

THE INSTITUTE FOR ANACYCLOSIS

EXCERPT FROM
PROPOSITIONI, OVERO CONSIDERATIONI IN MATERIA DI COSE DI STATO SOTTO
TITOLO DI AVVERTIMENTI, AVVEDIMENTI CIVILI, & CONCETTI POLITICI DI M.
FRANCESCO GUICCIARDINI, M. GIO. FRANCESCO LOTTINI, M. FRANCESCO
SANSOVINI [SIC.]
FRANCESCO SANSOVINO

1583 A.D.

Note: this text from the dedicatory letter of the aforementioned work contains a summary description of Anacyclosis. Special thanks to Dr. Paul F. Grendler for making his original copy of this work available to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for digital archiving, and also for providing this translation to The Institute.

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Ancient wise men argued from the unity of the Supreme God and from the order of the majority of the animals on earth that, after the floods of waters and other troubles, the world had at its beginnings that government of the human species was under one head that ruled over the multitude and was born to serve. And they said that while this one procured the common good, he was called prince, king, and best father by everyone. But his successor, corrupted by pleasures and no longer dedicated to the public good but to his own interests, changed the name and was called tyrant. Because this rule did not please good people, the most spirited among them rose up and overturned the tyrant, taking to themselves the administration and government. But these also became equally corrupted and came at length to become more lovers of their own comfort than the good of others. They eventually became unbearable and were driven out by the people, who were not content that in place of a prince who had become a tyrant, that they were subjects of so many other tyrants who were called aristocrats [Ottimati]. And coming together they (the people) arranged among themselves the government, thus constituting a republic. Which through the passage of time and through daily events became the tool of the lawless and despisers of the law, as the most powerful magistrates took control of the state again. Finally when matters reached such an evil state, the multitude threw them down and made recourse to the remedy of one sole head. And so going one after the other all governments of civil societies are in short reduced to three polities, namely of the prince, of the aristocrats (Ottomati), and of republics. These were called lawful, and the contrary to them were tyranny, the violence of the few, and the licentious multitude. These (governments) were evil and not lawful. In this circle, then, of the aforesaid forms turn all the governments of peoples and provinces found under heaven.

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