

Innovo:
On the Vicissitudes and Variations of a Concept

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Abstract

Etymological dictionaries date the coining of “innovation” to the thirteenth and fourteenth century, but remain silent on the Latin word *innovo* as precursor. When, how and why did innovation enter the Latin vocabulary?

This paper deals with innovation as a concept, from the time of the Roman Empire to the sixteenth century. Absent in ancient Roman times, *innovo* entered the Latin vocabulary in the third and fourth century as “renewing”. From the beginning, the concept had a positive meaning. Such a representation continued until the sixteenth century, when it changed to negative. The paper documents the several contexts in which the concept is used – religion, poetry and law – and particularly stresses the role of Christianity in the use and diffusion of the concept.

Neque enim putes quod innovatio vitae, quae dicitur semel facta, sufficiat; sed semper et quotidie, si dici potest, ipsa novitas innovanda est ... sicut innovatur et nunquam est quando non innovatio ejus augeat [Do not think that the renewal of life (baptism), which we say occurs once, that is, enough. It is always and every day, if we may say so, that this newness (*novitas*) itself must be renewed (*innovanda*)...as though there were never any renewal (*innovatur*) where the renewal (*innovatio*) does not increase]. Origen, *Commentar*, in *Epistulam ad Romanos* V, 8, PG XIV, 1042As. (Comments on Apostle Paul, Col. 3: 9 and 2 Cor 4:16).

... conversi autem ad interiorem, ad ea quae innovanda sunt ... inveniamus hominem novum, diem novum, canticum novum, testamentum novum - et sic amemus istam novitatem ut non ibi timeamus vetustatem ... [Turn toward the interior man, toward all that there is to be renewed (*innovanda*), would we be able to find the new man, the new day, the new singing, the new alliance, and cherish this newness (*novitatem*) such that we would not fear growing old]. Augustine, *Confessiones*, Enarr. in Ps. XXXVIII, 9, Corp. Christ., Ser. Lat. XXXVIII, 410.

Like we moderns, Ancient Greeks considered that novelty is everywhere and innovativeness (the propensity to innovate) is a fact of life (d'Angour, 2011). Yet, things are different with regard to innovation. To the Greeks, innovation (*kainotomia*) was not equivalent to innovativeness or creativity/originality. Innovation is subversive of the established order. It is a concept applied to and used mainly for discussing politics, including what we call revolutions today (Godin and Lucier, 2012).

Greek historian Plutarch (c.46-120 AD) is an exception among the Greeks. Plutarch, who at some point took Roman citizenship, uses innovation as a multifaceted concept: sometimes negative, at other times positive. To be sure, innovation, whatever the term, is considered multifaceted among other Greek writers as well (*kainotomia*, *neoterismos*, *kainopoeia*) – and remains so among Byzantine writers as well (Spanos, 2010; 2013). But statistically, *kainotomia* is considered as negative – until about Plutarch's time and much later, in religion for example. To the Greek fathers, such as Basil (c.329-379) in *Epistulae*, *kainotomia* is “heresy”.

“Innovation” is not a word in ancient Rome. Certainly, there are precursor terms or concepts. Yet *innovo* and derivatives do not exist. When, how and why did the word innovation enter the Latin vocabulary? This paper deals with innovation as a concept, from the time of the Roman empire to the fifteenth century. In many ways, the Romans share the representation of Ancient Greece. Innovation has some positive connotations, as a substantive for example (*novitas*). At the same time, innovation in political affairs is discussed negatively (*novare*).

By the third-fourth century, *innovo* got into the Latin vocabulary. In contrast to what it meant to the Greeks, in Latin it has a positive meaning as “renewing” from the beginning. Such is the use made in religion and poetry. Such a representation of innovation continued until the sixteenth century. During this period, innovation acquired a legal connotation too. In politics, it also came to be used positively (Nicolas Machiavelli). Yet in the sixteenth century, *innovo* shifted back to the negative connotation of ancient

Greece, following the Reformation in England. This pejorative and contested meaning lasted until the nineteenth century.

This paper is a (preliminary) study of the meaning(s) of innovation among Latin writers. Most dictionaries date the coining of “innovation” to the thirteenth century, and remain silent on the Latin word *innovo* (see Appendix 1). This paper goes further back in time. The first part looks at the vocabulary used in ancient Rome for novelty or newness, a time when *innovo* did not exist. The second part looks at early uses of *innovo* and documents the two meanings of the concept: renewal and change/make new. It is documented that these meanings vary according to context: religion (spiritual), poetry (material) and law (re-enacting). The paper concludes with some thoughts on the shift in meaning from positive to negative during the Reformation.

The Roman Vocabulary

Before the fourth century, *innovo* does not exist in the Latin vocabulary.¹ This section looks at various uses of novelty (*novitas*, *novare*, *nova res/res nova*) as a background for the understanding *innovo*. Like the ancient Greeks, the Romans had many words for novelty or newness. For the Greek adjectives *kainos* and *neos*, for example, the Romans had *novus*. For innovation as a substantive (*kainotomia*), the Romans coined *novitas* and *res nova/nova res*. These words are often used in a neutral sense, applied to things as well as human innovativeness, with either a positive or negative judgment on the innovator.

In his *Institutio Oratoria*, Quintilian (c.35-c.100) discusses how authors “introduce some novelty [*novitas*]” in the arts of rhetoric (IO 3, 3), some having an “excessive passion for novelty [*novitas*]”, such as the encyclopaedist Aulus Cornelius Celsus (IO 9, 1). Like many writers, Quintilian stresses the strangeness of and the unexpected in novelty. He makes an explicit reference to this connotation and explains why novelty has so much effect on people: “It is novelty [*novitas*] and change that please in oratory and what is

¹ *Inventio*, a word from rhetoric and whose history remains to be done, exists. Yet, *inventio* has a meaning totally different from that of today: the first step in constructing arguments.

unexpected always give especial delight” (IO 8, 6). Yet he notes that the old sometimes produces the same effect as the new: “Archaic words produce an attractive effect not unlike that of novelty [*novitas*]” (IO 1, 6).

Such is Lucretius’ (c.94 BC-c.51 BC) connotation too in *De Rerum Natura*. “I know how hard it is in Latian [*sic*] verse to tell the dark discoveries of the Greeks, chiefly because our pauper-speech must find strange terms to fit the novelty [*novitatem*] of the thing” (RN 1, 136). To Lucretius, nature is new but also strange. The philosopher gives himself the task of discovering the mysteries of nature and explaining its strangeness. “By what devices this strange state [sleep] and new [*novitas*] may be occasioned, and by what the soul can be confounded and the frame grow faint, I will untangle” (RN 4, 929). To Lucretius, newness is not “so easy”; it is “incredible at first sight” and “audacious to conceive for the imagination...the first time”. It is only “with time” that we accept it (RN 2, 1020-40).

Many other philosophers of nature gave themselves the same task as Lucretius. The new is fundamental to Gaius Plinius Secundus, better known as Pliny the Elder (AD 23-79), in *Naturalis Historia*, to Celsus (25 AD-50) in *De Medicina* and to poets like Publius Ovidius Naso (43 BC-AD 17/18), known as Ovid, in *Metamorphoses*. Statesmen, political philosophers and historians also hold this same connotation. Novelty strikes us because of its strangeness to what one is unaccustomed to. Strangeness is frightening and “expresses man’s helplessness in the face of a strange situation, which he cannot control” (Smalley, 1975: 130-31). The commentaries of Julius Caesar (100 BC-44 BC) are full of such uses (*novitate*).² Titus Livy’s (59 BC-AD 17) *History of Rome (Ab urbe condita)* also makes frequent use of the concept in this sense.³

² The warriors “dismayed by the novelty” of this mode of battle” (*De Bello Gallico* 4, 34); the “suddenness of the affair” (*De Bello Gallico* 6, 39). Labrenius “intimidated [the inhabitants of Melodunum] by [his] unexpected arrival” (*De Bello Gallico* 7, 58). “Things which strike us by their novelty” (*De Bello Gallico* 8, 0). Curio astonished by the “unexpected” cloud of dust (*De Bello Civili* 2, 26).

³ The Albans “being moved by the very novelty” (*novitate etiam rei moti*), i.e.: being convoked in an assembly first (History, 1,28); Servius commanding the senators to come to King Tarquinus at the Senate. The senators were “astounded at this strange and wonderful sight [*novitate ac miraculo attoniti*]” (History, 1,47); the consul Titus Quinctius Capitolinus, “a most unsuitable man for the purposes of changing things [of a would-be revolutionary] [*minime opportunus vir novanti res*]”; “the novel and surprising sight [*novitate rei ac miraculo*]” (History, 4,8); the Senate sitting apart from the people: “like all novelties

Titus Livius Patavinus, known as Livy, also makes use of *res nova/nova res* in several places.⁴ In Book IV, Livy discusses tribune of the plebs Gaius Canuleius' "subversive" (*alterum*) proposal on the intermarriage of patricians and plebeians. In fact, the bill would make it "lawful for one of the consuls to be chosen from the plebs ... the lowest of the citizens". "We propose nothing new [*nihil novi ferimus*]", said Canuleius, "but reclaim and seek to exercise a popular right". "Ought nothing new [no innovation] be adopted?" (*Nullane res nova institui debet?*) just because it had never been done before? No. The citizen has supreme authority and is "permitted, if it so desire, to enact a law".

The connotation of innovation as strangeness is an important lesson if we are to understand the representation(s) of innovation in classical antiquity. Innovativeness may be a fact of life (Lloyd, 1987: 50-108; d'Angour, 2011), but thoughts on innovation are rather ambiguous. In his study of novelty among the Greeks, Armand d'Angour stressed the case of positive novelty in classical antiquity (d'Angour, 2011). To be sure, d'Angour discusses the multifaceted dimension of novelty. Yet, because of a focus on the positive connotation – and his neglect of political writings – d'Angour underestimates what *kainotomia* as a concept is to the Greeks. D'Angour fails to distinguish innovativeness from innovation.

It is not a matter here of resuscitating the old debate on the non-innovativeness of the ancients, but rather a matter of balance. We can find confirmation of the ambivalence or tension of innovation in antiquity if we look at the Roman equivalent to the Greek pejorative connotation. One has to stress here the distinction noted above and generally missed in the literature, that between innovativeness and innovation, between the fact of innovating and the representation(s) of innovation. Innovativeness exists in ancient Greece (*kainein*: make new) and is accepted to many degrees (in poetry and science, for example) but innovation (*kainotomia*) is not. To the Greeks, *kainotomia* is political and

[innovations], excited much comment [*peaeibuitque sermons, sicut omnis novitas solet*]" (History, 34,54); the Macedonians raising their spears: "strangeness of the action [*novitate rei*]" (History, 33,10).

⁴ The Spaniards "eager for novelties [change] [*in novas res ingenia*]" (History, 22, 21); "calling the Senators to meet the decemvirs in the curia [instead of the Senate] was like a new thing [an innovation] [*velut nova res*]" (History, 3, 38); instituting scenic entertainments, "a new departure ... for a warlike people [*nova res bellicose*]" (History, 7, 2); "unexpectedness of the attack [*nova res trepidationem fecit*]" (History, 9, 31).

subversive (Godin and Lucier, 2012). The issue is not one between “innovativeness”, a modern concept, and non-innovativeness, but that between innovating and innovation. Innovativeness yes, to many extents; innovation no! Some have called this ambivalence the “paradox of innovation”: everyone innovates but denies he innovates (Ashton, 1980; Ferguson, 1965; Zaret, 2000).⁵

Above we mentioned that *innovo* does not exist in the Roman vocabulary. Yet the pejorative connotation of innovation among the Greeks is found in the context of Roman political writings. For example, the verb *novare* often stresses the revolutionary connotation of innovation, as in Livy’s *History of Rome* – and is often translated as such. At the time of an election to supply two new praetors, three were soldiers and deserters who were “desirous of innovation in every thing” (*qui omnia novare cupiebant*). Livy reports that the majority voted for Epicycles and Hippocrates (XXIV, 27). Livy makes many similar uses of *novare* in the *History*: upon his anxiety against the Arretines, Gaius Hostilius makes hostages of a hundred senators and their children and Gaius Terentius decides to “scour the whole province and see to it that no opportunity was given to those eager to change everything [eager for a revolution]” (*ne qua occasio novare cupientibus res daretur*) (XXVII, 24); on the Aetolians’ schemes for setting Greece “in commotion”: while the “principal people” (those of the best characters) are disposed to maintain the Roman alliance, the multitude (populace) “and especially such as were not content with their position, wished to change everything [wished for a general revolution]” (*omnia novare velle*) (XXXV, 34); on Lucius Scipio conducting the army through Macedonia and Thrace into Asia: “All hangs on the goodwill of Philip” and Africanus suggests that Scipio “test the attitude of the king”. Livy reports that “the king was at a banquet and had gone far with his drinking; this very cheerfulness of mind relieved all suspicion [anxiety] that Philip planned to change something [make any new trouble]” (*suspicionem dempsit novare eum quicquam velle*) (XXXVII, 7).

⁵ What d’Angour calls the paradox of innovation is rather a tension between innovation and tradition (d’Angour, 2011: 62).

The pejorative connotation of *novare* may be found in many other texts as well. In his story on Constantius' legions taking possession of Aquileia, Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus (325/30-c.391) ascribed to Constantius the "planning of overwhelming things [planning of a rebellion]" (*novare quaedam moliebantur*) (Rerum Gestarum, 21,11). Similarly, Cornelius Tacitus (c. AD56-117), Senator and historian of the Roman Empire, discusses Civilis' rebellion as "turning things upside down [setting the work of revolution]" (*novare res hoc modo coepit*) (Histories, 4, 14).

Yet *novare* admits of positive connotations in other contexts. Such is the case with Ovid in *Fasti*, 1, 620. *Fasti* – the calendar of religious feasts – is a work of Ovid less known than the classics *Metamorphosis* and *The Art of Love*. On the date of January 15, it was the time there for worship devoted to the nymph Carmenta. As a rite honouring mothers had been inadvertently eliminated, the mothers went on a childbirth strike – and also a sex strike? These gentlemen then gave in, and the old rituals return:

Nam prius Ausonias matres carpenta vehebant
 haec quoque ab Evandri dicta parente reor;
 Mox honor eripitur, matronaque destinat omnis
 Ingratos nulla prole **novare** viros,
 Neve daret partus, ictu temeraria caeco
 Visceribus crescens excutiebat onus

In the past, "carpentes" (two-wheeled chariots) transported mothers Ausonie's mothers. But soon this honour was denied them. All of the matrons then decided not to **renew** these ungrateful men through any descendants. In order not to bear children, these reckless ones, by hidden means, expelled the load that was growing in their bellies

Marcus Servius Honoratus, grammarian of the late fourth-early fifth century, deserves mention too, for his Commentary on Virgil's *Aeneid*. Virgil's Canto 8, verse 189, evokes the future Rome. King Evandre provides his assistance to Aeneas and introduces him to the cult of Hercules. Virgil writes:

Res Evandrus ait: "Non haec sollemnia nobis
 Has ex more dapes, hanc tanti numinis aram
 Vana superstitio veterumque ignara deorum
 Imposuit: saevis, hospes Troiane, periclis

Servati facimus meritosque **novamus** honores

King Évandré says: “These solemn occasions, these banquets of tradition, this altar consecrated to so eminent a divinity, this is not an empty and ignorant superstition of the old gods who have imposed them upon us; we celebrate them, having survived dire perils, oh our Trojan host, and we **renew** honours well deserved

Honoratus comments specifically on the words “novamus honores”:

detraxit ‘re’, nam ‘renovamus’ debuit dicere; quam particulam alibi addidit, ut ‘fata renarrabat divum’, aliter in quarto ‘tectam novantem’ dixit. Quidam intelligunt proprie esse ‘**novare**’ replicando vetera quaedam facere **novitatem** ac per hoc excludere vetustatis injuriam

He [Virgil] has removed [the prefix] ‘re’, since he should have written ‘renovamus’. Elsewhere, he has added this prefix, as in ‘he told anew the fates of the gods’.⁶ But he did otherwise in canto 4, saying: ‘constructing/creating [novantem] a block of houses.’⁷ We understand that ‘novare’ strictly speaking means ‘**make newness**’ by **returning to/reopening** old things and thus avoid harming the elderly/the old

It is precisely this meaning of *novare* as renewing that got into *innovo* in the following centuries.

Innovo

Warner Jaeger suggests that, “With the Greek Language a whole world of concepts, categories of thought, inherited metaphors, and subtle connotations of meaning enters Christian thought” (Jaeger, 1961: 6). Such is the case with innovation. In the fourth

⁶ Canto 3, verse 716:

Sic pater Aeneas intentis omnibus unus
Fata **renarrabat** divum cursusque docebat.

So our father Aeneas, standing alone with everyone attentive, told **anew** the plans of the gods and recounted his adventures

⁷ Canto 4 verse 260:

Aeneam fundantem arces et tecta **novantem**
Conspicit...

He saw Aeneas building fortifications and **creating/constructing** houses.

century “Christianity has been officially admitted to the Roman Empire by Constantine ... Christianity became the public religion of the Roman state ... [and] now occupied a powerful position in the Empire” (Jaeger, 1961: 70).

While *kainotomia* is of rare occurrence in ancient Greece and is found mainly in politics, the verb *καίνωω/καίνειν* (*kainôô/kainein*: make new) is a lot more frequent. But it is an old form of it – *καίνιζω/καίνιζειν* (*kainizô/kainizein*) – that was translated into *innovo*. *Kainizein* is rarely used in ancient Greece. It has a connotation of originality, not in the sense of creativity, but that of being first in time: inaugurating, doing something for the first time, something strange. It is originality in the sense of origin. The three great Greek tragedians make occasional use of it: Euripides’ *The Trojan Women*, Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* and *Libation Bearers* and Sophocles’ *Trachiniae*. The word survives in the first century BC, for example in Strabo’s *Geography*, and particularly in Roman Flavius Josephus’ *Antiquitates Judaicae* (six occurrences) in the first century AD.⁸

The Latin translation (*in + novo*) changes this meaning to “renewal” – in line with the other (Christian) terms used at the time: renovation, reformation, regeneration. While the radical ‘re’ serves to stress or emphasize (newness in the sense of) a *return* to an original condition – not novelty or newness in the sense of originality – ‘in’ serves to emphasize the *introduction* of novelty. The former stresses the past (return to the old, and later: changing the old), the latter the future (introducing something new).

An early use of *innovo* is by Pope Stephanus (254-57), known today for his battle to ensure every Christian church adhere to the Roman tradition, particularly the recalcitrant Eastern and African churches. During what is known as the Cyprian controversy, Stephanus reminds Cyprian, bishop of Carthage and threatened with excommunication, that one is not allowed to re-baptize heretics who repent, as an African synod had just

⁸ “Strange [because new] the prayer you offer to the God”, writes tragedian Euripides (*The Trojan Women*, card 860). More explicitly, the geographer Strabo says of Zaleucus that he “was among the first to innovate [to make the following innovation] – that whereas before his time it had been left to the judges to determine the penalties for the several crimes, he defined them in the laws, because he held that the opinions of the judges about the same crimes would not be the same, although they ought to be the same” (*Geography*, VI, 1).

decided to do. In such a case, says Stephanus, one must “practice forgiveness of repentance and reintroduce them to communion. Baptism is unique and leaves an *indelible* trace”. “If there are some who recover from some heresy, we must innovate in nothing [nihil *innovetur* nisi quod traditum est] that is not traditional (or that has not been transmitted to us) and that we simply impose our hand in the guise of a pardon...” (Ladner, 1959: 139). Here *innovo* has the sense of renewing, an enduring meaning for centuries.

The Vulgate

The new is fundamental to the Bible, in the sense of renewal. “What in Greek *paideia* [culture] had been the formation or *morphosis* of the human personality now becomes for the Christian the *metamorphosis* of which Paul had spoken when he wrote to the Romans, asking them to undergo a process of radical metamorphosis through a renewal of their spirit” (Jaeger, 1961: 97-98). The Vulgate is full of *novo/novare* as spiritual renewing⁹ – together with (some but less frequent terms like) *renovatio*, *reformatio*, etc. (Ladner, 1959).¹⁰ *Innovo* is no exception.

Before the Vulgate, there were many Latin versions of the “Bible”. In 382 Pope Damasus I commissioned Saint Jerome to produce a ‘standard’ version of the *Vetus Latina*, which

⁹ Apostle Paul (*Epistles*, originally written in Greek). Ephesians 4:20-24: That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new (ananeousthai: renew; Vulgate: *renovamini*) in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness; Romans 12:2: Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing (metamorphousthe: transform; Vulgate: *reformamini*) of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will; 2 Corinthians 3:18: And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed (metamorpho; Vulgate: *transformamur*) into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit; 2 Corinthians 4:16: Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed (anakainô = renew; Vulgate: *renovatur*) day by day; Colossians 3: 9-10: Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed (anakainô; Vulgate: *renovatur*) to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.

¹⁰ *Novitas* has the same meaning; yet, as with the Romans, it is rarely used in the *Vulgate* as compared to the verb form.

he did, using original Greek and Hebrew texts.¹¹ Four books in the Vulgate make use of *innovo* in a spiritual context. The Book of Job is a complex ensemble, of a genre more based on wisdom than history, related to an ancient tradition telling the story of an Eastern sage who lived in opulence, who lost everything, and who afterward had his faith severely tested. In the Book, which likely dates from the second generation of the exile to Babylon (the exile lasted from 587 to 538), a writer returns to this old story to contemplate the exodus of the population of Israel into exile, thereby deprived of all that it possessed. In it we find Job's friends who redouble their questioning and their objections: how do you explain that God so condemns a just man? Job is tempted to give it all up, but he holds fast and continues to believe in his God. The extract below (Job 29, 20) is part of one of the poems collected in the Book. Job repeats his faith and his certainty that misery will be conquered and that happiness will return:

...gloria mea semper **innovabitur** et arcus meus in manu mea instaurabitur

you shall see, my friends, my glory shall be **renewed** and my bow shall regain its youth

Lamentations 5, 21 is another Book making use of *innovo* in the sense of renewing. This text actually dates from before the end of the exile (538). It plays continually on two levels: "bring us to yourself, oh Lord, and so bring us to Jerusalem!".

...converte nos Domine ad te et converteremur, **innova** dies nostros sicut in principio

...bring us to yourself, oh Lord, and we shall **return, renew** our days as at the beginning/as before

¹¹The word *vulgata* is the passive past participle of *vulgo-vulgare*, divulge, spread, propagate, publicize), which itself comes from *vulgus* (people, multitude). The Vulgate replaced the *Vetus latina* (the old Latin), a previous Latin text with multiple authors and versions that was prepared from the Greek text of the Bible i.e.: the text called the "Septuagint", written in Alexandria in the IIIrd century. The text of the Vulgate has become the commonly-recognized reference in the whole of Christendom. At the Council of Trent, Catholics recognized it with a sort of legal accreditation, thus affirming its character of validity and of "safety for the faith". With the development of knowledge, the text underwent periodic technical improvements. The last major philological "face-lift", requested by the Vatican II Council, succeeded in 1979 in a text that was more exact and more certain, commonly designated as the "Neo-Vulgate".

A third Book is Psalms 50,12 (in the Hebrew Bible, this is Psalm 51, according to the usual timetable). Long (but wrongly) attributed to Solomon – a personage who carries authority and is often represented with a lyre like a poet musician – the Psalms constitute a collection likely compiled toward the end of the third century BCE. In particular, the Psalms have seen service in the liturgy and were used in the prayer of the faithful:

...cor mundum crea in me Deus et spiritum rectum **innova** in visceribus meis

...create within me a pure heart, oh God, and **implant** a new spirit inside of me...

Here, the meaning is definitively innovative, as compared to the above books. *Inново* is making new, not renewing. But this is an exception at the time.

Wisdom 7, 27, a Book long attributed to Solomon again – Chapter 7 also has Solomon speaking – and written in Greek, does not date back to before -50. It is a so-called “deuterocanonic” book i.e.: belonging to the “second canon”. Protestants called it the “Apocrypha” – in a different sense of the word than that of the Catholics. *Inново* here translates the Greek *kainizein*. It belongs to a philosophical literature of the time and includes some passages that comprise the eulogy to Wisdom – one of the Bible’s important feminine figures:

...et cum sit una omnia potest et permanens in se omnia **innovat** et per nationes in animas sanctas se transfert amicos Dei et prophetas constituit...

... since it [wisdom] is unique, it can do anything; stable in itself, it **renews** everything, and it circulates among the nations within pious souls and forms friends of God and prophets...

A spiritual connotation is only one use of *innovo* in the Vulgate. There are also political contexts. Ecclesiastes, included in the Septuagint, is now called the book of *Ben Sirah* according to his Hebrew name. The book is a deuterocanonic book and thus does not appear in the Hebrew Bible. It is attributed to a notable of Jerusalem in the time of the Seleucids. It would have been written about 180 ACE. Faced with the growing influences of Greek philosophy, Ben Sirah promotes the heritage of the Jewish faith. Chapter 36, 6

(in the Septuagint, this is verse 5, not verse 6) is a prayer for the complete liberation and restoration of Israel.

...**innova** signa et inmuta [rather: immuta] mirabilia...

...**renew** your signs and repeat your wonders...

A second political use is Samuel (1 Sam 11, 14). In the Greek Bible, this book is named the book of *Reigns*. The kingship of Saul, first King of Israel, was strongly contested. Here, after a military victory by Saul against the Ammonites, it was decided, under the advice of Samuel, who it must be remembered had been the instigator of the monarchy, to “renew” that institution.

Dixit autem Samuel ad populum «venite et eamus in Galgala et **innovemus** ibi regnum

So Samuel said to the people “come, let us go to Galgala and **renew/reaffirm/make new** the monarchy”

The Book of the prophet Osee 10, 12 offers a slightly different meaning, similar to that of the Psalms. Osee seems actually to have preached in the Northern Kingdom at the time that the Kingdom, governed by Jeroboam, was threatened by Assyria, that is, toward the end of the eighth century BCE, before the fall of Samaria in -721.

...sperate vobis in iustitia, metite in ore misericordiae, **innovate** vobis novale, tempus autem requirendi Dominum cum venerit qui docebit vos iustitiam

sow for yourself justice, reap the fruit of piety, **break up/make** yourselves a **new** field; for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain down justice upon you

Finally, 1 Maccabees 12, 17 on the renewal of a pact that Jonathan, one of Maccabees brothers, wants to renew with the Roman allies, says:

... mandavimus itaque eis, ut veniant etiam ad vos et saluent vos et reddant vobis epistulas nostras de **innovatione** et fraternitate nostra, which I have already translated for you

We have ordered them to go to you with our greetings and deliver this letter about the **renewal** of our ties of brotherhood

Together with the spiritual and political, another variant of renewal is that found in a material context. In 1 Maccabees 10, 10 *innovo* means renovate. This book, which tells the facts and doings of the Maccabees brothers under the Hasmonean dynasty, seems to have been written in Greek by a Jew from Palestine somewhere in the first century BCE, in any case before the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans. This use of the Greek verb is therefore in all likelihood not a translation and we know roughly the date of its emergence. The first book of Maccabees does not appear in the canon of the Hebrew Bible, but does appear in that of the Greek Bible and the Vulgate. It is a deuterocanonic book:

Et habitavit Jonathas in Hierusalem et coepit aedificare et **innovare** civitatem

Jonathan settled in Jerusalem and he began to construct and to **restore/renovate** the city

Poetry

Like the Vulgate, poetry contains a spiritual connotation of *innovo*, as in Minucius Felix, rhetorician and Christian apologist of the second-third century. In the extract below, from the *Octavius* (chapter 11), a sort of sarcastic pamphlet which, here, comments on the belief of Christians in the Resurrection, we read:

vellem tamen sciscitari, utrumne cum corporibus an absque corporibus, et corporibus quibus, ipsisne an **innovatis** resurgatur. Sine corpore? Hoc, quod sciam, neque mens neque anima nec vita est

I would nevertheless like to know whether we are resurrected with the bodies, or without the bodies, and with which bodies, the same ones or **new ones**. Without the body is neither spirit [mens] nor soul [anima] nor life [vita]

The meaning is clear enough: are we resurrected with the same bodies or with new/transformed/other/renewed/“revamped” bodies?

Paulinus (354-431), Latin poet and Bishop of Nole, near Naples, in a letter to Ausonius (*Epistles to Ausonius*, 31, 60), describes the wonders that the grace of God works in human beings:

Abstergit aegrum corporis pigri situm
Habitumque mentis **innovat**

He removes stains from the sick body and he **renews** the condition of the soul

Like the Vulgate, poetry has other connotations too: political, material and cultural. Grammarian Honoratus uses all three. In his comments on Virgil's *Aeneid*, Honoratus makes five uses of *innovo*. In Canto 2, verse 473 Virgil tells of the fall of Troy. In the extract commented on, Aeneas describes the fall of the palace at the hands of Pyrrhus, who he compares to a snake that crawls out of the ground and, having cast off its old skin, bursts with a new youth. Honoratus comments:

Constat enim serpentes **innovari** virtute pelle deposita

we know basically that, their skin having been cast off snakes are **renewed** in strength/vigour

Another use is "cultural". Canto 4, verse 302 is dedicated to the romance of Dido and Aeneas. In the extract commented on, Dido thunders forth against Aeneas, torn between rejection and reconquest. Honoratus comments on the feasts as follows:

Liberi enim sacra tertio quoque anno **innovabantur**

the sacred rites [orgies] of Bacchus were **renewed** every three years/every third year

Yet, Honoratus makes the most use of *innovo* in a political context. A slightly different meaning of renewing occurs while commenting on Canto 5, verse 598. Canto 5 tells of the Trojans' stay in Sicily and describes at length the games that the Trojan children learned there, and which were then handed down to the Latins. The extract commented

on concludes with a big game of carousel-parade, very complex, which foreshadowed the one Ascagne introduced into Albe-la-Longue, and which later appeared in Rome. Virgil writes:

Hunc morem cursus atque haec certamina primus
Ascanius, Longam muris cum cingeret Albam
Rettulit et priscos docuit celebrare Latinos
Quo puer ipse modo, secum quo Troia pubes

this race/parade, these competitions, Ascagne, when he surrounded the city of Albe-la-Longue with a wall, imported/adopted/reproduced/remade [*rettulit*] them first. It was he who taught the old Latins to celebrate them, as he himself had done with the young Trojans when he was a child

Honoratus comments on the word *rettulit* which he considers equivalent to *innovavit*:

innovavit quod ante jam fecerat

he **redid/reproduced** that which he had previously done

In a political context again, Honoratus comments on Canto 11 which reports various actions of Aeneas and tells the story and the heroic deeds of Camille. In the extract commented on, Latin ambassadors come to ask permission of Aeneas to honour their dead. Honoratus again comments on the words Virgil uses. In verse 104 Virgil writes:

Iamque oratores aderant ex urbe latina,
Velati ramis oleae veniamque rogantes
Corpora, per campos ferro quae fusa jacxeban t,
Redderet ac tumulo sineret succedere terrae;
Nullum cum victis certamen et aethere cassis
Parceret hospitibus quondam socerisque vocatis

already envoys arrive from the Latin city, covered with olive branches and asking a favour: that he [Aeneas] give back the bodies scattered by iron in the fields, that he allow them to be covered by a “tumulus” of earth – basically, no battling against the beaten and those beings deprived of light/air – and that he spare those whom he had already called his hosts and his in-laws

Honoratus comments on the words *et aethere cassis* (deprived of light):

id est luce vacuis (...) hoc autem bene addidit, quod victi possunt **innovare** certamen

[Virgil] correctly added this, because those conquered could **return to/resume** fighting

A third use in a political context is found in Honoratus' comment on Canto 12, verse 573. Canto 12 tells the end of the epic, which revolves around the Aeneas-Turnus duel. In the extract commented on, Aeneas prepares the assault against Latinus and demands its total surrender. Virgil writes:

Scilicet expectem, libeat dum proelia Turno
Nostra pati rursusque velit concurrere victus?
Hoc caput, O cives, haec belli summa nefandi:
Ferte faces propere foedusque repscite flammis

Must I [Aeneas] wait until it is convenient for Turnus to fight and, once beaten, to take up arms again? Oh citizens, here is the beginning, the peak of this abominable war. Quickly, bring torches and, with fire, demand once more/require again the alliance/the treaty/the pact

Honoratus comments on the word *repscite* which he makes a synonym of innovate:

nam hoc dicit: flammis foederis urbis **innovemus** incendio. Nam 'repscite' est revocate, **innovate**

[Virgil] says, let us **renew** through fire the flames of the alliance. Basically, 'repscite' signifies 'revocate' [return to, demand again, recall], **innovate**

Renewing as "recall" is also the meaning found in Sidonius Appolinaris (430-489), poet, diplomat and bishop. In a letter to his "Dear Eutropius" (*Epistulae* III, 6, 1), the holy Gallic-Roman bishop Sidoine writes:

Si veteris commilitii, si deinceps **innovatae** per dies gratiae bene in praesentiarum fides vestra reminiscitur, profecto intelligitis ut vos ad dignitatem sic nos ad desideriorum culmina ascendere.

If your loyalty recalls our joint [military] service, if it recalls our amity/involvement subsequently unceasingly **renewed/increased**, you will understand that, although you are at the height of dignity, we ourselves have reached the height of our desires.

Like Honoratus, Prudentius (348-413), Roman Christian poet, makes use of several meanings or contexts. The three references below are taken from the *Peristephanon* (crown, as in a martyr's crown), a work (late fourth-early fifth century) that, poem by poem, sings of the glorious and courageous end of the Christian martyrs. Three poems make use of the concept innovation. Poem 9 illustrates the martyrdom of Saint Cassien, that professor delivered into the hands of his students, who made him suffer the worst torments, in particular that which consists of writing on his body as if on a tablet: they go at it with a metal point and with a little stylet, they erase, they start again, etc.:

Inde alii stimulos et acumina ferrea vibrant
Qua parte aratis cera sulcis scribitur.
Et qua secti apices abolentur et aequoris hirti
Rursus nitescens **innovatur** area.
Hinc foditur Christi confessor et inde secatur;
Pars viscus intrat molle, pars scindit cute.

Others wield spurs and iron points, both by the end we use to trace characters in wax and by the end by which words previously inscribed are erased and the smooth surface **restored** in place of the messed-up surface. By these two maneuvers, the confessor of Christ is lacerated and torn/cut. One part penetrates his tender flesh, the other cuts his skin.

The semantic key here is the use of writing tablets, generally made of wood covered with beeswax. This technique allows one to completely erase what has been written, replace the coat of wax, and write another text. The writing surface is thus made new/renewed, restored – a much repeated context (and analogy) in which the word appears, like the Spanish poet Marcus Valerius Martialis' (40-104) *Epigrammata*:

Esse puta ceras, licet haec membrana vocetur
Delebis, quotiens scripta **novare** voles

You erase each time that you wish to **make new** writings/texts

Poem 12 sings of the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul, both of whom died in Rome, on the same day but at a one-year interval, one by the sword and the other crucified. Two monuments have been built on the Tiber to commemorate this. We read:

Festus apostolici nobis redit hic dies triumphi,
Pauli atque Petri nobilis cruore,
Unus utrumque dies, pleno tamen **innovatus** anno,
Vidit superba morte laureatum.
Scit Tiberina palus, quae flumine lambitur propinquo,
Binis dicatum caespitem tropeis,
Et crucis et gladii testis,
Quibus irrigans easdem bis fluxit imber sanguinis per herbas.

We remember the day of the apostolic triumph, a day enlarged by the blood of Paul and of Peter. A single day [the same day], but **renewed/returned** by a full year, saw them crowned by a magnificent death. The Tiber marsh, the one that languishes by the river, knows the two burial mounds ennobled by their double trophy; it is witness to the cross and the sword, which have twice seen its meadows bathed in blood.

Every year on the same date, it is as though the same day renewed itself/began anew. The image had already appeared in Virgil above.

The third poem (Poem 14) sings of the martyrdom of Saint Agnes, a young girl desired by the emperor, but who has resisted him. As punishment, he among other things placed her in a bordello and made her available to all and sundry. The first man who approached her fell stricken down on the floor! We read:

Sunt qui rogatam rettulerint preces
Fudisse Christo, redderet ut reo
Lucem jacenti; tum juveni halitum
Vitae **innovatum** visibus integris.

There are those who reported that we had asked her [Agnes] to pray to Christ to bring the light to the guilty lying stretched on the ground: so a breath of **new/renewed** life and a perfect vision were given back to the young man.

The rest of the torments ended just as badly for the torturers. In the end they cut off Saint Agnes head or cut her throat, something of that nature.

In sum, innovation or rather innovate, has the meaning of renewing. One may find some variations, as in Psalms and Osee (make new) and Honoratus (imitate), but the dominant representation is that of a return to, a renewal. To men of the Middle Ages the future (introducing something new) “does not exist yet”.

Development of the Concept

Innovation as renewal continues until the Reformation. For example, people accused of innovation in the seventeenth century reply that they are only returning to past or forgotten practices that time has corrupted (Godin, 2010). However, during the late Middle Ages, innovation acquires new meanings.

Poetry continues to be a key user of the concept *innovo* in the positive sense. In poem number 2 of *Iambici libri*, Augurelli (1456-1524), humanist poet and alchemist, pays homage to Laurentius of Medicis, under whose reign the Lauretanian house was symbolized by the phoenix: “*ad Laurentium Lauretanum patricium Venetum/ phoenix sub quo domus Lauretana significatur*”. The phoenix, which is reborn from its ashes, is frequently associated with the laurel. Both appear on the Laurentius family coat of arms:

et usque ab Indis et Rubio advectos mari
Miros odores congerit.
Quibus se adurit, et **innovans** sub unica
Arterna lauru permanet.”

He collects astonishing perfumes brought all the way from India and the Red Sea, with which he covers himself, and he endures, **renewing** himself under the unique and eternal laurel.

Innovans clearly refers to the phoenix which is reborn from its ashes. Laurentius endures by constantly renewing himself under the laurel, symbol of the phoenix: both the same, and perpetually new at the same time.

However, poetry introduces a change in meaning, putting the emphasis on the future. This meaning is often used in a material context. Here, *innovo* means change, transform. Such is the use that Ammonio (1478-1517), Italian cleric and Latin poet, makes of it. Poem 1 from the *Carmina omnia*, qualified by the author as “*carmen asclepiadeum*” (i.e.: poem in verse of twelve feet according to an old Greek lyric form) is dedicated “*ad Gulielmum Monioium, Angliae baronem*” (Guillaume Monioius, English baron):

Longobardia adhuc, cepit ab Angliis
Tunc nomen quod habet, vestra Britannia
Sic est, longa dies **innovat** omnia.”

Lombardy until then, your Great Britain took for the English the name it has now.
So that’s it: a long day/time **changes** everything.

The change of name suggests here that, taking the long view, time eventually changes/renews/transforms/”innovates” everything.

A century before Ammonio, Boccaccio (1313-1375), Italian author and poet, a Renaissance humanist, talks of change as transformation. In the sixth poem, titled *Alceste*, from *Bucolicum carmen* (bucolic poem), Boccaccio imitates Virgil’s *Bucolics* (eclogues) and places Amintas and Mélibée in poetic dialogue. The extract, from the mouth of Amintas, sings the beauties of Italy – a veritable geography lesson on Latium and Campanie!

Massicus et Gaurus florent pulcherque Vesuv[i]us
Innovat arbustis vites stauratque Falernus
Ulmis jam colles, stringit Vulturnus et undas.

[The mountains] Massicus and Gaurus are flowering, fair Vesuvius **changes** the shrubs into vines, [the forest of] Falernus already revives the elms on the hills and the Vulturnus collects the waters.

Here *innovo* translates the idea of “transformation”, of “creation in a new form”.

Just to take a few more examples: Stefanardo (1230-1298), Italian professor of theology, makes use of the term in a poem titled *De controversia hominis et fortune* (we expected *fortuna*) [Of the Fight of Man and Fortune]. Verse 1018ss is an homage addressed to some powerful warrior prince:

Tempore ter deno gressu Saturnus inerti
 Lustrat bis seno seiuga clara Jovis;
 Sic tua bimatu diu rutilantia Martis
 Jugiter, Astripotens, **innovat** ora manus.”

With his slow/lazy gait, Saturn completes his voyage three times in ten strides; Jupiter’s beautiful team of six horses shines twice in six strides. You, every day in two years, without respite, great powerful star (*Astripotens*, an epithet often attributed to Jupiter), your grandiose power of Mars **changes** the face of things.

Innovo here means transform/change/renew/make newness, according to the semantics of the movement of stars that “renew themselves” in their orbits (revolution), an analogy already made by Honoratus. In his comments on the *Aeneids*, Canto 1, Honoratus discusses Virgil’s idea of the revolution (circumvolution) of the sun and the years as *innovatione*:

TRIGINTA: vel quod XXX, tantum annos regnavit, vel quod Cato ait, “XXX. annis expletis eum Albam condidisse”. MAGNOS ORBES: tria sunt genera annorum: aut enim lunaris annus est XXX. dierum aut solstitialis XII. mensum, aut secundum Tullium magnum, qui tenet XIIDCCCCLIII. annos, ut in Hortensio “horum annorum quos in fastis habemus magnus XIIDCCCCLIII. amplectitur. Hoc ergo loco magnum dixit comparatione lunaris, et alibi “interea magnum sol circumvolvitur annum”. annus autem dictus quasi anus, id est anulus, quod in se redeat, ut est “atque in se sua per vestigia volvitur annus”, vel ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνανεοῦσθαι, id est ab **innovatione**.

THIRTY: or it signifies that he reigned only thirty years, well that’s what Cato says...to the effect that, thirty years having been completed, he founded Albes. GREAT ORBITS (or GREAT CIRCLES): there are three types of years, or it is the lunar year which is 30 days, or it is the solar year which is of twelve months, or it refers to the great Tullius [Cicero], who evokes a cycle of *n* years as in his treatise *Hortensius* “these legal years that encompass *n* years”. In the current citation, it is mainly the lunar comparison that dominates and elsewhere, it is the sun (“meanwhile, the sun completes its great circumvolution”). The year is said as

“anus” (that is, ring), which returns to itself as is the case in the citation “the year returns on itself as though in its tracks”, or by the fact of **renewing** itself.

Stefanardo is only one theologian talking of change in this way in the late Middle Ages. Bonaventure (1221-1274), scholastic theologian and philosopher, is the great Franciscan thinker – Augustinian philosopher – who taught in Paris in the eighth century at the same time as the Dominican Thomas Aquinas, the Aristotelian, in a tense but always courteous battle. The extract below comes from his *Rythmi* (poems, texts in verse) and bears the title *Philomene*. This is surely not Saint Philomene, a story dating to the ninth century and settled since that time by the removal of the saint from the calendar. Undoubtedly derived from *philomene*, which signifies “nightingale” or “bird”, the poem strongly evokes a bird:

Tunc cum fletu recitat illius labores
Sitim, famem, frigora, aestus et ardores,
Quae dignanter pertulit propter peccatores,
Dum illorum voluit **innovare** mores.”

So, with a flood of tears, he recalls his work, recalls thirst, hunger, cold, heat, the sweating he endured with dignity due to the sinners, while he wished to **change** their way of living.

The meaning is clear: it is a matter of changing/transforming mores. One creates new mores. One “innovates”!

Over time, *innovo* developed a legal application. Pope Gregory VII (1073-85) is the artisan of the Gregorian reform, first as counselor to Leo IX and his successors, then as a pope himself. He particularly wanted to purify the clergy’s customs (celibacy, nicolaism) and fight against simony and the trafficking in benefits and especially bishoprics. In a most celebrated letter in which he attacks the investiture practices by which certain bishops attain their position by paying, he calls to mind the correct rule which says that a bishop legitimately attains his position due to his faith and to his aptitudes, and not by usurping. This rule “which has long been neglected in the Church because of our sins and which has been twisted by a culpable habit, we desire to restore it (*restaurare*) and put it

into effect (*innovare*) for the glory of God and the salvation of all Christianity...so that the bishop duly-elected according to the doctrine of truth cannot be described as a thief and a brigand”. This refers to Jn 10, 1: “In truth, in truth, I say it to you, whoever does not enter by the doorway in the sheepfold, but who climbs over another side, that one is a thief and a brigand. But he who enters by the doorway is the shepherd” (Ladner, 1959: 241).

In the face of recalcitrant individuals who continue to oppose Church decrees, popes like Gregory regularly had to recall (confirm, reactivate) previous authorities’ instructions. They did so by issuing bulls that renewed (*innovare*) prior legal statutes. In 1509, Julius II (1503-1513), patron of Michelangelo, creator of the Swiss Guard and promoter of the construction of St. Peter’s of Rome, issued a bull against those who aspire to the papacy by practicing simony (trading in spiritual goods, such as the sacraments and indulgences, from the name of that Simon in Acts of the Apostles chapter 8, verse 18, who was given to this type of foul trafficking): *Si summus rerum opifex. Bulla contra aspirantes ad papatum symoniace innovata confirmata et approbata per sacrum Lateranensem concilium*. The fifth Lateran Council, (1513-1521), convened by Julius II just before his death and continued by Leo X, put an end to the “conciliarist” debate – conciliarism is an ecclesiastical theory that believes that a council is above the Pope – and confirmed the primacy of the Seat of Rome. The bull renews (*innovata*), confirms (*confirmata*) and approves (*approbata*) a decision by the first Lateran Council (1123). Clearly, from a legal perspective, *innovo* here signifies renewing/reactivating a legal statute.

Julius’s bull is only the first of a series of similar bulls issued in the sixteenth century and making use of *innovo* in this sense. Julius himself issued a second bull in 1510 to retract his position on conciliarism. Many bulls condemn individuals or groups who abuse Church properties and renew previous condemnations. Such are Leo X’s bulls,¹² and many others: Pius IV, 1560, condemning dueling already decreed by his predecessors) or

¹² 1514: condemns exactions and crimes perpetrated on Roman territory; 1517: against those who enter into the lands and properties of the Holy Roman Church; 1518a: attacks the wicked barons who act ruthlessly on lands belonging to the Church ;1518b: attacks those who refuse to recognize and apply the “Apostolic Letters”, maintaining that only local prelates can give them executory force.

decisions on the management of properties and corporations' practices; Clement VI, 1528, on the assembly of all magistrates and officers on the lands of the Holy Roman Church, except for the very venerable personnel of the cardinal legates; Clement VIII, 1593, modifying the status of the "declassified" monasteries of the Order of St. Basil.

Conclusion

From the time of the Roman Empire to the Reformation, innovation is discussed as action (verb) – *innovo*. In the sample of documents studied here, the substantive does not appear. *Innovo* does point, however, to an outcome – not to the one who innovates, the innovator: a new soul. In this sense, *innovo* has a positive meaning. A first and most common meaning is renewing: a spiritual and moral renewal. This meaning has little or no connotation of introducing something (entirely) new, although it inaugurates a new 'order'. The second meaning is change (make new). This has been the meaning of *novare* since the fourth century.¹³ It frequently appears in the Vulgate and regularly among poets and Christian writers.

In spite of some variants in the sense of imitating (start again), as in Honoratus, and renovating, as in Maccabees, renewing and changing/making new are the two dominant meanings of *innovo* during the Middle Ages. These two meanings are used in multiple and diverse contexts: spiritual, political, material, cultural and legal.

Yet with the Reformation, a change in connotation occurs. While the Middle Ages innovated as compared to Ancient Greece, making of innovation (*innovo*) an exclusively positive concept, writers of the Reformation shift back to the ancient Greeks' pejorative meaning of *kainotomia*. Ecclesiastic authorities and writers in the sixteenth century introduced the substantive "innovation" (*innouacion*), a term absent from the Latin vocabulary, and accuse opponents of introducing innovations – in the doctrine and

¹³ In turn, *novare* admits of renewing too. Such is Celsus' use of the term in the extract below, from *De Medicina*, first century. While discussing fevers, Celsus reports the remedy of a certain Petron, a rather "harsh treatment" that kill patients. The remedy "renew and increase a disease and inflame fevers" (*De Medicina*, 3, 9).

discipline of the new orthodoxy, Protestantism (Godin, 2010). Such is the case with English bishops. In contrast, the Catholics use the term to oppose Protestantism. On both sides, innovation becomes the (modern) successor term to heresy.

In the centuries following the Reformation, innovation becomes a polemical term, used against one's enemy or any proponent of change. The use of the concept then stresses the one who innovates, the innovator. Such a meaning of innovation enters the vocabulary of politics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and then that of social reform in the nineteenth century. Innovation is subversive to the established order: religious, political or social.

The next major change occurs in the twentieth century. "Technological innovation" becomes a policy instrument to solve social and economic problem, and starts being studied and theorized about. At the same time, and partly because of this instrumental function, coming from governments as well as theorists, innovation becomes a magic word, a buzzword.

The history of the concept innovation is not a linear story, from the negative (ancient Greece) to the positive (twentieth century). At every epoch, innovation has always had an ambivalent or dual meaning, depending on the writers' aim and the context of the time. There have also been periods where the negative meaning dominated over the positive, and *vice versa*. These periods alternated over the centuries. The vicissitudes and variety in the meaning of innovation is a pattern in the concept over the centuries.

Appendix 1.

The Etymology of Innovation

French Dictionaries

From *innovare*, *innovatio*.

Innovation: 1297 (first a legal term, a synonym of novation)

Innovate: 1315 (first in a legal context)

novateur: 1500 (1578 according to *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*).

Source: Oscar Bloch (1968), *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française*, Paris: PUF; *Lexilogos*; *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*.

Innovateur: 1483 (1529 according to OED)

Source: *Centre national de recherche textuelles et lexicales*; *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*.

English Dictionaries

From *in* + *novus*.

innovate: 1322

innovation: 1297

innovator: 1598

Source: *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989.

innovate: 1540s

innovation: 1540s

innovative: 1806

Source: *Online Etymology Dictionary*.

Neologisms

Ancient (early occurrence)

novelist: 1605 (listed in Johnson's Dictionary (1755) as: innovator; affecter of novelty)

noveller: 1609

novellism: 1629

Source: *Early English Book Online*.

Modern

innovative: 1608
innovationist: 1800
innovatory: 1853
innovational: 1959
innovativeness: 1962
innovatively: 1971

Source: *OED*, 1989.

Innovativity: 2006
Innovistic: 1966

Italian Dictionaries

Innovare: 1313-19
Innovazione: 1364
Innovatore: 1527

Source: *Dizionario etimologico della lingua italiana*, Manlio Cortelazzo and Paolo Zolli (eds.), Bologna: Zanichelli, 1979.

Innovare: 14e
Innovatore: 16e
Innovazione: 14e

Source: *Dizionario Etimologico Italiano*, C. Battisti (ed.), 1952.

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Bulls

1. [1509] *Si summus rerum opifex*. Bulla contra aspirantes ad papatum symoniace innovata confirmata et approbata per sacrum Lateranensem concilium (If the supreme creator of things...Bull against those who aspire to the papacy by practicing simony, renewed, confirmed and approved by the Lateran Council).

2. [1510] *Suscepti regiminis nos cura sollicitat*. Bulla innovans et confirmans constitutionem sive extravagantem Pii II contra appellantes ad futurum concilium Caring for the burden we received weighs upon/disturbs/worries us... A bull renewing and confirming the position/decision/rule/edict, however unusual, from Pius II against those who appeal to the future council...)

3. [1514] *Quoniam perversi difficile corriguntur*. Sanctissimus Dominus noster Leo Papa X bullas Pii II, Sixti IV et Julii II contra criminosos et receptatores eorumdem promulgatas innovat (Since the guilty mend their ways with difficulty...Our most holy Lord, Pope Leo X, renews the bulls of Pius II, Sixtus IV and Julius II promulgated against culprits/criminals and those who welcome/shelter/protect them).

4. [1517] Bulla innovationis litterarum contra invadentes hostiliter terras et loca S.R.E.¹⁴ (Bull of renewal of letters issued against those who enter into the lands and properties of the Holy Roman Church with hostile intent)

5. [1518a] Bulla innovatoria brevis felicitatis recordationis Julii papae II contra Barones (...) in terris Ecclesiae ... (Bull renewing a brief from that Pope of happy memory Julius II against the barons on lands of the Holy Roman Church...)

6. [1518b] Bulla approbationis et innovationis Litterarum Bonifacii IX contra impediens executionem Litterarum apostolicarum ... (Bull of approval and renewal of the Letters of Boniface IX against those who impede the execution of the Apostolic Letters...)

¹⁴ S.R.E: sanctae romanae ecclesiae.

7. [1528] *Onus pastoralis officii*. (Bulla) aurea ... innovatoria Bullae Julii II super sindicatu omnium magistratuum et officialium in terris S.R.E., exceptis personis revendissimis legatorum cardinalium (The weight of our pastoral duty ... A golden bull¹⁵ that renews the bull from Jules II on the assembly of all magistrates and officers on the lands of the Holy Roman Church, except for the very venerable personnel of the cardinal legates). This golden bull is from Clement VII (1523-1534).

8. [1560] Bulla ... super confirmatione ac innovatione prohibitionis duellorum (On the confirmation and renewal of the interdiction of duels).

9. [1593] Bulla confirmationis et innovationis alterius bullae felicitatis recordationis Gregorii XIII super approbatione reductionis monasteriorum ordinis sancti Basilii in Congregationem (Bull confirming and renewing another bull from that Pope of happy memory, Gregory XIII, on the approval of the reduction of the monasteries of the Order of St. Basil to the status of congregation).

¹⁵ A category of bull to which the golden seal gave additional prestige.

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