

What changes
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What changes characterised the development of medieval political thought in the thirteenth century and why did these changes take place?

The Thirteenth century was the mark of a turning point in medieval political thought. Political thought complicated as it mirrored the growth from the earlier middle ages. The development found its roots in the twelfth century as a product of revived ideas discovered and learnt in Universities. The main sources of these developments came from the translations of Aristotle's works, the Bible, and textbooks of law.[1]It was the time that change resulted in Medieval Europe taking off as more of a civilisation.

The emergence of Universities created an environment that was designed to foster an intellectual life. After the twelfth century, the scale of writings that could potentially contribute to developments in political thought increased dramatically.[2]The background for these writings to influence political thought was provided for by the rapid availability of a higher education, prompting more research and growth.

As a result of the educations Universities were providing, political ideas became increasingly sophisticated in the newfound European world which was opening up to new ideas. The works of many medieval writers became the most important sources for medieval political thoughts. The infusion of rediscovered knowledge from many different sources allowed for this growth to occur.[3]

Between the early tenth and the later eleventh centuries, Aristotle's whole works were translated into Latin. Robert Grossette translated the entirety of Aristotle's works by around 1246/7.[4]The rediscovery of these works was <https://assignbuster.com/what-changes-characterised-the-development-of-medieval-political-thought-in-the-thirteenth-century/>

crucial in characterising the thirteenth century political thought. Aristotle's influence truly took off when studies became available in Oxford and Paris. The new development of Aristotle's works becoming widely known resulted in a concern in the relationship between ideas from Aristotle and the church.

Probably the most important idea for the development of political thought in the middle ages, was the idea of natural law that arose from the University opportunities. The law textbooks were probably the largest source for the idea of natural law. According to natural law all persons are born free.[5]The result of Aristotle's works being studied, was a naturalistic system for understanding politics which is a prevalent influence that continued in the Middle ages.

Thomas Aquinas' works of political writing, in the genre known as 'mirror of princes' can be considered coincidental when aligned with his academic work, this contrasts to other medieval political writers at the time, whose work was meant to influence current political ideas. For example, Aquinas believed that in the state of innocence (in relation to Augustine), there would have been government as a form of leadership or dominium (lordship) accepted by people no matter how knowledgeable.[6]That was more contradictory towards the thirteenth century view, which was highly dependent on Aristotle's works.

The changes in the sophistication and development of medieval political thought in the thirteenth century occurred because of the access to further education from universities. The creation of universities was a massive change that opened up so many opportunities to transform the way politics

was thought about and carried out. The changes in society and its government in the thirteenth century was a response to the newfound intellectual level created by university education.

At a political level, communities were more organized politically and with defined territory. It marked a position of high contrast to that of earlier middle ages which was vital to the characterisation of medieval political thought.[7]By the late thirteenth century, states as we now know them were slowly developing. Areas such as England France, Russia and Germany were beginning to form during this time.[8]There was a range of types of areas from western monarchies such as the Spanish one, and intercity states like Italy. The change in states with boundary developments as a result of political ideas becoming more advanced were made possible by the amount of developing bureaucracies. The bureaucracies were a result of the sheer scale of lawyers that were being produced from the universities.

The main concern with political thought throughout the middle ages was the relationship of the church, in particular in regards to papacy. The most distinct change with the church was its change in status as a governmental institution with legal influence.[9]The Roman church claimed independence from roman nobility and emperors. This step was crucial in the development of the papacy in The papacy had been established as the true form of universal authority in western Christendom at the time. Compared to earlier middle ages, it had a far more assertive and influential status in political thought. There was an overall insistence that the Pope was the head figure of reform with Rome embodying the territory of all the churches and orthodoxy guarantor.

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With the knowledge that put the papal change into action, also came controversy with some of the papal claims. One controversy came from the claim that of papal 'fullness of power.' It originally meant that the Pope would have whatever power any other authority figures had in the church. Interventions such as the Pope allowing questionably able Friars and such to preach without any consent from a Bishop occurred in the thirteenth century. While the papal power was a large change it was not always seen as a positive change. Many clerics argued that there were certain scenarios which required the approval of Bishop's etc, and their authority came from the law rather than being agents for the Pope. When issues such as the above arose the controversy came, not primarily from issues with the church, but primarily from issues with the lack of limits of papal authority.

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