

HOW THE GREEKS CREATED THE FIRST AGE OF INNOVATION

Tracing the Roots of Synergy and Co-Creativity

Updated March 24, 2008 Version 1.32

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(Author's Note: this article is still in Draft Form. Any comments and ideas are welcome)

Prelude

Innovation is one of most important competitive advantages a company can possess. To understand innovation in a new light, our study team realized we could gain a valuable and unique perspective by exploring innovation in a wide variety of contexts. One era we knew would be fertile territory was the period in Greece from about 510 BC to 146BC – the time known as the Golden Era of Hellenic¹ Invention. This time is particularly intriguing for several reasons:

1. There is no period in the history of the world where, on a per-capita basis, there was more intense innovation. It was during this era that the Greeks invented new language, new architecture, new medicine, new literature, new philosophy, new theatre, new mathematics, new astronomy, and many great scientific inventions, such as the steam engine and the first geared chronometers, new engineering, and especially new insights into the nature of the world.
2. There was very little precedent for what the Greeks did. While the Hellenistic era followed their Egyptian predecessors, the Greek epoch was a breakthrough from their Egyptian antecedents. In other words, the Greek innovation was a massive shift in thinking from any other civilization that preceded or co-existed with it.
3. The heart of the innovation center was Athens, which was populated with a relatively small number of people, probably not more than 40,000, which would make it just a very small city by today's standards. What emanated from that city and the surrounding regions is staggering, even by today's standards.

By taking the study of innovation out of the realm of our modern era forced the authors to look at innovation through the eyes, mind, and heart of an ancient Greek.

While innovation did not start with the Greeks, there is no question that, until the modern era, there is no precedent in history for such a burst of creativity in such a narrow time window of only three hundred years, from approximately 500BC to 200 BC.

Impact of Culture

We wanted to know what unique characteristics of the Greek culture spawned such a massive outburst. What innovations were created from individual effort and what from

¹ The Hellenistic Era is formally considered beginning at the time of Alexander the Great (323 BC). However, for the purposes of this article, we are also including the earlier Greek Classical Era (beginning about 510 BC). Some scholars advocate that, despite the fall of Greece to the Romans, the vestiges of Hellenistic culture continued, though somewhat diminished, until 180 AD with the death of Marcus Aurelius, the last of the great Roman Emperors, who was not only a military general, but a philosopher of Greek tradition.

collective collaboration, we shall never know. But what can be stated with certainty is that culture nurtures innovation; innovation seldom occurs independent of culture. If it did, innovation would occur randomly throughout the world and throughout time. For this reason, we made it a point to examine the cultural underpinnings that enabled a few Grecian City-States to create breakthrough innovations so discontinuous from anything that preceded it.

When the Greeks were conquered by the Romans about in the second century BC, this great era of innovation slowed dramatically, retrogressed horribly during the Dark Ages after the fall of Rome in 455 AD, not to be resumed until the Renaissance, a millennia later.

Quest for Synergy

Our quest began a few years ago. We all know that words “name” things, events, or processes. We asked ourselves this fundamental question:

“If the Greeks created the word ‘synergy,’ then they must have had a process enabling its manifestation or genesis. What, then, was the process for creating synergy that produced so many magnificent breakthroughs in thought, science, architecture, and politics?”

We did not realize this was a singularly unique question. From our search through the literature and questions to academics, we came to realize this question had not been asked before. In fact, what we were doing was somewhat out of the ordinary, that, remarkably to our knowledge, no one had ever tried before. We called our quest: “process archeology.”

As we searched through reams of Greek writings and commentaries by scholars over the millennia, we hoped we could discern the process for creating an innovative culture in Greece.

More importantly, we believed that such a comprehension could be used to propel modern innovation teams. Synergy produces innovation. In today’s world, more often than not, innovation occurs in teams, and alliances, where communities of interest attempt to channel the synergies of interaction, and, particularly utilized unique but compatible differentials in thinking to trigger breakthrough innovation. What “collaborative culture” did the Greeks design or discover over two thousand years ago that we can utilize today?

Cracking the Code

What we did not understand at the beginning of the project was how deeply the Greek code was buried. A search revealed there was no “best practices” handbook that had been written by a student of Socrates that addressed this issue. Like most issues of culture, the “code” was imbedded in the invisible subconscious – something that every citizen just knew and took for granted.

After several years of digging into the culture we came to realize that the ancient Greeks had evolved into a highly sophisticated society – an evolutionary strain that has probably never been duplicated before anywhere on the face of the earth, even in modern times.

This evolutionary strain came to a slowed dramatically about in the second century BC when the Romans conquered the Greeks, but its aftermath lingered in early Rome for another two or three hundred years.

If one might imagine the Greek culture being a mountain, with the most precious gems located in the top of the mountain, the Romans lopped off the top of the mountain because it was impractical to access the real heart and soul of the culture. What remained was a flattened mountain where the practical uses of Greek innovation remained. Much like a modern corporation acquires a smaller, more entrepreneurial company, gains access to its current technology, but drives those who are the real source of its innovation away by imposing a lugubrious culture upon the entrepreneurs, so the Romans suppressed the Greek innovators.²

We found the evidence of the synergy process buried in the word structure of the Greeks. Sadly, many of the Greek words never made it into the Roman language, thus nearly becoming lost forever. Some words passed into Latin, but were either “flattened” of their depth and richness, or were never passed through the old French into English.³

By delving deep into the original Greek language to explore the true richness of meaning, we found a virtual treasure trove (“thesaurus” in Greek) of coded meaning. We believe we may have cracked the code on how the Greeks created synergy.

Reaching Back to the Future

Archeology searches for lost artifacts from a by-gone age. We approached archeology a bit differently – searching for *lost processes and practices*. We looked into the writings of ancient Greeks, such as Plato and Aristotle, from about 500 to 200 BC, but did not find what we were looking for. We examined the works of many of those Greeks who wrote in the early Roman Era, such as Plutarch, Ptolemy, Galen, and Epictetus, finding few clues. Apparently, after several hundred years of daily usage, many of the key process issues had already migrated into the invisible aura of “context.”⁴

Surprisingly, the massive amount of innovation was produced by a very small number of people. Athens, the by far the largest of the Greek City-States had a population of 40,000. Only 6-8,000 were members of the educated male elite; the rest were women, children, and slaves. The wealth both financially and culturally, attracted many of the best and brightest of the times to study and live within its bounds.

Six Core Values

² Perhaps the only Roman Emperor to recognize the real value of the Greek culture was Marcus Aurelius.

³ Upon closer examination of Greek and Roman word structure, one finds that the truly spiritual words in the English language originate from the Greek, while the more practical words come from the Latin, German, or Anglo-Saxon roots of English.

⁴ (Context is something everyone knows and understands, but does not need to talk about. For example, every corporate culture has a rewards system that is just “known,” and seldom discussed. Thus, as Carl Gustave Jung observed, the “collective unconscious” becomes “invisible.” And, because it is invisible, it can easily become lost, foreign, and inaccessible.)

Much of Greek innovative interaction was manifested in their philosophies and embodied in their words and values. We identified several critical words that epitomized the underlying value structure of the core innovation processes:

1. **Arete (Virtue)**
2. **Philotimos (Love of Honor)**
3. **Sophia (Wisdom)**
4. **Koinonia (Spiritual Community)**
5. **Metanoia (Mind Shifting)**
6. **Deep Inquiry**

When the combined force of aligned human energy was released with the core values embodied in these words, a burst of co-creative synergy was let loose, much like a lightning bolt discharges when the energy potential reaches a flash point. The power of these values can be seen in modern times, but to a lesser extent because our value structure is much looser, less rich (flatter), vaguer, more politicized, and more confused and conflictive.

Also, it's vital to understand that the ideals embodied in "philosophy" were far important to Grecian society than "philosophy" is to ours. Back then, philosophy was discussed, debated, honored, and idealized. The idea of creation, beauty, and truth manifested and embodied itself all aspects of society: in architecture, art, sciences, and social discourse. These were powerful reflections of the philosophic values of the Greek culture.

The key five values described below we believe were the "core" values (listed in no particular priority order – each was central and symbiotically important to the synergy process as the other) that contributed specifically to innovation.

1. Arête (Virtue):

Arête, known in Latin and English as virtue (or excellence), was also a pivotal value the co-creative spirit in ancient Greece. One could not perfect one's soul unless virtue was a continual pursuit.

Virtue was dependent upon one's commitment to act in accordance with the dictates of the higher soul, and not forsake oneself to the more prurient, lower level vices such as lust, greed, anger, or revenge. While no one then, nor today, could be expected to be perfect at the practice of virtue, holding this standard as a goal enabled higher order teamwork, intellectual interaction, and co-creativity to take place.

Socrates and Plato introduced the concept of the soul in a profound manner to the Greeks. The soul became a universal connection between people, enabling the sparks of creative energy to flow between individuals without the fear or concern of betrayal⁵, who got the credit, or loss of ownership. Ideas were owned collectively and thus shared and built upon by a group, who cherished the value of regenerative energy.

⁵ See: [Mordred Factor & Machiavelli Maneuver](#) by Robert Porter Lynch

But virtue could never be achieved unless one practiced honor, sought wisdom, and built community. As Ninon Papanicolas observes:

“Arête (virtue) was not a moral virtue only, but it was more an aspiration and endowment of qualities that would result in practical efficiency and public fame. Most young Athenians wanted virtue more than anything.”

In today’s world of teams, community, and alliances, virtue should not be neglected as both a price of admission and as a standard of excellence. Differences in opinions can be handled virtuously with compassion, understanding, and acceptance, or, conversely, arrogantly with condemnation, derision, and denial.

Modern day co-creative teams can gain a great edge when a powerful commitment is made by all the members to think, speak, and act in a caring manner. The commitment to exploration and inquiry is an essential component of successful innovation and breakthrough.

2. Philotimo (Love of Honor)

Philotimo is a critical element in understanding the human co-creative foundation. Literally it means the “love of honor,” and carries a very special sense of honor, obligation, self respect and teamwork. It was considered as an “extremely sensitive region of men’s souls that gives forth gallantry, nobility and moral pride; it is the sense of honor and dignity.”

Unfortunately, neither the word nor the idea has any English equivalent, and thus the concept has been largely lost in our culture. When Virtue (Arete) was joined with Love of Honor (Philotimos), the union created two powerful foundations for innovation: trust and focus on the “greater good.”

As any modern innovation team knows, trust spurs creativity by taking away the fear of betrayal, thus letting the mind expand into imaginative realms. Similarly, by focusing on the “greater good,” a team is able to supersede ego, greed, and self-interest with the faith that all will benefit.

As Alexander Makedon has described, the ancient meaning of Philotimos was complex but essential to the functioning of the culture:

“In ancient times, there was great public pressure to behave uprightly. It would be unthinkable that someone without integrity (honesty, justice, truthfulness) is admired...”

“This emphasis on goodness is perfectly encapsulated in the ancient inscription “kalos k’ agathos” on numerous Greek artifacts. Kalos k’ agathos⁶ means, literally, “good and good,” with one “goodness” referring to the [outward] social and personal “beauty” of the person being depicted on the artifact, usually

⁶ *Kalos k’ agathos has a number of connotations, including being Noble and Ethically Courageous, and in the 4th Century BC carried implications of “dutiful citizenship.”*

an amphora, and the other to his [inner] moral and humanitarian excellence. One is inwardly looking to personal improvement, the other outwardly to the quality of his social relations.” “The purpose of education was the formation of character” to build a good and virtuous person – kalos k’agathos anthropos”

“The term "philotimo"may be translated as an internalized inclination to do good, with a strong sense of social responsibility. (Etymologically, filotimo means "love of honor" =philos+timi, although the honor referred to is not merely external, or for "show" purposes, but a psychologically internalized yardstick of goodness, as in the ancient "kalos k agathos."

“Few will deny that among modern Greeks, philotimo is not only widespread, but also highly desirable. By now it is considered almost a cliché that if you want Greek men to cooperate with you, then somehow you must appeal to their "philotimo," including their personal worth, or the degree to which what they are about to do is lofty. Modern Greek culture puts inordinate pressure on young people to acquire philotimo, often through their teacher's rhetorical exhortations to "act with philotimo." At others times, anyone may be asked by someone else such embarrassingly castigating questions as, "How could you act that way? Don't you have any philotimo left in you?"

“By making them confront the possibility of their "aphilotimia" (=lack of philotimo, or integrity), they are at once chastised, or, worse, threatened with virtual exclusion from civilized company. Furthermore, and perhaps most painful, to be branded as "aphilotimos" is sometimes even equated as being dispossessed of your true "Greek [culture]."

The power of Philotimos was extraordinary in that it bound the individual to a very high standard of behavior. Philatimo was not just an admired trait among Greek citizens, it was expected of them. The expectation was that all members of the society or community would first act in the interests of the greater good of the whole, not in their self interest.

And anyone who violated the honor code of Philatimos would be branded a heretic, labeled with the scarlet letter “A” for Atimia - which means unscrupulous, dishonest, dishonourable, like a weasel and a fox etc.. The consequences of atima were severe: excommunication – to be ostracized or exiled from one’s community for violating the “common unity.” As my colleague Ninon Papanicolas says:

“In ancient Greece - the very worse thing that could happen to a man was to lose his 'timiotita' (from the word 'atimia') meaning lose his honesty.. men were judged for their moral traits.. and lost their civic rights when accused of 'atimia' They were thrown out of Athens and had no rights.. They did not have to be caught killing, or stealing to be branded 'atimos' - Athenians had to cast 6000 votes in order to judge someone.. Everyone voted. If a majority of the 6000 people voted and found you to be dishonourable, you just lost your civic rights and had to leave Athens and go into exile!! Moral values during that era were far more important to ancient Greeks than anything else! It was very important to them from a religious stand point to live a very honourable and virtuous life. They believed that if they lived and acted honourably, would reach a superior 'level' of virtue, which would give them happiness.”

Philotimos was the principle source of trust that enabled the group to overcome their fear of betrayal, their fear that one person's unscrupulous or selfish desire would supersede the greater good of the whole. Aristotle observed that that all human actions have one or more of these seven causes:

Chance Nature Compulsion Habit Reason Passion Desire

Of these seven, if Reason and "constructive" desire were to prevail over compulsion, passion, old habits, chance, and "destructive" desire, then any group must adhere to a code of honor which would form the covenant of cooperation.

The implications of this idea/ideal on any community, team, or alliance today are profound. Those who break the bond of virtue by violating honor, respect, and love for one another can no longer play in the game. Those who play by the rules of honor will cherish the greater good – all for one, one for all – thus being released from the bondage of fear of betrayal, released to explore the unknown together.

3.Sophia (Wisdom)

Wisdom was so vital to the Greeks that it was not embraced by just a word, but honored in the highest manner by dedicating a god to it. The Greeks knew Wisdom as Sophia, a Goddess who brought Truth. The distinction the Greek made between knowledge (gnosis) and wisdom (Sophia) is important.

An active mind could bring deep knowledge. But knowledge alone is often empty of real learning, and can carry with it much conceit and narrowness. Knowledge existed in answers, wisdom in questions and in revelations, uniting idea with action. Knowledge is intrinsically self fulfilling, while wisdom creates higher order purposes and new destinies. The pursuit of wisdom created the challenge to grow upward with a spiritual yearning. Wisdom, thus was sacred. As written in the Wisdom of Solomon from the Apocrypha:

"Wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me. For there is in her a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear, undefiled, distinct, beyond harm, loving the good, keen, unhindered, beneficent, philanthropic, firm, sure, free from care, all powerful, all seeing, and interpenetrating all spirits that are intelligent, pure, and most subtle. For wisdom is more mobile than any motion, and she penetrates and permeates everything, because she is so pure; for she is the breath of the power of God...." ⁷

It is this sacred journey that so excited and empowered the Greeks. Wisdom combined knowledge with spiritual transcendence and human compassion and passionate action.⁸

⁷ Later versions of the Apocrypha became embodied in the Catholic Church's Bible (but omitted in the Protestant version). Because gods and goddesses were clearly a pagan belief, the early Christian church struck out the references to "Sophia" from the Wisdom of Solomon, and inserted the "Holy Spirit" in her place, still retaining the sacredness of Wisdom.

⁸ The Greeks did not write obituaries. Instead they asked the question: "Did he live a life of passion?"

Wisdom was not dry like knowledge, but it was dynamic, engaging, vital, and soulful. As Ninon Papanicolas has pointed out:

“Athenians were always excited and happy when a sophist (teacher of wisdom, such as Socrates) would visit Athens so that they could learn those qualities which were a pre-requisite of Arete – to be virtuous, one must also be wise.”

By holding wisdom as a sacred ideal, it unified groups to search, to inquire, to explore, to be open to new ideals. This approach is diametrically different from the arrogance of those who found prideful pleasure in knowing more than someone else, who put others down for some perceived weakness, or treasured a condemnation for lack of superficial wealth or status. (Interestingly, some of the most revered wise men in Greece -- Socrates, Homer, Aesop -- were actually quite poor; and Epicticus was a slave.)

4. Koinonia (Community)

To unify and manifest these three ideals required a forum for group action. Without joint action, the words would be simply abstract and irrelevant concepts. Today's idea of teamwork had a deep meaning for the Greek. Joint action required a powerful framework for a group of people to produce something unique and potent. For this, the idea of synergy came into being. The word synergy means:

- a) The interaction of two or more agents or forces so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual effects.
- b) Cooperative interaction among groups, that creates an enhanced combined effect.

The word itself is derived from the Greek *sunergi*, meaning *cooperative work or unified energy*, and from *sunergos*, meaning *working together in fellowship*. In effect, for the ancient Greek, simply working together would produce an effect far greater than more than the sum of the individuals. This is a critical meaning, because it transcends issues of conflict, dissention, and factionalism.

Did the Greeks believe that when a group adopts the values of honor, virtue, and wisdom, a synergistic effect occurs. Were the Greeks that naïve? Or did they understand something we have lost?

To answer these questions it is valuable to understand the ideas and nature behind *Koinonia*. The word has such a multitude of meanings that no single English word is adequate to express its depth and richness. It is a derivative of *koinos*, the word for common.⁹ *Koinonia*, is a complex, rich, and thoroughly fascinating Greek approach to building community or teamwork.

⁹ "Common" has two different meanings in the Greek and English. It can refer to that which is jointly held by a large group, such as the "town commons." It can also mean something that is commonplace and vulgar (as contrasted with that which is precious and uniquely distinguished. The former meaning is implied here.

Because of Virtue (Arete) and Love of Honor (Philotimos) were conjoined, their union produced a strong commitment to *Kalos k' agathos* meaning "good and good," – an *inner* goodness toward virtue, and an *outer* goodness toward social relationships. This laid the foundation for outer goodness to embrace joint participation in something with someone, such as in a community, or team or an alliance or joint venture. Those who have studied the word find there is always an implication of action included in its meaning. The definition of the word is quite rich in that there are many connotations because the word used in a variety of related contexts:

- **Generous Sharing:** Koinonos means 'a sharer' as in to share with one another in a possession held in common. It implies the spirit of generous sharing or the act of giving as contrasted with selfish getting. When koinonia is present, the spirit of sharing and giving becomes tangible. In most contexts, generosity is not an abstract ideal, but a demonstrable action resulting in a tangible and realistic expression of giving.

In classical Greek, koinonein means "to have a share in a thing," as when two or more people hold all things in common. It can mean "going shares" with others, thereby having "business dealings," such as joint ownership of a ship. It can also imply "sharing an opinion" with someone, and therefore agreeing with him, or disagreeing in a congenial way. Participation is vital because vital as the members are sharing in what others have. What is shared, received or given becomes the common ground through which Koinonia becomes real.

The Greeks seemed to have known what we know now: "Sharing Expands, Hording Contracts."

- **Partnership:** "Koinonos" in classical Greek means a companion, a partner or a joint-owner. Therefore, koinonia can imply an association, common effort, or a partnership in common." The common ground by which the two parties are joined together creates an aligned relationship, such as a 'fellowship' or 'partnership.' In a papyrus announcement a man speaks of his brother "with whom I have no koinonia", meaning no business connection or common interest. In the New Testament, (Luke 5:10) James, John, and Simon are called "partners" (**koinonia**). The joint participation was a shared fishing business.
- **Marriage:** Two people may enter into marriage in order to have "koinonia of life", that is to say, to live together a life in which everything is shared. *Koinonia* was used to refer to the marriage bond, and it suggested a powerful common interest that could hold two or more persons together.
- **Spiritual Relationship:** In this sense, the meaning something that is held and shared jointly with others for God, speaking to man's "relationship with God". Epictetus talks of religion as 'aiming to have koinonia with Zeus".

The early Christian community saw this as a relationship with the Holy Spirit (see footnote 1). In this context, *koinonia* highlights a higher purpose or mission that benefits the greater good of the members as a whole. The term *enthusiasm* is connected to this meaning of *koinonia* for it signifies “*God in Us,*”¹⁰ or *one’s participation in the Divine.*

- **Fellowship¹¹:** To create a bond between comrades is the meaning of *koinonia* when people are recognized, share their joy and pains together, and are united because of their common experiences, interests and goals. Fellowship creates a mutual bond which overrides each individual’s pride, vanity, and individualism, fulfilling the human yearning with fraternity, belonging, and companionship. This meaning of *koinonia* accounts for the ease by which sharing and generosity flow. When combined with the spiritual implications of *koinonia*, fellowship provides a joint participation in God’s graces and denotes that common possession of spiritual values.

Thus early Greco-Roman Christians had a fellowship God, sharing the common experience of joys, fears, tears, and divine glory. In this manner, those who shared believed their true wealth lay not in what they had, but in what they gave to others. Fellowship is never passive in the meaning of *koinonia*, it is always linked to action, not just being together, but also doing together.

With fellowship comes a close and intimate relationship embracing ideas, communication, and frankness, as in a true, blessed interdependent friendship among multiple group members.

- **Community¹²:** The idea of community denotes a “common unity” of purpose and interests. By engaging in this united relationship a new level of consciousness and conscience emerges that spurs the group to higher order thinking and action, thus empowering and encouraging its members to exist in a mutually beneficial relationship. Thus community and family become closely intertwined, because aiming at a common unity strives to overcome brokenness, divisiveness, and, ultimately gaining wholeness with each of the members, with their environment, and with their God. By giving mutual support, friendship and family merge. Both fellowship and community

¹⁰ Definition: The source of the word is the Greek *enthousiasmos*, which ultimately comes from the adjective *entheos*, “having the god within,” formed from *en*, “in, within,” and *theos*, “god.” **Word History:** “Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm,” said the very quotable Ralph Waldo Emerson

¹¹ Definition: Fellow is from the Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse ‘felagi’, comrade or partner.. ‘Ship’ is a suffix indicating state or condition. Fellowship is a state in which we share as fellows, that is as partners or peers. Fellowship addresses the relationship between people, not between material objects. One doesn’t have a fellowship with a house, a companionship with a tree, or a comradeship with a bed. It relates to a state or condition in which such persons interact, thus we speak of friendship, partnership, and fellowship.

¹² Definition: from Latin *communitas*, *fellowship*, from *communis*, *common*; **a.** A group of people having common interests.**b.** A group viewed as forming a distinct segment of society.**c.** Similarity or identity: a community of interests.**d.** Sharing, participation, and fellowship.

imply an inner and outer unity. No where in the framework of community is their implied a hierarchy of command and control. While there is leadership, the leader's task is to focus energy, and align interests, not impose control.

Koinonia is a very expansive and meaningful term, for which no single word in the English dictionary can describe.

Koinonia creates a brethren bond which builds trust and, especially when combined with the other three values, overcomes two of humanity's deepest fears and insecurities: being betrayed and being demeaned.

Whether working collectively or individually, the innovators of ancient Greece worked for the greater good of the whole – to propel their community forward, to share their understanding with others so that all ships would rise on a rising tide. Thus loftier goals and dreams are more easily manifested in the mind and achieved in reality. The team's sense of Purpose became manifest.

5. Metanoia – Mind Shifting

If one looks up the word Metanoia in a modern dictionary, the definition is typically overly simplistic: *beyond the mind*. Unfortunately, the richness and depth of real meaning has been “flattened” in the English language.

More properly *metanoia* meant:

shift the mind to a higher/transcendent order of conscious understanding.

In this sense, metanoia sought to move the level of perception from a more mundane experience to a spiritual one where the perceptions of reality embrace the role of God as creator and maker of the highest and deepest truth.

The word is made of two parts:

Meta = beyond, in the sense of outside the normal realm of perception, shifting to a higher plane, higher than what the birds that fly might see. Modern English words like meta-principles, metamorphosis, metaphysical, etc embrace this notion.

Nous = the highest good, beyond normal being, the “first cause.” , When one reaches the level of “nous,” everything becomes natural, obstacles cease to exist, life opens, and one's soul and mind marvelously unite – giving access to a transcendent universe of “first source,” or “fundamental truth,” referring with reverence to the deepest meaning of life.

Albert Einstein was well acquainted with these concepts (although probably not the word itself) and where such thinking could take him when he said:

Creativity is More Important than Knowledge,

*We Cannot Solve Today's Problems
with the Same Level of Thinking that Created the Problem.*

God Does Not Play Dice with the Universe

When Greeks used the soul to 'see' beyond, the 'mind' transcended to "the heart of the mind" (in the Greek the word is 'nous') The *heart of the mind*¹³ is more expansive, more powerful, more peaceful, more natural because it operated above and beyond people's normal experience and expectations – functioning at the level of *divine expectations*.

In the ancient writings, the words *repentance* and *forgiveness* are often closely linked to metanoia. While this seems strange to the modern reader today, it must be understood that the word *repent* originally meant to "shift or change one's mind to a higher order of thinking."¹⁴ When a person had acknowledged this shift in the mind, they had "repented." Similarly forgiveness meant to shift from the moribund thinking of anger, hatred, revenge, and vindictiveness, and upward to releasing the pain and hurt one holds within. Forgiveness first heals the forgiver.¹⁵

As one shifts to a higher view of life, the relinquishing of the of the old point of view left one to regret the old framework or paradigm, which is now seen as fallacious, incorrect, or regrettable. We then relate to the world and to others in a fresh, innovative way

Thus metanoia connoted a regenerative force. By exercising forgiveness, whether it be self-forgiveness, or with others, the effect is cathartic, cleansing the mind and the soul to enable a blossoming as one figuratively leaves a dark winter to enter a flowering of spring. By shedding the old husk, the human spirit is released from the bondage of anguish, pain, pettiness, and bitterness and reborn anew at a higher level.

This process of renewal was uniquely Greek. The Latin word "revival" (to re-live) was not nearly as fulfilling as its Greek counter-part: Anapterosis (to take flight, to rise above as on the wings of a bird, such as a phoenix rising from the ashes). The Greek word, despite its nearly impenetrable pronunciation, embodies the whole idea of transcendence and transformation lacking in the Latin version.

Similarly, metanoia often required "courage," a word meaning *a heartfelt conviction*, by which the courageous person put their ideals ahead of their fears, or taking the less comfortable path to stand for what's right, despite the consequences. In the world of the twenty-first century, the rich Greek meaning of courage is used nearly synonymously with the Latin word "valor," meaning fearlessness or bravery.

¹³ Another commonly referred to reference on this concept is in the Old Testament Book of Proverbs: As a man *thinketh in his heart*, so shall he be.

¹⁴ Now the word means to acknowledge or pay for one's sins. For the ancient Greek, it was simply an acknowledgement that one had been experiencing the world at a lower order of perception.

¹⁵ Christ's admonition: "Judge and ye shall be judged, condemn and ye shall be condemned, forgive and ye shall be forgiven" is a perfect example of such a framework of thought.

By shifting the mind to a higher plane, metanoia became a fundamental learning process through which “discovery” (Latin: to uncover) or “anacalipto (Greek: to uncover that which is hidden) was an important piece. Much like Michelangelo, who, after unveiling the Pieta, said he didn’t really carve the statue, but simply revealed that which was already in the stone, so metanoia became not a process invention, but a discovery, an unveiling of that which has been hidden. This idea was also expressed by the Wright Brothers on the evening after their first flight in 1903 when Orville Wright said: “Isn’t amazing how all these secrets of flight have been hidden for so many years just so we can discover [uncover] them.” The Wrights did not “invent” the airplane, they simply uncovered that which was hidden.

6. Deep Inquiry

There is perhaps no other thinker in the history of the human race that was so filled with deep questions as Socrates. His dialogues, as recorded by Plato, were among some of the most challenging interactive questionings ever recorded. We suspect that, while Socrates had obviously mastered this method, others had also become quiet adroit at inquiry, which enabled them to dig deep into the depths of scientific investigation. When one reads Hippocrates, for example, one is immediately impressed by his level of insight, investigation, and analysis.

Or one can read Ptolemy’s¹⁶ scientific inquiry into the nature of the universe and see the tremendous integration of sophisticated observations, trigonometric calculations, and analytical deductions. While Ptolemy’s thesis (position) was an proof that the world was the center of the universe, other Greeks, using the method of deep inquiry, proposed their opposing thesis (antithesis), that the sun was central. This form of debate, with supporting and opposing modes of inquiry is central to any community of learning.

Fundamentally, inquiry is more than just a process of asking questions. For the Greeks, it was an awe-inspiring journey of discovery that commenced from *wonder* as the first step. This was a somewhat playful, even child-like experience that embraced genesis (creativity), synthesis (system thinking), analysis (observing components), and sympathesis (relating).

¹⁶ Ptolemy was a Greek Egyptian operating outside of Alexandria writing about 100 AD. Using centuries of accumulated data, he had carefully plotted the course of the stars and the planets, and, erroneously concluded that the sun and the planets had revolved around the earth. Without the benefit of telescopes, the Greeks had pondered and debated whether the sun or the earth was central in the solar system. In the late 1400’s, Copernicus, studying under a Greek scholar in Padua, learned of the theories of early Greeks, such as Aristarchus of Samos, Heraclides Ponticus, and Philolaus who proposed the first models of a heliocentric solar system: the Earth and all other planets revolving around the Sun, the Earth rotating around its axis daily, the Moon in turn revolving around the Earth once a month. Because those works have not survived (but Ptolemy’s have) Copernicus is rightly credited with having proven the sun is central to the solar system. During the early 1500’s, Copernicus disproved the theory of an earth-centric universe, and proved the sun was the center of the solar system. (All calculations by Copernicus were made without the aid of a telescope, which was not invented until early in the 1600’s and then improved upon by Galileo.)

Conclusion

By combining a strong amalgam of Honor (Philotimos), with Virtue (Arête), Wisdom (Sophia), Koinonia (Community), Metanoia (Paradigm Shifting), and Deep Inquiry, Athenians and other citizens of allied city-states were able to work collectively, to co-create, co-operate, and generate a revolutionary community that exceeded all other tribal nations of that era, and set a standard of excellence that, in many ways, as never been duplicated.

This was the essence of how the Greeks created synergy.

Synergy is the deepest yearning of the human soul. Few people do not have a heartfelt desire to create a synergistic relationship between themselves, their God, and nature.¹⁷

Sadly, at the very time these Greek values were being transformed into a Christian context, the Roman Empire fell to the Barbaric tribes and spiritual Christianity succumbed to the regimented dogma of the Church. Lost were what was left of the traditions, culture, and practices of the ancient Greek, buried in the dearth of inspiration by the arduous death-march of the Dark Ages.

In the modern world, a concerted (but unknowingly superficial) effort was made to resurrect a few of the symbols, edifices, and teaching of some of the values and principles of the ancient Greek. Beginning with the Renaissance, the Greek books of learning were reopened after a thousand years of collecting dust. Their genetic code was examined only as an exoskeleton, without understanding their DNA buried within the culture after the Romans left only a shadow of the evidence.

These six values formed the “core” or “kernel” of the Innovation System. Like a seed kernel, the entire plant is imbedded in the kernel’s DNA. And, like a seed, it will not germinate and grow without sun, water, and fertile soil.

In somewhat simplistic terms, one might say that unleashing the innovative spirit in any human civilization involves only three things:

1. Cherish Differences
2. Honor Others
3. Inquire Deeply
4. Share Fully

Continuing the analogy, the kernel needs a support system of other values to flower. In the next edition of this study, we will including the “support values.”

With this newly discovered level of understanding, what has been lost or invisibly imbedded in our collective unconscious can now be manifested, replicated, and regenerated. We believe by engendering these five values into a modern innovation team, community, or alliance, magic will occur as synergy blossoms. For the first time in over 2000 years we should be able to create synergy on a sustainable and replicable level. And, if the team does something to lose that synergy, it can be resurrected.

¹⁷ It therefore should be no wonder that, when Christ preached the overarching commandment “Love God with thy whole mind, and whole spirit, and love thy neighbor as thy self, he was exhorting people to engage in synergy. Early Greek Christians, already practicing their core cultural values would not be as perplexed as we are today by the passage in John 14:12-16 “I leave you so that the Great Comforter, the Holy Spirit (Sophia) may come to you ... And these work that I do so shall you do, and greater works shall you do than I.”

HOW THE GREEKS CREATED THE FIRST AGE OF INNOVATION

Author's Notes:

This is a third draft. Further editions will amplify on our “process archeology.” In particular, in later editions, we will be elaborating on how the Greeks created a series of support values to reinforce the core values. We invite feedback from readers. While we believe the five core values enumerated above were the key innovation enablers, there were other supportive values that will be discussed in the future. Also, in later editions, we will lay out a case describing why the Romans were unable to sustain the Grecian Age of Innovation, and its implications on our society today.

We are especially appreciative of Jerry Dell Erlich's comments and insights on this unique period in human history. Jerry's books and his personal guidance have been extremely helpful. He is one of the few Platonist scholars in America. His two books: Plato's Gift to Christianity, and the Platonic Bible are fascinating reading for those willing to dig deeply into the spiritual roots of our culture.