

## Abstract

This thesis takes a look at the most important traces *Magna Carta* has left on its peculiar road through constitutional history. It also analyzes the facts, motifs and contemporary opinions that concern the document through the prism of present-day critical perspective and tries to connect events in a retrospective way, using knowledge, acquired and shared, by modern historians, political scientists and sociologists. The main focus is to illustrate *Magna Carta* not merely as a legal document, which has in consequence largely contributed to the formulation and codification of basic rights of individual human beings, but also as a metamorphic phenomenon, that on many occasions has turned out to be a powerful pacifist weapon in the hands of great historical minds. The thesis uses a platform from the three most important time periods when the document was brought to light, adapted to the current situation, and used in order to help to enforce political changes. Along with the historical, political and legal importance, the thesis also concentrates on the social, philosophical, and sentimental value of *Magna Carta*.

The work is divided into three principal parts. The first one deals with the origin of *Magna Carta* in 1215. It provides the historical background for the events accompanying the formation of the document and the subsequent outcome. The thesis examines the document's purpose from a modern point of view and contrasts it with 17th century interpretations. Furthermore, it looks at medieval law as well as linguistic difficulties and their significance for the later emergence of the charter.

The following section is aimed at another historical period when *Magna Carta* played an important role in social and political life in England. The thesis offers a historical outline of relevant political events in 17th century England and evaluates Sir Edward Coke's opinions and logic that led to the reinterpretation of the charter. Moreover, the work explores the relationship between *Magna Carta* and its descendant; *the Petition of Rights*, and looks at the social shifts that happened through the intervening 4 centuries and were largely significant in forming the Renaissance point of view on the document.

The third part considers the circumstances accompanying the American War of Independence and the subsequent formation of the United States of America. The thesis examines the traces of *Magna Carta* in colonial law, the American identity, and the way in which the colonists rediscovered their Anglo-Saxon heritage and turned it to their advantage. Eventually, this part connects *Magna Carta* with *the Declaration of Independence* and *the American Constitution* and its amendments, collectively known as *the Bill of Rights*.

The conclusion of the thesis takes a look at the legacy of *Magna Carta* in a more general sense, paralleling the three historical periods. It contemplates the philosophical message the document carries and the transformations that *Magna Carta* underwent under different circumstances and through different perspectives. In consequence, the thesis considers *the Great Charter* as a homogenous product of human history and the natural tendency towards the pursuit of democracy, which symbolizes the evolution of humanism and value of which goes far beyond its paradoxical role in the development of constitutional law.