

A return to the high ethic of the Ionian Greek Culture

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Why Return to the Ionianⁱ Greek Culture?

It took nearly 2000 yearsⁱⁱ for the physical sciences to return to the level of knowledge of the physical world known to the Ionians, recovering from the suppression that started with Sparta and ended with the Roman Catholic Church.ⁱⁱⁱ Modern philosophy has yet been able to achieve the broad reach that it enjoyed within the Ionian culture.^{iv} This is seen in the modern definition of the word philosophy¹ that specifically excludes bodies of knowledge that the Ionian philosophy (Ideal) harmoniously included. In fact, there was no body of knowledge that was and is not logically explained within the Ionian philosophy, which they defined as the love of wisdom (phílos – friend and sophía - wisdom).

Especially in an age with both nuclear weapons and gene manipulation, such an all-encompassing Ideal embraced by government, the scientific community, the business community and the general population is desperately needed. The Ionian Ideal motivates people to pursue a virtuous life in lieu of an unscrupulous one. It provides the needed logical and reasonable explanation that only the highest ethical stand is acceptable.

The strides made in the last 400 years in the physical sciences are fantastic^v. After having been freed from the control of the church, science has been able to help us understand the “how?” of our world. But a highly developed philosophy is required to complement this growing scientific knowledge in order to be able to present a meaningful “why?” to mankind. Starting from the newly discovered understanding of the Ionian culture^{vi} can help us to form the basis of a philosophy worthy of explaining the great discoveries of science and bringing their meaning into the larger picture of our world.

Let us look at one example where a greater understanding is desperately needed today. A pure mathematical view of the identical twin studies done throughout the last decades has shown that at least five independent variables are required to define the statistical variances found in human behavior and chronic disease^{vii}. Modern medicine only recognizes 2 of these 5 required variables: genetics and environment. A complete lack of understanding and acceptance of the missing three factors is responsible for modern medicine’s lack of successful treatment of emotional and mental disorders, as well as chronic disease. This was not the case in the Ionian culture because their philosophy helped them understand the three other “soft” factors currently overlooked by modern medicine².

The benefits this Ideal brings are many, but I have just listed a few.

- Creates a framework for understanding both current and historical events.
- Improves the interpersonal environments in the workplace, at home and in the community.
- Broadens the understanding of sickness, poverty and personal suffering.
- Brings reason and logic back to areas where personal interpretation and dogma have reigned for centuries.
- Builds the needed bridges between science, daily experience and belief.

¹ Philosophy: 1. the branch of knowledge or academic study devoted to the systematic examination of basic concepts such as truth, existence, reality, causality, and freedom; 2. a particular system of thought or doctrine; 3. a set of basic principles or concepts underlying a particular sphere of knowledge; 4. a precept, or set of precepts, beliefs, principles, or aims, underlying somebody’s practice or conduct; 5. restraint, resignation, or calmness and rationality in a person’s behavior or response to events; 6. the branch of learning that includes the liberal arts and sciences and excludes medicine, law, and theology (archaic). (Encarta® World English Dictionary © 1999 Microsoft Corporation.)

² See also Heal Thyself, Dr. Edward Bach

Rediscovering Socrates

Like many “Great” figures of history, a true understanding Socrates has faded over time. Recent researchers have carefully applied the scientific method in order to present a number of these important figures in a new light: that of their contemporaries^{viii}. The pictures that emerge are exciting, and present our society with perfect role models.

Socrates placed his highest value on teaching people to use their reason in all walks of life. Only through reason can man come to higher knowledge and ethic. He spent his life seeking goodness, truth and beauty while remaining true to his virtues of modesty and self-knowledge. One can see, with these noble requirements for the true philosophy, how philosophy became fragmented over time. Understanding the true philosophy requires strict pursuit of the highest ethical standard.



For many years, Plato’s dialogs were thought to have been fictitious, but they were not. A better understanding³ of the Ionian culture has shown us how professional journalists of the time were motivated to stenograph^{ix} the discussions of the best-known personalities. This allowed him the greatest possible circulation for the published work. Plato’s motivations were nobler, but his tactics were the same. He wanted to thank his teacher of 30 years by making sure that Socrates’ words and lessons lived on.

Knowing now that real people were involved in the dialogs, it is possible to achieve great insight into the various philosophical differences that existed within the Greek culture. It is also amazing to see Socrates in action as a teacher. He was really too modest and too wise to stand up and preach his ideas to others. Rather he used his wisdom, reason and humor to help his opponent see the truth for himself. He did this by asking thought provoking, exacting questions and only accepting exact answers.

Today, people tend to view the Greeks as one people and do not recognize the internal struggle that continually existed between the Ionians and the Dorians⁴. But during the time of Socrates, he knew exactly who belonged to which camp. In Plato’s dialogs, he allows both the Ionians and the Dorians fully express their opinions, allowing the reader to see the very basic differences in the two group’s view of the world. Below is a list of the typical traits of these two opposing ends of the Greek culture.

Ionian^x	Dorian^{xi}
Settlers	Conquerors
Builders	Takers
Democracy	Monarchy (Tyranny)
Wisdom	Power
Love	Lust
Spiritual (Music, Art, Poetry)	Material (Temples, Graves)
Freedom	Slavery
Reason	Mystery
Truth	Dogma
Sexual Equality	Male-Dominance
Respect	Sarcasm

³ Museion 2000, 3/1999 page 39

⁴ Dorians: A Greek people who took their name from Dorus, son of Hellen. They came from north or northwest and invaded Corinth, then Crete in 1100 B.C.; Spartans always regarded as representatives of unmixed Dorian ancestry. (From Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia Deluxe © 1999 The Learning Company, Inc.)

Highlights of the Ionian Ideal

- No contradictions between any subjects across the entire educational spectrum.
- Longing for the wisdom of Eros and the love of Zeus^{xii}. (Socrates treasured the spirit of the youth while the Pausanias⁵ lusted after the young body.)
- A society built on the concept of a true democracy where the good of the whole can only be achieved through the good of individual, where each member has a set of responsibilities that are fully appreciated by the remaining members.^{xiii}
- The fine arts carry with them the greatest social demands. They have the requirement to help guide mankind to the highest ethical standard. If it does not have this goal, by the Ionian definition, it is not art.
- Great care taken in teaching the young minds. They fully understood the importance of providing children with a well-balanced and logical social structure^{xiv} in which to learn. They followed the well-proven rule of never teaching a child something known to be false^{xv}. The example given to us by Socrates and Maria Montessori must be followed in all areas.
- Works (whether they be theories, art, music or laws) created within the Ionian Ideal have passed the test of time.
 - More than 3000 years later, Homer's poems are still the most inspiring ever written.
 - Modern researchers^{xvi} continually go back to the works of Euclid, Pythagoras, and Plato in order to help interpret the latest scientific discoveries.
 - Galileo and Einstein have drawn on it in recent history in order to develop their laws and theories.
- Works created outside of this Ideal have not passed the test of time.
 - The definition of the word Philosophy needed to be changed throughout the years in order to justify Aristotle's imperfect view of the world. Only those areas of his philosophy that he learned from Plato have passed the test of time.
 - Just as Friedman incorrectly defined the free market, Darwinism does not fully explain the beauty, the diversity, and the many symbioses in nature.
 - The modern model for human behavior and disease fails to recognize more than half of the responsible factors.
 - American universities admit that their current curriculum can only supply 20% of what is needed for its graduates to be successful in life.⁶
 - The deterministic mechanics founded by Galileo and enhanced by Newton appears to break down at the atomic level. Against the recommendation of Einstein, a probabilistic approach to quantum mechanics was adopted, avoiding the consequences of a deterministic model.^{xvii}

“There is no one to whom history has nothing important to teach.”⁷

A broad adaptation of the Ionian Ideal will put an end to the monotonous repetition of social and humanitarian disasters, and show that the best route for mankind is only to pursue the highest ethic. By using the systematic methods given to us by Socrates and Galileo, we need to examine history. Only by understanding a person's philosophy and their personal motives are we able to determine whether our children should be given them as personal idols or as negative examples. The current non-judgmental view towards historical figures leaves open the opportunity for every generation to pursue

⁵ Pausanias was a Dorian aristocrat from Athens who lived at the time of Socrates. See Plato's Symposium.

⁶ Emotional Intelligence, Daniel Goleman 1997

⁷ From Friedrich Schiller's exceptional academic speech at the University of Jena on 26 May 1789

these same negative virtues with materialistic short-term rewards. We must show our children, in a logical and reasonable form, how the behavior of various historical individuals has impacted mankind, both positively^{xviii} and negatively^{xix}. Not only showing them how much a single individual can contribute to society, but also giving them the needed tools to interpret their current environment and to make their own impact.

A Framework for the Study of History

More than 250 years ago, Sir William Jones discovered the relationship between the Indo-European languages that led to the linguistic hypothesis that all peoples of Europe originated from Mesopotamia. It was not until recently that this hypothesis was confirmed by genetic researchers, which made the bold assertion that modern man descended from Mesopotamia.

When looking at the early history of this area, a clear picture emerges of two totally different types of societies: those who settled and cultivated the land (Celts) and those who conquered it (Kaukasiern). The characteristics of these two types of peoples were described above, and the roots of all peoples can be traced back to these two basic and very different lifestyles and philosophies. When looking back into history, it is the ancestors of the Celts that are hardest to find because their societies did not leave behind many monuments, certainly none as big as could have been built with slave labor.

When looking at history it is important to understand which philosophy one is studying. The following points need to be considered.

- First of all, answer the following questions: How did they treat their own people, their neighbors, and their enemies?^{xx} (Switzerland has been a democracy, and without war for over 700 years! They have never had slavery, never took land from their neighboring countries, and they accept equally all four ethnic constituents of their population.)
- Use the modern understanding of human rights to judge the societies of the past and their people. Those who fulfill our modern understanding are possible role models to follow; those who don't are example to learn from.
- Understand why a culture or society was really destroyed or conquered. What threat did it pose or what profit did it present to the captor? Why did those books need to be burned or re-translated?^{xxi} Socrates shows us that the pursuit of the truth can only be good and that falsehoods are easily revealed through logic and reason. So how can books ever be bad?
- Do not be blinded by great, materialist achievements. Understand how these were achieved and to what "higher" goal.^{xxii}
- Look for traces of the conquered culture in the slave labor that they may have been forced to perform. (Ionian Greek slaves performed nearly all of the fine art, medicine and construction in Rome.)

Requirements for achieving the Ionian Ideal

Only by fulfilling all of the following is it able to re-achieve the high level of understanding of all areas of studies and life.

- A complete scientific understanding – One that explains not only "how's" the physical world, but attempts to answer the "why's" of our entire world.
- A schooled reason – In conjunction with the use of reason in every aspect of life, an exact thinking is also a requirement. Socrates said that mathematical studies help us to find the pure reason.⁸

⁸ The Republic 521-541, Plato

- The use of the scientific method in all areas of study, not just science.
- High ethical standards and pursuit of virtues – For Socrates and Plato, a high ethical standard played a central role in their scientific and philosophical research.⁹

In Origenes^{xxiii} “Peri Ahchon” he recommends starting with an observation of nature to form a basis for all areas of research. He particularly recommended that everyone use logic and reason to understand the vast differences; in character, fate, and even body structure; between individuals and groups.

It would be a very noble goal for a school to attempt to provide its students with a framework in which they are able to understand and analyze every situation that await them in life. It may be too much to ask that all children achieve this goal, but it would be infinity satisfying to be able to see one child approach the level reached by Socrates or Plato.

ⁱ The Goth’s and the Celt’s shared this ethic, but they did not leave the literary wealth of the Ionian’s.

ⁱⁱ It was common knowledge at the height of the Ionian culture (7th to 5th Century BC) that the Earth is round and that the Sun is at the center of the Solar System, which was in conflict with the Aristotelian view adopted by the church 700 years after Aristotle’s death.

ⁱⁱⁱ Galileo Galilee (1564 to 1642) founded the modern scientific method. In order to do so, he had to leave the university, which was teaching Aristotle’s dogmatic view of the world, and go back to the teachings of Euclid and Archimedes. While being a devout believer, he was still brought before the “holy inquisition” for his rediscovery of the sun’s central position in the solar system. His work was built on the foundations created by Nicolas Copernicus, to whom this revolution is named after.

^{iv} Through the writings of Plato, we are able to get a taste of the high ethical level reached by the likes of Socrates. His dialogs do not give the typical one-sided view, but rather he allows his enemies the ability to voice their entire opinion. They allow the deep thinking reader the ability to see each of the speaker’s true spirit.

^v Science has rapidly developed after the dark ages, but medical, emotional, spiritual and ethical development has not kept pace.

^{vi} The Ionian culture was a democracy built on equal rights for all. They valued the high virtues of modesty, generosity, patience, and charity and their philosophy teaches the requirement for only pursuing them. Art and music were a part of everyday life, where the laws were sung to the people so that they went deep into their hearts.

^{vii} Abstract of “Updated Model for Human Behavior”: The current model used in research for all walks of medicine has only two independent factors: genetics and environment. This simple model breaks down quickly when looking at identical twin studies, especially the study of infant twins since both variables are equal. We have been analyzing the data collected from various identical twin studies in order to find a more robust causality model for both non-hereditary disease and behavior in humans. The model that we are currently testing has three additional independent factors. These have been hypothesized in order to describe the pattern found in all behavioral research data. Non-hereditary disease occurrence data fits well into this more robust model, and study of this data may also bring with a better understanding of a possible sixth factor needed to fully explain human behavior and disease.

^{viii} How can it be that people who, with no personal motives, provided a great service to mankind? A study of the case of Ludwig von Beethoven exemplifies the mechanism used to turn a truly great

⁹ The Republic 485, Plato

person into a highly questionable eccentric. But, since we still have access to so much information about Beethoven, it is possible today for the careful researcher to rediscover the true genius and soul of the man who left mankind with his timeless works. Jeanne d'Arc is another such case whose truly heroic efforts have been overshadowed the personal opinion of individual writers. Taking a close look of what their contemporaries had to say about them quickly erases these false personal opinions.

^{ix} Journalists carried with them wax sheets on which they could quickly write every word of the discussion in their own shorthand.

^x The most prominent Ionians were: Homer, Socrates, Pythagoras, Euripides, Euclid, Archimedes, Hesoid, Origenes, Didymos

^{xi} Examples of Dorians: Pausanias, Aristotle

^{xii} For the Ionians, the Earth was not the real home of man, but rather a testing and learning ground enabling him to relearn the Olympian laws, making Olympian virtues his own again after having lost them during his fall into Hades. They believed that they would continue to return to Earth until they had fully achieved this goal. Therefore, the Ionians followed the teachings of nine daughters of Zeus and especially the Olympian Eros; next to Zeus the most good and beautiful of all the gods of Olympia. By contrast, the Dorians' Zeus is the ruler of Hades who demands from his subjects' blood sacrifices. Since they do not have a spiritual view of the afterworld, their actions are quite materialistic.

^{xiii} As Professor John Nash has recently shown, a competitive environment, in which everyone does what is best for themselves and simultaneously the best for others, is far more efficient and stable than the Friedman model. This model implies that justice is superior to chaos, matching the Ionian Ideal, which is reflected both in history and nature.

^{xiv} Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, born in 1746, said: "The most important basis required for his future development a child's emotional support." This was recently confirmed by modern research and published by Daniel Goleman in "Emotional Intelligence" in 1997.

^{xv} It is amazing today how many parents and teachers violate this basic rule. Once the child finds out if one thing they were taught was false, they begin to question everything taught to them by that person.

^{xvi} These include Max Planck, Albert Einstein, Niels Bohr, Werner Heisenberg, and Wolfgang Pauli. Erwin Schoedinger (Nobel Prize for Physics) wrote "Nature and the Greeks".

^{xvii} Einstein said that radioactive decay is deterministic, just like all other physical events defined since Galileo, but that we are presently unable to calculate it. The scientific community was not ready to recognize a currently immeasurable form of energy required to explain the deterministic model.

^{xviii} Florence Nightingale (founder of nursing), Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (social reformer), Berthe Morisot (co-founder of impressionism), Maria Sibylla Merian (natural researcher and artist), Ellen Key (author of "Century of the Child"), Henry Dunant (founder of the Red Cross), John Boyd Orr (founder of FAO and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize), Albert Schweitzer (humanitarian and doctor) Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (linguistics and fairytales)

^{xix} Constantine the Great, Justinian, Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte, Richard Wagner

^{xx} While the Ionians mourned the deaths of their enemies, Greece's Dorian population danced on their graves.

^{xxi} It was common practice to declare someone a traitor or heretic, and then to re-write or destroy everything that that person wrote. It must have been highly threatening to his power base for the Emperor Justinian personally to condemn the vast writings of Origenes and any one who even speaks his ideas. (Source: Medieval Sourcebook: Fifth Ecumenical Council: Constantinople II, 553)

^{xxii} The Ionians did also create fine structures, but the photo below exemplifies the materialistic view of the Dorians. They thought that Ionian temple (small building to the far left) was not big enough for

their god Athena, so they built one that they thought was fitting of their god. (Picture source: ABZ Verlag Zurich)



^{xxiii} Origenes was one of the last great teachers of the Ionian culture at the school in Alexandria, before the Romans destroyed it.