradition and the way its structure can be presented in terms valid for the theorizing of political action within it.

Given this last statement and the task of justifying the need for its presentation, we will draw a succinct itinerary, focusing on the areas that form a tradition and the presentation of its structure in a way that enables the conceptual glimpse of its points. The values that became central to the Roman tradition appeared aligned in the three instances pointed out, the education of the individual, the direction of religion and the basic social institutions, finally, in the appreciation of individuals and their actions in the political context. We have already had the opportunity to allude to *mos maiorum*, the set of precepts belonging to tradition and basic in the construction of the education of Roman individuals.

It is necessary to realize that Roman society was very well referenced on a strictly cultural basis in relation to the formation of individuals. “In the first phase, archaic, the rural base, education is based on tradition (*mos maiorum*), in the reverence for the elders and to the

gods (*pietas*), in the value of the paradigm (stories such as those of Múcio Cévola, Horace Cocles and others)” (Pereira, 2002, p. 196). This construction interconnected all the Roman institutions, from the family to the Senate itself. As Lintott points to us: “Constitutional tradition (*instituta, mos, consuetudo*) had a huge spectrum under the republic, which ran from non written basic laws – that is, even if they are not *scriptum* – even what *meromos* might be called, the way things happened at the time” (Lintott, 2009, p. 04). In this sense, it can be said that political and social participation was prepared from the first moments of education and the formation of individuals. An exercise that developed within the family institution was through social relations and was strengthened in the foundation of political institutions.

At *mos maiorum* are contained the main expressions of the values that constituted the Roman tradition in its most first base. The specificity of the formation of Roman society imposed the need to establish solid bases of appreciation of relations between individuals. The education that emerged from this tradition was the basis for republican institutions and the values estimated by the Romans. The lack of a common social reference in the incipient formation of the city, at least regarding the regimentation of individuals of various origins, led to the need to build their own reference. As indicated in the first topic, the origin of Rome is quite fragmented, receiving Greek and Etruscan influences and building from there its own identity. It is correct to say that Roman society has managed to take advantage of the central aspects of the influences received, but was not limited to such aspects, establishing its own bases of constitution of a political and social tradition.

This process represents the core of formation of Roman society and its uniqueness in relation to the other cultural ones that influenced it, even in the face of all aspects of syncretism we have already pointed out so far. The education of the individual within Roman society is first of all the formation of a new citizen, the group's collective values are transmitted from the parental relationship of the child to the rigid military formation of young adults. Take the instructive description given by Pereira (2002, p. 196, 198):

From the age of seven, the father is the educator. A very famous example is that of Catão-o-Antigo, who, according to the biography he made Plutarch, did not admit that a slave scored his son or pulled his ears, being slow to learn... [...] Family education ends, as a rule, at sixteen, with the taking of the virile toga. It follows a year of learning at the Forum (*Tirocinium Fori*), with a friend of the remarkable and elderly family (in the first century BC, we have the known example of Cicero listening to Quinto Múcio Cévola Águre and Quinto Múcio Cévola Pontífice). Then, the military service, for which the young man was prepared by physical exercises, performed, not with an agonistic purpose, as among the Greeks, but to achieve greater dexterity and strength.

One can see in this preparation of the individual a trait that becomes a common reference among many of the ancient civilizations, the individual is “swallowed” by the collectivity, the subject belongs to the “set of subjects” that form his community. The individual's social sense of social belonging is the basis of his adherence to the values transmitted to him during his life. This simple social arrangement of the way the relationship of individuals is established in their group assimilation process is enough to support various values nevralgic to the whole tradition. Among them we can list *Honor*, *Dignitas*, *Gravitas*, *Libertas* and *Res Publica*, all values present in tradition and intrinsically stipulated in view of the action of the individual in political life.

These values were an expression of the emphasis given to the act of the individual in the political life of society, they were personal acquisitions, that is, freedom and laws are for all, but *Dignitas*, *Honor*, *Gloria*, are recognitions gained by the value of action individual. Such value is measured by its meaning in relation to the common good and defense of the homeland. Examples of men who gained such distinctions became part of the paradigm (*exemplum*). The Greeks had a principle known as a paradigm, something that greatly influenced Roman education and became one of the pillars of Greek education. “The idea of taking examples of the past to formulate a good line of conduct is already in tragic and IV century speakers before our era [...]” (Natali, 2004, p. 17).

What stands out in the Greek tradition is the action in view of the production of a disposition for a certain virtue, the individual who creates a disposition for justice will always act precisely. In this sense, education is a direction to the practice of virtues in view of the creation of a disposition through a habit. In the case of Rome, the constitution of a republican tradition, based on the *exemplum*, the appreciation of the actions of prominent individuals, was not only founded on an ideal of virtue based on universal principles, before, was focused on the appreciation of the effectiveness of the action of the individuals.

This is exactly why political distinctions such as *Honor* and *Gravitas* were seen as a public recognition of the actions of individuals, and *Gloria* was the coronation of these actions undertaken by individuals. Machiavelli knew how to capture this trait of the republican tradition of Rome very well by pointing out the importance of the examples of prominent men for the stability and ordination of the Republic, as follows:

This return of the republics is born towards its beginning from the simple virtue of a man, without depending on any law that encourages them by some obligation: nevertheless, they are of such reputations and so much that good men want to

imitate, and the bad ones embarrass themselves to have a life contrary to theirs. Those who in Rome, particularly, made these good effects were: Horacio Cocles, Scevola, Fabricio, the two Decios, Regulo Atilio and some others, who, with their rare and outstanding examples they made almost the same effect as the laws in Rome and the institutions (*Discorsi*. III, 1).

The Roman tradition is established from the appreciation of the actions of individuals in view of the adhesion and reproduction of principles and values considered essential in the political constitution of society. Such values are constituted from what represents the basis of social relations and institutions that support Roman society, not just universal moral principles. The traces of influence of Greek and Etruscan civilizations are shown in many ways, as we have already indicated, however, the originality and identity of the republican tradition of Rome is constituted as the differential of this civilization that became the greatest empire of antiquity.

However, after the republican period, in which these values were in a position of centrality in the organization of political and social life, a new government organization, centered on the emperor figure, emerges. The imperial period represents the beginning of changes in the values of *mos maiorum* and its application. However, we will not have the opportunity to analyze this period. We are interested in pointing out that after the collapse and decline that occurred in the imperial period, the Roman civilization and its republican tradition, as well as all traits of “pagan” influences received from the Greeks and Etruscan, will be buried by the weight of Christendom. On this issue, in the next topic, we will deal with the manage as Machiavelli resumes the Roman republican tradition, directly resuming the ‘pagan’ traits that founded it, thus reflecting the very influences received from the ancient peoples.

3 THE ROMAN REPUBLICAN TRADITION IN MACHIAVELLI

The rich Roman tradition, while a kind of cultural “inheritance” common to neolatine languages, was present in the various branches of the arts that remained during the medieval. However, as far as ethical, political and religious framework is concerned, the picture is not so conciliatory, ancient Rome, of great achievements, the impetuous civic heroes and the various pagan gods, it is just a construction of the past. Medieval Europe is a scenario dominated by new ethical, political and religious precepts, a new model of civilization in which the moral of the ancient Romans is just a mistake created by the mistakes of “pagan darkness”.

It is possible to minimally discern what this split process occurred in the medieval, in which the image of a Rome of the past, the result of pagan values, and a Rome still present, the result of the great speakers, magistrates, poets and writers is created. Certainly the medieval influence of the rich Roman 'inheritance' will come to humanists, however, the main way for this movement is undoubtedly the field of rhetoric and jurisprudence, as Lintott points out: "Rome originally affected the political thinking of the Middle Ages through rhetoric teachers, called (somewhat disconcerting to students of the Roman Republic) dictators, and through lawyers" (Lintott, 2009, p. 235).

The steps that make up the process of discrediting the ethical and political values of Roman civilization take place in the same sense as that we declare to be the promulgator of a tradition: I – the formatting of the education of the individual; II – the disposition of religious precepts to favor an understanding of the world that is in line with the end in society; finally, III – a cultural appreciation of individuals who demonstrate the effectiveness of these understandings of individual.

It can be said that one tradition imposes itself on the "corpse" of another, this truth is seen in the case of the passage of Roman civilization to Christendom. Machiavelli tells us: "Such a thing is known considering the ways the Christian religion has taken against the Gentile, which has canceled all the ordinances, all the ceremonies of this, and has erased every memory of ancient theology" (*Discorsi*. II, 5). Human history in general is full of these examples, as it is also full of examples of ways as in general the 'ghost' of the buried tradition can resurface in new configurations. This seems to be the case of the Roman tradition that will be resumed by Machiavelli and assimilated, at least in its political terms, by the republican tradition in modernity, both in Italy and in England of the 17th and 18th centuries.

In dealing with the relationship between Italian Renaissance Humanism and Roman heritage, it seems to be a commonplace of Western historiography the fact that Latin tradition, as stated, buried by almost all the Middle Ages, resurrected in the Italian peninsula as a result of a natural course. Nauert (2000, p. 11) points out that such perception is not correct:

Culture historians often assumed that the Renaissance recovery of old languages and literatures was somewhat easy because Italy, as a homeland of the ancient Roman civilization, had never completely lost contact with this civilization. But this free assumption is never proven, for the simple reason that it cannot be. Not only the '13th century Renaissance', but all previous classic revivals (Caroling, Alfredian, Otonian) were centralized north of the Alps. In the Renaissance period, some important discoveries of little known manuscripts were made in Italian libraries, but the most significant came from libraries north of the Alps, where medieval

civilization flourished while Italy remained culturally late. Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459), the most spectacular and successful humanistic discoverer of lost manuscripts, made his greatest discoveries in Cluny, Burgundy, and St. Gallen, Switzerland monasteries.

From this perspective, it is not a historical “appropriation” leveraged by simply cultural or geographical bonds, the dominant Christian culture throughout the medieval has dealt with widening the distance that kept forgotten the Roman traces of a pagan culture. However, what the 'pagans' had of the most virtuous and “godly” was indicated as a precursor, even without spiritual intention, of the values that only Christendom could promulgate as true. As Toffanin (1953, p. 154) argues:

[...] there is talk of the equalization of certain Latin scriptures to the truths and ends of faith, which had already been performed by godly men with theological scruples. From here comes the silent persuasion that, especially with the last writers of Rome, in the rays of the four stars (the cardinal virtues) the spark of revelation was infused.

The resurgence of a new perspective on the Latin tradition of cultural foundations that brought brightness to the ancient Roman civilization, the foundations of all the ideals that built that great period of glory, was a task that could not be given by simple historical overlap. These brief considerations are essential to understand how the movement undertaken by Machiavelli will bring a deep strangeness to the “Christian humanists” of his day, as well as the disbelief of these same humanists, to consider possible the “imitation” of civic virtues and the values present in Republican tradition of classical Rome. Machiavelli indicates, in the Proemio of the *Discorsi*, the way humanists closed to certain classic aspects, while relegated others to impossibility and neglect. Let's look at your criticism:

Considering, therefore, how much honor is attributed to antiquity, and how many times, leaving aside a multitude of other examples, a fragment of an old statue was bought for a great price, to have it with you, to honor your home and to do it so that it imitates those who delight in this art, and like those who later strive with all their skills to represent it in all their works; And observing, on the other hand, the very virtuous operations that the stories show us, which were performed by old kingdoms and republics, by kings, captains, citizens, legislators and others who worked for their country, being more praised than imitated [...] (*Discorsi*. Proemio).

What Machiavelli seems to show is the way Italian humanists, with a clear influence of Christian tradition, sought to purify what could adapt Christian doctrine and what seemed to be the result of pure pagan heresy. It is true that the Renaissance valued the human form, many of the classic ideals, as well as the precepts of an incipient naturalistic view of the

world, but in no way broke with the tied of Christendom. As Nauert (2000, p. 56) argues: “The inherent and general denial of religion in Renaissance humanism is a creation of nineteenth-century historians, secular liberals (who approved) and conservative Catholics (who were horrified), but not the Renaissance itself.” Central figures of Italian Humanism, such as Chancellor Salutati, were divided between admiration for classical culture and faithful belief in Christian dogmas. Bianca (2010, p. XII) tells us the way Salutati prepares the way for her approach with the Roman authors: “At the age of 23, therefore, with Prisciano, Virgil, Lucano, Orazio, Coluccio threw the foundations of his library and began to write down his codes. This was the point of turning, the possibility of reading the authors of direct antiquity and fully...”

But, and Machiavelli, how can we point out in his work evidence of a resumption of the Roman republican tradition with deep pagan traits? Well, we will try to answer, even succinctly, to this important question. The first question is to point out how Machiavelli compares the education of modern (their Christian contemporaries) with the education of the ancients (mainly pagan Romans), as follows:

Thinking, therefore, why in those ancient times people were more lovers of freedom than in these, I believe this derives from the same reason that now makes men less strong, which I believe is the difference between our education and the old, founded in the diversity of our religion in relation to the old. Because, since our religion shows us the truth and the true way, it makes us estimate the honor of the world less: therefore, the Gentiles, having it in great esteem and having placed the supreme good, were more fierce in their actions (*Discorsi*. II, 2).

At this point we see how Machiavelli highlights the need to associate education with the founding precepts of religion that promulgates the way individuals act, the values that support such actions and the recognition they receive. Since Augustine, in his work *The City of God*, the link between ‘individual’ and ‘political body’, had already been broken, leaving a gap in the relationship between ‘national religion’ and ‘education’. Augustine (1941) promulgates the following:

Two loves founded ‘two cities’, namely: self-love, led to the contempt of God, the earthly; love to God, leading to the contempt of himself, the heavenly. The first in itself and the second in God is glory, for the first pursue the glory of men, and has the second, by maxim, the glory of God... (*De Civitate Dei*, XIV, 28).

All medieval Christianity reflects this detached view of religion in relation to education and the pursuit of social recognition. Machiavelli, in resuming the Roman tradition, with its pagan traits, will have to criticize this configuration present in the political model emerged in Christendom. In his work, the Florentine will again bring the religious aspects of the auguries and presages, their importance and centrality in political and military life. The importance of the great religious ceremonies, with their traces of “pagan violence”, as well as the great public shows that made people resume fear and respect for laws.

In addition, Machiavelli will reinforce the importance of the prominent actions of individuals, especially in view of the search for recognition, glory and the common good of the Republic. As already pointed out several times, these aspects make up the pillars of a cohesive society, education, religion and political institutions. Machiavelli, by undertaking his criticism of the Christian civilizing model, will have to rehabilitate such aspects within a pre-Christian republican tradition. Machiavellian criticism of the “education of modern” also reveals how important to the Romans was the fact that political institutions, the tradition of the *exemplum*, from *mos maiorum*, as well as education, were in the same direction.

The Florentine expresses this fact more clearly: “It can not be called a disorganized republic, where there are so many examples of *Virtù*, because good examples arise from good education, the good education of good laws, and the good laws of the riots that many condemn unconsciously” (*Discorsi*. I, 4). The forceful political action, focused on the common good of the Republic, undertaken by individuals from *Virtù*, represent the objective of an education focused on the pursuit of glory, recognition, the founding values of political and social living. According to Machiavelli, the ‘modern’ had no such education, as they sought the examples of “selfless”, the “humble”, values cultivated in Christianity, not in the pagan republican tradition represented by Rome.

The laws had a function of guaranteeing the stability of the political body, braking the “*umori*”, both the “*Grandi*” and the “*Popolo*”, but also represented guidelines that founded the education conducive to the maintenance of the political body. On this aspect, Machiavelli is quite clear in explaining the frightening character that was often employed by legislators to infuse in individuals respect for laws and orders. Let's see what the author tells us:

Among those executions before the taking of Rome by the Gauls, the death of the sons of Brutus, the death of the *decênviro*s, that of Spúrio Moelio, were notable; after the taking of Rome was the death of Manlio Capitolino, the death of Manlio Torquato's son, the execution of Papirio Cursor against Fabio, his cavalry master, for

the accusation against the Cipiões. These things, because they were exceptional and notable, every time they occurred, made men return toward the founding principle; and when they began to be rarer, they began to give men more space to corrupt themselves, with more danger and turmoil (*Discorsi* I, 1).

These “exceptional” things occurred publicly, besides the austerity expressed by the city's own architecture, as argued in the previous topic, the participation of individuals in a “collective” act reinforced the “educational” character of such events. The laws were based on aspects that linked individuals directly to collective values, but, moreover, fear constituted one of the factors of maintaining the order. Decreasing this fear, corruption was beginning to emerge in the political body, it was necessary that the public shows of extraordinary severity occurred periodically. For Machiavelli the Christian religion did not provide such necessary severity, unlike the pagan religion, which he said, was always full of extraordinary acts, as follows: “The pomp was not lacking or the magnificence of the ceremonies, but the actions of full blood and ferocity were gathered, killing multitudes of animals; Such as a terrible aspect made men like them” (*Discorsi*. II, 2).

As highlighted in the first two topics, such aspects were typical of pagan religions that influenced the formation of a Roman tradition. The centrality of the ceremonies, the “materiality” of religion from aspects that incorporate the nature and mystique of divine forces were a clear inheritance of Etruscan influence. Certainly these elements were not part of the Christian tradition, much less were considered by the humanists who sought references in the republicanism of the Roman tradition. The strangeness that Machiavelli caused was proportional to the immense abyss that separated the pagan rituals from ancient Rome from Christian rituals. As Gilbert (1996, p. 135) argues:

He was different from the humanists and the objectives of political literature and saw the Florentine political scene from an opposite angle to that of aristocrats. This difference can be the starting point for an analysis of Machiavelli's thinking. Although he used the same methods, worked with the same concepts and debated the same problems as others, he modified them and expanded the meaning, so that we see politics under a new light.

Machiavelli's reading undertakes from the Roman republican tradition is devoid of a dogmatic limit, not stifled in a “Christian frame”, so he can instrumentally take his own aspects of a pagan tradition. The Roman religion, strongly influenced by Etruscan and Greek aspects, was inserted in all aspects of individual's lives, from citizen formation to army control and political decision making. In this process the auguries and presages played a

central role, as already pointed out at other times. Machiavelli is very straightforward when resuming this feature, not worrying about committing some heresy, he indicates that religions have “founders” and, when necessary, do not need to talk about “dogmatic truths”. Let's see what the Florentine tells us:

The life of the Gentile Religion was founded on the answers of the oracles and the sects of the riddles, and the auspices; And all the other ceremonies, sacrifices and rites depended on this. Therefore, the princes of a republic or a kingdom must maintain the foundations of religion that support them; and this done, it will be easy to keep their religious republics and, consequently, good and united. And they should favor and increase all things that favor it, even if they judge them false, and the more they should do this according to prudence, and as knowledgeable of natural things (*Discorsi*. I, 12).

The role of religion as “*instrumentum Regni*” is highlighted from its ability to keep the political body cohesive, educate individuals and contribute to the maintenance of the instituted power, whether early or republican. The extraordinary character of pagan rituals, the use of auguries and the mystification of nature are factors that create a kind of reverence in individuals. For Machiavelli, this is a primordial factor to have a cohesive and pacified political body, even though it directly confronting the Christian teachings of his day. Certainly these are characteristic of a national religion, which contributed directly to the construction of a feeling of social belonging.

Christianity is not a national religion, moreover, it does not incorporate the aspects highlighted by Machiavelli from the pagan religion. But, as indicated, we are interested in the function of religion as a factor of maintaining power, social cohesion and political stability, using elements that are not obligatorily committed to a “dogmatic truth”. Such characteristics are inherited from an Etruscan and Greek influence, creating a pagan republican tradition in Rome, which Machiavelli resumes in an integral way. To illustrate its interpretation of the function of religion, especially of the auguries and presages, in the history of Rome, the Florentine alludes to an important fact.

In Chapter 14, Book IV of the *Discorsi*, Machiavelli presents the case of Papirio and that of Appio Pulcro. The first, against the Sanitas, being warned by his nephew that the auspices were not favorable, even if they were presented as favorable by the priests to have the battle, preferred to continue and keep in the soldiers the idea that they were really favorable, leaving victorious. Already the second, against Cartago, with the indication that the auguries were opposed, threw the sacred birds to the sea, defeating the battle. Machiavelli

indicates that the first was prudent, took advantage of the auguries as a way to encourage soldiers, even false; already the second, hurting customs and religion, created doubt and fear in his troop. The Florentine concludes this chapter by saying: “Another end does not have this custom of the auspice, except to make the confident soldiers to go to the battle, this confidence is almost always born victory. Such a custom was used not only by the Romans, but by foreigners...” (*Discorsi*. I, 14).

The episodes in which the *Virtù* of important figures of Roman history can be seen are taken by Machiavelli as a foundation for their interpretation of the republican tradition. Far beyond the role of religion, its auguries and presages, the action of individuals was important to have a clear relationship between *Virtù* and *Fortune*, central elements in machiavellian theory. The pursuit of glory and recognition, values that existed fully in the Roman tradition is highlighted by the Florentine as a way of maintaining and appreciating republican freedom itself. As we discussed in the previous topic, the Roman republican tradition was based on the political appreciation of individuals' actions, the search for *Gravitas*, *Honor*, *Dignitas*, as well as all possible recognitions. The Roman religion favored this practice, unlike the Christian religion, as seen in Machiavellian criticism.

Christianity, besides suppressing the natural factor of religion, one that was strongly present in the practice of auguries and presages, also suppressed the “worldly” character of the actions of individuals in view of the pursuit of glory and political recognition. These aspects were central to ancient pagan civilizations, especially Etruscan and Greek, exerting a strong influence on the construction of a Roman republican tradition. Machiavelli, in studying Roman history, perceives the discrepancy between the Roman tradition, pagan, and Christian tradition, defending the need to value the actions of individuals showing *Virtù*. According to the Florentine: “Men who are born in a republic should therefore walk this path, and strive for some extraordinary action to begin to reveal” (*Discorsi*. III, 34).

Beyond rewarding individual actions, this possibility of pursuit of glory, recognition and political dignity was a way of guaranteeing full freedom, which everyone had the same possibility of achieving. Within a tradition that valued the “*exemplum*”, respect for ancestors, as well as active participation in the political body, it was essential to keep these beliefs alive in individuals. Christian tradition has suppressed this perspective of freedom, as stated, turning off the individual from the political body and placing the “spiritual glory” above “worldly glory”. But the main break was the denial of citizenship as political participation and complete acceptance of customs and, especially, of laws. The bishop of Hippona had put the

following: “Do not worry about the diversity of laws, customs or institutes, which destroy or maintain earthly peace [...] if it does not prevent religion from teaching that the only God should be worshiped, true and supreme” (*De Civitate Dei* XIX, 17).

The republican tradition assimilated by Christian authors of the Renaissance and Italian humanism, as well as by the English and French thinkers of the 16th and 17th centuries, will bring the limitations of a political theory revived in a new dominant political-cultural context. In other words, the republican fundamentals that have emerged from a cultural influence and pagan values will have to be suppressed in view of an adaptation to Christian principles and values. Machiavelli will be the counterpoint in this process, he undertakes the resumption of the Roman republican tradition in all its traits, cultural, moral, political and religious. Such a movement placed him in a diametrically opposed position of his contemporaries, highlighting all the pagan cultural heritage that the Romans inherited from the peoples who influenced them in their republican construction.

CONCLUSION

The construction of Rome, such as people, republic and empire, was a historical, political and cultural phenomenon that to the present day serves as a substrate for numerous and profound discussions. Far beyond all the mythical narrative, the cultural annulment performed by later Christian civilization, remains the historical facts that connect the origin of Roman civilization to the two great civilizations that preceded it in power, splendor, intellectual and cultural production, Etruscan and Greek. This mixture of influences and disputes, exchanges and clashes has helped forge what became the basis of the republican tradition of classical Rome. Through the sharing of moral, religious, military and architectural precepts, the Roman people were shaped in their own identity, however, knowing how to take advantage of what came from their interaction with their rivals, strengthening their own civilizing traits.

The political and moral values that constituted the basis of classical Roman republicanism were shaped from the need to privilege the prominent actions of individuals. These actions turn to the common good, the stability of the political arrangement and the enhancement of the homeland. The foundation of this construction was the solid establishment of a tradition that was supported by the education of individuals, family and social ties, respect for institutions and, especially, the recognition of the political action of

individuals. Despite all its splendor and power, both military and cultural, Rome succumbed to the attacks of time and the profound political, social and cultural changes that developed during the centuries in which it remained as the largest empire on the planet. The Middle Ages is inaugurated precisely with the collapse of this great empire and the rise of a new paradigm of civilization. The Latin heritage in the medieval period, the great republican tradition of classical Rome, becomes an idealized reference, being part of an erudition that no longer seemed possible in the real world.

Machiavelli becomes the great restorer of a Roman republican tradition founded on strong cultural, political and religious traits from a clear base of pagan values. This movement places the Florentine directly on a direction contrary to that of its humanistic contemporaries, which sought to adapt classic republican principles to the principles and values, instituted in Christianity. Certainly the Machiavellian rereading caused a strangeness compared to the proposal of Christian thinkers, placing the Florentine as the herald of a tradition that had been buried throughout the Middle Ages. However, it is extremely important to understand the movement undertaken by Machiavelli and the way it lets the strong pagan influences appear on a classical republican tradition. In this way, we can understand how Roman civilization was influenced by ancient peoples, creating its own republican tradition. Finally, with the discussion undertaken throughout this brief article, we can also begin to realize the traits that differentiate the Machiavellian rereading from the Roman republican tradition from that rereading undertaken by thinkers influenced by Christian principles.

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