

Machiavelli's Legacy

The Prince After Five Hundred Years

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best states it must be the people who control the politicians, and their interests which direct the state. Machiavelli's true legacy, his most signal achievement, was to combine two seemingly irreconcilable ways of thinking about politics, to be both the supreme realist and always, even when writing a handbook for princes, an idealist. This double understanding is always difficult to sustain: it is all too easy to slide into the contradictions that undermine Conzalo's speech even as he utters it. Machiavelli remains the best person to read to understand the difficulties of combining realism and idealism when thinking about politics, and to find out how one might overcome them.

It is precisely this tension that his Machiavellian successors sought to eliminate from political discourse, and which Locke sought to restore by insisting on "this Fundamental, Sacred, and unalterable Law of *Self-Preservation*" (*Second Treatise* §149). In doing so he was reintroducing into normative politics the principles of *ragione di guerra* and turning them against those of *ragione di stato*, which had sought to render the people passive, submissive, and obedient. Locke's theory of the law of nature is an account of how easily the people can find themselves in a state of war with their rulers; for Locke the state has become an entity whose powers must be limited and restrained, and rebellion is the last resort by which the people regain control over the state when its powers are used against them. In his famous essay "The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with That of the Moderns" (1819), Benjamin Constant insisted that the ancients had no conception of citizens having rights that could be exercised *against* the state. Nor did Machiavelli, Bodin, Boreto, and Hobbes (except insofar as he acknowledged an inalienable right of self-defense). In that crucial respect, they are all premodern, not modern. Thus in order to understand Machiavelli we need to keep in mind at all times that he is both the last of the ancients and the first of the moderns, which is to say that we can never understand him if we read him in isolation, without comparing him to his predecessors and successors.²⁶

CHAPTER 6

Machiavelli and Machiavellianism

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Niccolò Machiavelli is best known to the world not as a person but as a concept. "Machiavellian" is an adjective we are all familiar with. It may today be used far from its place of origin to apply to business or personal relationships, but it was in the sausage factory of politics that it received its birth.

In politics, it meant a doctrine of political success, by means however foul. It embraced oath breaking, dissimulation, assassination, and other such methods as were as common in the fetid atmosphere of the Italian state system circa 1500. Machiavellism was, according to one of its most important chroniclers, "the infamous doctrine that, in national behaviour, even unclean methods are justified, when it is a question of winning or of keeping the power which is necessary for the State. It is the picture of Man, stripped of all transcendent good qualities, left alone on the battlefield to face the daemonic forces of Nature, who now feels himself possessed too of a daemonic natural strength and returns blow for blow."¹

In the shadings of political demonology, Machiavellism falls well short of Nazism or Bolshevism in its connotations of utter wrongdoing. Providence has evidently desired to show that the doctrine of progress is an illusion, and has introduced these recent examples to confuse the hopeful and test their faith. Machiavellism used to be first among equals in the literature of political

abuse; with these more recent examples in mind, it might even have some pretensions to respectability.

In fact, it always did so, at least among the great, though they were not, as Machiavelli recommended, keen to advertise that fact. Machiavellism refigured the doctrine of reason of state, allowing for a code of morality for statesmen much less exacting than that required for ordinary mortals. That underhanded means might be necessary to preserve the great human communities we call states was not as terrible a doctrine as that an individual man might do anything he pleased; there was a greater force to the state's discretion than to any individual's (though also, it is necessary to add, greater opportunity for abuse). Still, if excuses must be sought for acts that pass beyond the law, the state could make a claim for latitude that no individual could make for himself; even those who rejected the further reaches of Machiavellism could see the sense in that.

By common reputation, Machiavelli taught the doctrine that the end justifies the means. That his ends were sacred, embracing the glory of a *patria* for which he was willing to forfeit his soul, can be entered in his defense, but the users of the term "Machiavellism" are not really interested in the fine biographical details of Niccolò Machiavelli, a diplomat in the service of the Florentine Republic from 1498 to 1512, the author whose most famous books were published after his death, there to await their enrollment on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. Whoever and whatever he was, the term "Machiavellian" means something that soars far beyond the details of his life and is even semi-detached from the message of his books: it connotes not only an underhanded approach, a willingness to countenance any means, but also the idea that the purposes of the Machiavellian actor are to be condemned as malign as well.

It would, however, be impossible to say for sure whether the foul breath of Machiavellism puts the wind in the sails of our statesmen, because it is of the essence of Machiavellism, if you are a Machiavellian, to denounce the doctrine yourself as an infamous reproach against decency. Frederick the Great did that, right about the time he swallowed Silesia.² That world in which men and women speak of religion and duty and morality is the world of appearances; deep down, you are supposed to think what you really think and do what you must do. In this conception, the world of appearances is a thing to

be manipulated in accordance with the pieties of a given day, and no sort of guide to action.

Probably Machiavelli's most startling contribution to political thought was this discovery of the gap between profession and practice, how there existed a broad canvas of political calculation behind the glossy paint supplied by conventional morality. To understand politics, you had to see this; if you were in politics, you needed especially to see it, for it was the key to your survival. If you lived only in the world of profession, you were done for in practice.

Of course, the ancients knew that: there was a long tradition of reason of state in antiquity, but it had been buried and forgotten when civilization fell into a deep coma after Rome was sacked and its inheritance was scattered. Machiavelli played a leading role in the recovery of that inheritance. History knows this grand awakening as the Renaissance, the glanor of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. No one in that era more intrepidly explored the implications of Roman history than Machiavelli. Here was a newly discovered civilization from a buried past that appeared to Machiavelli and his contemporaries to have done "whatever there was to do, in philosophical speculation, political action or cultural achievement." When the range of ancient works was discovered and digested, writes the historian John Hale, Renaissance thinkers wanted to live in the past rather than in their own time. The newly awakened spectacle of antiquity was all the more enthralling because it presented "the wholeness of a completed cycle, from obscurity through world empire to barbarian chaos."³

Machiavelli's understanding of Rome is key to his significance—so I will be arguing. I take as my point of departure an exploration of the view that the Scottish Enlightenment took of Machiavelli, as this holds important clues for Machiavelli's relationship to both antiquity and modernity. We want to then examine his discussion of Roman foreign policy in his *Discourses*, wherein he sets forth a range of options that have not only philosophical but also practical significance: they bear some similarity to the American predicament in the world today. Finally, we need to assess Machiavelli's relationship with the doctrine of political realism, of which he is often considered a founder. His view of Rome is worlds apart from that of Thomas Hobbes, another realist; that fundamental difference must be registered in our understanding of what political realism teaches.

I will declare my conflicted views on Machiavelli at the outset, so readers will not have to guess as they wind their way through the labyrinth to follow. I love it that Machiavelli sought to tell the truth about politics, that he made a heroic attempt to see the political world as it really was. Machiavelli did not necessarily see clearly on that point—as a friendly but critical Francesco Guicciardini said, it was not true that all men are bad, and if you treat good men as such you are ruling unwisely.⁴ But that Machiavelli sought to see clearly, that he tried to go to the effectual truth of things and thus administered an electric shock to intellectual life, is just fabulous and exhilarating. Who cannot admire that?

Machiavelli is usually known as the political theorist who justified official lying—and yes, he did do that—but he also was the first modern to tell the truth as if nothing else mattered, and at a time when so many, inhabiting a fictional world, had created a shroud of untruth in both church and state. “He taught modern Christian Europe politics, as if Christianity or a Divinity or divine justice did not exist.”⁵

Much as I think that we should dress up just like Machiavelli did and converse with ancient writers in the wee hours—yes, it is my solemn advice that college students should do so regularly—it is also highly advisable not to be carried along too far in our reverence for certain aspects of Machiavelli’s life and thought. He pierced the veil of power, took off its mask for all to see. That was a fundamental revelation that cracked the European mind wide open. But we are also supposed to feel some shock at his doctrines, supposed to understand that they are offensive to basic propositions of morality and justice. I think some of those doctrines should be regarded as such. Insofar as Machiavelli really was a Machiavellian—that is a question to be held in suspense—we are indeed obliged to condemn him as a teacher of evil.

A View from the Enlightenment

Adam Smith knew something about the moral sentiments, and his were offended when he read Machiavelli’s depiction of Cesare Borgia’s doings in the Romagna.

In Italy, during the greater part of the sixteenth century, assassinations, murders, and even murders under trust, seem to have been almost familiar among the superior ranks of people. Caesar Borgia invited four of the little princes in his neighbourhood, who all possessed little sovereignties, and commanded little armies of their own, to a friendly conference at Senigaglia, where, as soon as they arrived, he put them all to death. This infamous action, though certainly not approved of even in that age of crimes, seems to have contributed very little to the discredit, and not in the least to the ruin, of the perpetrator. That ruin happened a few years after from causes altogether disconnected with this crime. Machiavel, not indeed a man of the nicest morality even for his own times, was resident, as minister from the republic of Florence, at the court of Caesar Borgia when this crime was committed. He gives a very particular account of it, and in that pure, elegant, and simple language which distinguishes all his writings. He talks of it very coolly; is pleased with the address with which Caesar Borgia conducted it; has much contempt for the dupery and weakness of the sufferers; but no compassion for their miserable and untimely death, and no sort of indignation at the cruelty and falsehood of their murderer.

Smith went on to contrast the “foolish wonder and admiration” bestowed on great conquerors with the opprobrium dished out to ordinary thieves and murderers, noting that the former were “a hundred times more mischievous and destructive” than the latter.⁶

Smith’s world was evidently not that of Machiavelli. In the interim, a revolution in consciousness had taken place, summed up by the word “politeness.” Sentimentality—and the novel—were in; cruel and unusual punishments, even those conducted with an economy of violence, were out. An eighteenth-century observer of Borgia’s scheming would not treat it coolly; would not be pleased with the execution of the plot, and would be indignant with the cruelty and falsehood of the murderer. It had become fashionable to denounce such things, and most thinkers noted the great improvements that had taken place in the monarchies of Europe since the sixteenth century. It

was not just a European conceit: Jefferson attested to it, as did John Adams. The dark days of two hundred years before, when murders and assassinations set the tone for statecraft, were no more after the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713; among the beliefs of the eighteenth century was that their own enlightened age had transcended that mode of existence. We often hear today of the European Union representing an attempt to transcend the older ways of a nefarious statecraft that had previously done in its individual nations; the age of Utrecht felt the same way about the ruthless statecraft unmoored from legal or ethical ideals that dominated the sixteenth century, risen to and fro by palatial monarchy and religious intolerance. Enlightenment developed, notes John Pocock, as "a critique of Calvinist Protestantism (and enthusiasm) as well as of Nicene Catholicism (and superstition)."⁷ In transcending that terrible stalemate, the Enlightenment did not look back to Machiavelli.

Smith's great friend David Hume had a similar reaction to Machiavelli. The following passage, from his essay "Of Civil Liberty," discloses a profound gap between Renaissance and Enlightenment:

MACHIAVELL was certainly a great genius; but having confined his study to the furious and tyrannical governments of ancient times; or to the little disorderly principalities of ITALY, his reasonings especially upon monarchical government, have been found extremely defective; and there scarcely is any maxim in his *Prince*, which subsequent experience has not entirely refuted. *A weak prince*, says he, *is incapable of receiving good counsel; for if he consult with several, he will not be able to choose among their different counsels. If he abandon himself to one, that minister may, perhaps, have capacity; but he will not long be a minister. He will be sure to surpass his master, and place himself and his family upon the throne.* I mention this, among many instances of the errors of that politician, proceeding, in a great measure, from his having lived in too early an age of the world, to be a good judge of political truth. Almost all the princes of EUROPE are at present governed by their ministers; and have been so for near two centuries; and yet no such event has ever happened, or can possibly happen. SEJANUS [of the praetorian guard] might project dethroning the CAESARS; but

FLUURY [a French minister of the eighteenth century], though ever so vicious, could not, while in his senses, entertain the least hopes of dispossessing the BOURBONS.⁸

Hume went on to note that Machiavelli and other Italian thinkers were basically clueless with regard to the significance of commerce; that was a gaping omission that made Machiavelli's thought seem archaic to Hume. That limitation also suggests that Machiavelli is not best seen as a representative of modernity but as "the last of the ancients," one who provided a distillation of Roman statecraft "unshrouded by natural law idealism."⁹ From the standpoint of international relations theory, Hume's correction of Machiavelli is constructivist in tenor, the message of which is that you cannot be a good judge of political truth without knowing the norms and customs of a particular age. These changes, what might be a brilliant success in one era would be a disaster in another. Montesquieu made the same judgment in noting that the world had "begun to be cured of Machiavellianism. . . . What were formerly called *coups d'état* would at present, apart from their horror, be only imprudences." Because of commerce, Montesquieu believed, "men are in a situation such that, though their passions inspire in them the thought of being wicked, they nevertheless have an interest in not being so."¹⁰ Hume and Smith followed the same line of reasoning as Montesquieu, putting their enterprise on a sounder footing than Machiavelli's in figuring out the meaning of modernity. They understood, as Machiavelli did not, that it was constituted by the transition from glory to interest.¹¹

Three Methods of Expansion

The *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius* contains Machiavelli's most extended reflections on foreign policy, featuring especially a discussion of the three modes of expansion for republics. After treating in the first book of his *Discourses* of Rome's internal conduct, he took up in the second book "what the Roman people did in relation to the aggrandizement of their empire." Machiavelli marveled at this aggrandizement and hoped (though was not quite

sure) it could be emulated by the Italians of his day. In detail he describes the methods of association, successfully disguising an imperial ambition, by which Rome gained the mastery of the known world.¹²

In describing the Roman ascent, Machiavelli stresses the fact that Rome never fought two wars simultaneously. They "did not engage in war with the Latins until they had beaten the Samnites so completely that the Romans themselves had to protect them with their arms; nor did they combat the Tuscans until after they had subjugated the Latins; and had by repeated defeats completely enervated the Samnites. Doubtless if these two powerful nations had united against Rome whilst their strength was yet unbroken, it may readily be supposed that they could have destroyed the Roman republic." But such was not the case. Machiavelli provides a brief sketch of the series of wars that successively subdued Rome's enemies in Italy and abroad and notes that "when these had been victoriously terminated, there remained in the whole world neither prince nor republic that could, alone or unitedly, have resisted the Roman power."

The reason for Rome's success was not good fortune but extremely clever and deceptive technique. Once Rome achieved sufficient power to make others fearful of attacking it, it became its option to "make war upon such neighboring powers as may seem advantageous, whilst adroitly keeping the others quiet." The "salami tactics" that were employed in the twentieth century are here clearly anticipated by Machiavelli's Romans. Anticipating that states will bandwagon with a strong power rather than balance against it, Machiavelli relates how the Romans made their conquests piecemeal, and how none of the powers who would ultimately succumb to the Romans had the wit to see the future danger to themselves.¹³

Despite Machiavelli's praise of Rome's courage and sagacity in conducting this expansion, he emphasized the lost liberty of the peoples the Romans conquered and seemed genuinely to mourn over it:

Nothing required so much effort on the part of the Romans to subdue the nations around them, as well as those of more distant countries, as the love of liberty which these people cherished in those days; and which they defended with so much obstinacy, that not-

ing but the exceeding valor of the Romans could ever have subjugated them. For we know from many instances to what danger they exposed themselves to preserve or recover their liberty, and what vengeance they practised upon those who had deprived them of it. The lessons of history teach us also, on the other hand, the injuries people suffer from servitude.

Machiavelli's republican sympathies burn brightly as he contemplates whence arose the love of liberty among the independent nations, such as the Tuscans, the Romans, and the Samnites, who inhabited Italy before Roman expansion overwhelmed its rivals.

And it is easy to understand whence that affection for liberty arose in the people, for they had seen that cities never increased in dominion or wealth unless they were free. And certainly it is wonderful to think of the greatness which Athens attained within the space of a hundred years after having freed herself from the tyranny of Pisistratus; and still more wonderful is it to reflect upon the greatness which Rome achieved after she was rid of her kings. The cause of this is manifest, for it is not individual prosperity, but the general good, that makes cities great; and certainly the general good is regarded nowhere but in republics.

Reflecting on the causes of the great transformation such that "in ancient times the people were more devoted to liberty than in the present," Machiavelli attributes this to a Christian religion that made men feeble—here we find his famous judgment that a religion that teaches humility and a contempt for worldly objects is not the stuff of which empires are made, though he immediately adds that Christianity rightly understood encourages men to love their country and that they ought therefore to be willing to defend it. But it was not only this (allegedly false) interpretation of Christianity that was to blame. He also insists that the loss of attachment to liberty between ancient and modern times was due to the Roman conquest itself, which destroyed all the ancient republics by force of arms and kicked the life out of those who were

subdued. "Only those cities and countries that are free can achieve greatness," for only they allow citizens to compete in emulation for the highest honors of the state and to enjoy tranquilly the fruits of their labors.

The beautiful lessons that Machiavelli gives here on the superiority of free government—resting on a popular foundation and securing rights to private property—are attenuated when we come to his discussion of the best manner of expansion for republics. Republics, Machiavelli insists, are undoubtedly best for their own citizens, but ruinous for other free peoples. Contrary to what our age might identify as the common sense of the matter, Machiavelli insists that "hardest of all servitudes is to be subject to a republic." Republics "aim to enervate and weaken all other states so as to increase their own power," and they have the longevity to make their strictures stick. Machiavelli contrasts this harsh republican regimen with the light treatment that foreign subjects might expect of a prince. If such a prince has only an ordinary dose of humanity, he "will treat all cities that are subject to him equally well, and will leave them in the enjoyment of their arts and industries, and measurably all their ancient institutions." To act otherwise would show the prince to be "a barbarous devastator of countries and a destroyer of all human civilization, such as the princes of the Orient."

Two centuries after Machiavelli, Montesquieu wrote that the "spirit of monarchy is war and expansion; the spirit of republics is peace and moderation."¹⁴ Machiavelli, by contrast, identifies war and expansion with republicanism, whether ancient or modern, and he seems to think that a prince, unless he was a monster, would treat a population he subjected much better than would a republic, whose rule was to weaken its neighbors while increasing its own power.

There was, however, a crucial difference among the ancient republics in how they sought the increase of their power. For Machiavelli, that made all the difference. Whereas Athens and Sparta were hostile to strangers and refused to admit them to citizenship, Rome both broke its enemies and welcomed them. It tried by all possible means to increase its population, both by "making it easy and secure for strangers to come and establish themselves there" and, after destroying the neighboring cities, by compelling "their inhabitants to come and dwell" among them. Rome, following this policy, was

able to put two hundred thousand men into military service, whereas "Sparta and Athens could not raise more than twenty thousand each."

This difference in policy is one of Machiavelli's most trenchant examples showing the effect of different policies, as opposed to better material circumstances or good fortune, in explaining Rome's success. Lycurgus, the founder of the Spartan republic, "did everything possible to prevent strangers from coming into the city," prohibiting foreigners from becoming citizens through marriage and "all other intercourse and commerce that bring men together." Nothing could compensate for the relative weakness that this comparative lack of population imposed on Sparta. Its material base was too weak to hold its conquests. The same was true of Athens. Only Rome, by its superior policies, escaped the evident disutility of military force that Athens and Sparta suffered by their cloistered policies toward those whom they subjugated.

All this is prefatory to Machiavelli's crucial discussion of which is the best among "the three methods of aggrandizement" employed by republics. The first is the method of confederation, employed by the ancient Tuscans and Greeks and by the Swiss of Machiavelli's day. It entails the equal association of several republics, none of which have "any eminence over the other in rank or authority."

The second method, employed by the Romans, is "to make associates of other states; reserving to themselves, however, the rights of sovereignty, the seat of empire, and the glory of their enterprises." We might call this method one of "imperial association," emphasizing both the imperial primacy of the center and the equitable treatment of protectorates.

The third method, followed by the Spartans and the Athenians (and his own city of Florence), was "to make the conquered people immediately subjects, and not associates." Machiavelli's discussion of the best mode of aggrandizement—he hates the third, greatly admires the second, and has a grudging admiration for the first—is of key importance in understanding his approach to foreign policy.

Machiavelli's rejection of the despotic empires that Athens and Sparta maintained over their conquests is not based on the immorality of the practice but on its evident disutility. Because these cities did not know how to exploit their victory, by making protectorates of the conquered and treating

them to a share of the spoils, their successes proved more costly than their defeats, as their holdings were plagued by revolts and had no adhesion to the center beyond domination. All this Machiavelli deemed extremely pertinent to his own city of Florence, for the Florentines had stupidly pursued the same counterproductive policy: "If this system of making subjects is disadvantageous to warlike republics, how much more pernicious must it be for such as have no armies?"

It is significant that Machiavelli pours scorn on a method showing the disutility of force, as the folly of war is usually considered a liberal or anti-Machiavellian theme. But this, it turns out, is a very limited concession, as can be seen by the manner in which Machiavelli decides between the two remaining options. Of these, Machiavelli declares heartily for the Roman method, though not without some ambivalence as to its practicality in his own day. Rome both made associates and increased its population, bestowing on it a greater scale of power than anything hitherto achieved.

Having created for herself many associates throughout Italy, she granted to them in many respects an almost entire equality; always, however, reserving to herself the seat of empire and the right of command; so that these associates (without being themselves aware of it) devoted their own efforts and blood to their own subjugation. For so soon as the Romans began to lead their armies beyond the limits of Italy, they reduced other kingdoms to provinces, and made subjects of those who, having been accustomed to live under kings, were indifferent to becoming subjects of another; and from having Roman governors, and having been conquered by Roman arms, they recognized no superior to the Romans. Thus the associates of Rome in Italy found themselves all at once surrounded by Roman subjects, and at the same time pressed by a powerful city like Rome; and when they became aware of the trap into which they had been led, it was too late to remedy the evil, for Rome had become too powerful by the acquisition of foreign provinces, as also within herself by the increased population which she had armed. And although these associates

conspired together to revenge the wrongs inflicted upon them by Rome, yet they were quickly subdued, and their condition made even worse; for from associates they were degraded to subjects. This mode of proceeding (as has been said) was practised only by the Romans; and a republic desirous of aggrandizement should adopt no other plan, for experience has proved that there is none better or more sure.

There are some dubious logical leaps in Machiavelli's argument. The trap into which Rome led its associates would seem not to be easily replicable. After all, the promise of nearly equal association was a false one, and meant, in the end, that Rome's allies were "degraded to subjects." Would not others given such assurances by a rising power, having absorbed Machiavelli's history lesson, learn to distrust them? For what seems to distinguish the Roman from the Spartan and Athenian methods, apart from the crucial difference in population base, is that the latter openly proclaimed their ambition of ruling by violence, whereas the Romans hid their objective of subjugation and indeed covered it in the language of association and equality. Despite this evident duplicity, Machiavelli seems in no doubt that the Roman method is the best.

Next best is the method of forming confederations. Machiavelli acknowledged that the method of confederation did not allow for extensive conquests—a failing—but it had two other big advantages:

the one, not to become easily involved in war, and the other, that whatever conquests are made are easily preserved. The reason why a confederation of republics cannot well make extensive conquests is, that they are not a compact body, and do not have a central seat of power, which embarrasses consultation and concentrated action. It also makes them less desirous of dominion, for, being composed of numerous communities that are to share in this dominion, they do not value conquests as much as a single republic that expects to enjoy the exclusive benefit of them herself. Furthermore, they are governed by a council, which naturally causes their resolutions to be more tardy than those that emanate from a single centre.

This is a remarkable discussion of what might be termed the modalities of multilateralism, suggesting why multilateral alliances have difficulty reaching consensus and are hobbled from undertaking energetic action by the difficulty of getting the parties to agree on the sharing of costs and benefits. He goes on to argue that twelve to fourteen is the maximum number of such confederate states, a postulate with keen implications in the early days of the American union, with its thirteen united states, and not without relevance today in considering the dynamics of multilateral organizations. In modern experience, the move beyond twelve to fourteen states often forces, sooner or later, a fundamental choice between hegemony and breakup, a sort of primordial showdown between centralizing and decentralizing forces. Machiavelli was on to this peculiar dynamic between widening and deepening, one which hovers round all the grand confederal experiments in world history.

Machiavelli allows that the method of confederation does have certain real advantages—it ensures security, allows some share of military glory, and offers Italy a better option than its customary disunity—but it is the Roman method by which he is enthralled. He is amazed that this rich experience has not “even been taken into account by anyone,” with the result that “Italy has become the prey of whoever has chosen to attack her.” He sees history as a redeemer of the present, its lessons once known to shed a powerful light on what must now be done.¹⁵ But he also seems to ascribe the neglect of ancient precedents not simply to ignorance but also to the belief that such precedents were inapplicable to contemporary Italian affairs and therefore useless. That was, in fact, a very cogent criticism. On the face of it, however, Machiavelli does not accept this conclusion; he will only allow that if imitating the Romans seems too difficult, it should not be too difficult to imitate the confederate method of the Tuscans, “especially the Tuscans of the present day.”

Francesco Guicciardini read the *Discourses on Livy* after Machiavelli's death and wrote a short treatise on Machiavelli's work. He was sharply critical of many of Machiavelli's passages. Given particular attention by Guicciardini was Machiavelli's account of the Roman conquest, which emphasized the deceit the Romans practiced. Guicciardini showed that Machiavelli's ac-

count was deeply implausible. He pointed out the obvious limitations, in life and in statecraft, to a policy of fraud:

I do not call it fraud if the Romans made pacts with the Latini such that they might endure their rule with patience. This was not because the Latini did not notice from the first that under the colour of equal confederation there lay servitude; but being helpless and not treated in such a way as to make them desperate, persuaded them to wait, not until they recognized the objectives of the Romans, which they would have had to be very stupid not to realize from the first, but until such time as with increased numbers of men and being really expert in military discipline they might hope to be able to meet the Romans as equals. It was therefore prudence, not fraud, on the part of the Romans, to treat the Latini fairly; and I think it very true that without such arrangements and prudent ways of going about things, not only may one seldom rise from a lowly condition to great fortune, but one would even be hardly likely to preserve one's power. But as for fraud, it may be questionable whether that is always a good means of attaining power, for while by deception one may bring off some fine things, too often a reputation for deceit spoils one's chances of attaining one's ends.¹⁶

A good many of Guicciardini's criticisms of Machiavelli anticipate themes of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. He was saying here, as George Washington would later more emphatically say, that honesty is the best policy. Guicciardini objected, as Adam Smith would later do, and as we all should do today, to Machiavelli's partiality for “extraordinary and violent methods.” Discussing Machiavelli's observation that “a new prince in a city or province taken by him, must make everything new,” Guicciardini insisted on the weakness invariably incurred by force: “Violent remedies, though they make one safe from one aspect, yet from another . . . involve all kinds of weaknesses. Hence the prince must take courage to use these extraordinary means when necessary, and should yet take care not to miss any chance which offers of

establishing his cause with humanity, kindness, and rewards, not taking as an absolute rule what [Machiavelli] says, who was always extremely partial to extraordinary and violent methods."¹⁷

Perhaps the most interesting feature of Machiavelli's discussion in the *Discourses* is that one might from his premises reject his conclusion. Let us first take the horrific costs of the Roman conquest for subjugated peoples into full view, which Machiavelli seems perfectly willing to do. Consider, secondly, the sheer unlikelihood of making commercial Florence, with its unarmed populace and dependence on mercenaries, the leader of a project to revive Roman glory, duly noting that, even acting in near-unison, the states of Italy were weaker than Spain, France, and Germany, and not much superior to the Ottomans. Let us accept, finally, that any prince who had the benefit of reading Machiavelli's Roman history would see at once that the assurances of a rising power that modeled itself on Rome could not be believed. This meant that such a prince was more likely to ally with the weak than to succor the strong, to balance rather than bandwagon. The Roman experience, rather than paving the way for a similar attempt by a modern prince, rather showed Europeans to be on their guard against that very thing. The whole system of the balance of power, which arose from the laboratory of Renaissance Italy, was justified as preserving the freedom and independence of states as against a renewal of the Roman tyranny.¹⁸

Given these considerations, it would seem to follow that the method of confederation offered a more eligible means to Italian security and freedom than the Roman method. That is the conclusion that Americans like Jefferson and Washington drew for their own union; they had no intention of emulating the dead-end cynicism of the Italian states and were determined to avoid the dose of poison that Machiavelli had recommended. They built their union on consent, not on force. That too measures the gap between Renaissance and Enlightenment.

That Machiavelli would not pronounce himself for the confederal solution is not easily understandable. It suggests that his thought remained wedded to ideals of glory and conquest, in preference to the coming idea of the free association of republican equals. It also suggests a myopic failure to grant to others the rights it claims for itself. That myopia made him a poor guide—in

profession, at least, if not in practice—in resolving Italy's predicament and in speaking to our own.¹⁹

The dilemmas identified by Machiavelli suggest a remarkable parallel with the contemporary international order, so often defined in terms of U.S. hegemony. The "liberal Leviathan" that now presides—very shakily, it is true—over the international system is the central plank in a configuration of power that is a sort of halfway house between confederation and empire.²⁰ It is usually described as a hegemony (a word derived from the Greek *hegemon* and denoting leadership in a coalition of allies). It partrakes, however, of both confederal and imperial tendencies. Its leaders seem conscious of the fact that neither ideal type by itself can offer a solution to the problem of international order, so it cleaves to both of these contradictory notions. Machiavelli's ambivalence on the question—confederation or empire?—is suggestive of America's own.

Machiavelli's advice can be read as making citizens, not subjects, in the course of republican expansion, a prescription bearing some comparison with the early American practice of making new states equal to the old as the federal union expanded across the continent. But even more remarkable is the manner in which former enemies are seduced into the lap of the empire and become extensions of it. The Romans, notes Richard Tuck, often saw their interests as in alignment with those of oppressed citizens elsewhere and made appeal to that solidarity:

Rome's mission, in the famous words of Vergil, could be thought of as "parcere subjectis and debellare superbos" ("to spare the oppressed and bring down the proud," Aeneid 6.852). Rome's status during its expansion into the Eastern Mediterranean as the only republic left in a world of military despotisms undoubtedly contributed to its self-image as a liberator, freeing the subject peoples of Greece and Asia from the despotic descendants of Alexander's generals (though, as the ruthless destruction of Corinth in 146 B.C. testifies, Rome could in practice be even more tyrannical to the Greeks than the Kings of Macedon or Pontus had ever been). Rome certainly felt free to respond to appeals for help from populations engaged in struggles

against their rulers or in war with their neighbors, and to some extent its entire imperial expansion was driven by a succession of such responses. The Jugurthine War of 112 is a good example: Rome's initial involvement in the affairs of Numidia was as an international arbitrator to resolve a civil war there and to enforce the settlement, but—in an entirely familiar way—the war escalated. Rome was drawn in and eventually a Roman protectorate was established, which in turn became a Roman province.²¹

There are remarkable similarities between Roman expansion of the second century B.C. and U.S. expansion of the past seventy years. Unlike Rome, America does not make provinces, but both histories feature the incorporation of former enemies as protectorates and the cultivation of insurgents against despotic enemies. Neoconservatives and liberal hawks may fairly be seen as defining the mission of the United States as that of liberating the oppressed and denouncing despotic rule, and they have driven U.S. expansion (or tried to) on the old Roman road. They are doing it now (circa 2014–15) in Ukraine; they tried to do it in Iraq in 2003 (in what seems an obvious failure until one appreciates that Iraq still has need of U.S. airport, advisors, and military equipment). It is a notable fact, disturbing in its significance, that this pattern of conduct—simultaneously looking for enemies to fight and protectorates to create—is very similar to the road marked out by Machiavelli.

Our leaders would do better to try the old Tuscan method. The Roman road, it may be recalled, does not end well for the republic.

Machiavelli and Political Realism

Machiavelli's attitude toward Rome was far from uncritical but was certainly more adulatory than that of his successors in Western political thought. Hobbes announces his philosophic enterprise, in the preface to *De Cive*, by exhorting those whom Machiavelli had celebrated: "what sort of animal was the Roman People? By the agency of citizens who took the names Africanus, Asiaticus, Macedonicus, Achaicus, and so on from the nations they had robbed,

that people plundered nearly all the world."²² Whereas Machiavelli glorified early republican Rome for perfecting the ways of military expansion, Hobbes made the people of Rome the villain of the piece. Whereas Machiavelli foresaw humanity gripped by endless war, Hobbes forecasts the possibility of universal peace. Machiavelli and Hobbes are alike in insisting on the right of states to self-protection, but there are significant contrasts in their understanding of this right. It makes a great deal of difference whether vast dominion (as with Machiavelli) or safety (as with Hobbes) is your watchword.²³ A century after Hobbes, William Robertson also lamented the awful consequences following from the Roman conquest, which left the conquered peoples losing "not only the habit but even the capacity" to think for themselves: "the dominion of the Romans, like that of all great Empires, degraded and debased the human species."²⁴

Machiavelli himself does not conform to the cardboard portrait of realism one finds in international relations textbooks (states aggrandize their power without reference to norms and ought to do so). He understood that there were certain limits. He descends eloquently on the difference between the good and the bad Roman emperors, and sees that it was their fidelity to justice that made the good ones good and earned them the love of the people and the senate. He burns with understandable indignation at the incapacity of Italy to fend off the barbarians, in the shape of French, Spanish, German, and Swiss armies. His purposes in resisting this grim servitude were exemplary, and his life was one of sacrifice in the service of his country. He would have given more if they would have let him. He even offered up his soul, only to be expelled from office and returned when the republic came to an end.

Machiavelli occasionally bows to conventional notions of the good, the true, and the beautiful. But he also inverts them, makes a sort of ethical irrationality of human experience, with good producing evil and evil producing good. Without any certain landmarks, it is easy to get lost, morally speaking. Many others, reading Machiavelli, did get lost. Machiavelli invited the prince down that path with a sort of breezy abandon and with invocations of necessity—you are screwed if you do not, so get with the program—but it is not in my opinion the path of true policy. Even at the time, Erasmus counseled more wisely.²⁵

As Mark Hulling observes, Machiavelli "deliberately inverted the master symbols of Latin literature, and each of his inversions was an intentional subversion of the humanist creed: by turning the Stoicism of Cicero upside down, Machiavelli forced the *studia humanitatis* to give birth to Machiavellism." Everything done in the name of those inversions cannot be attributed to Machiavelli, nor even most of it—just some of it, and that is quite enough. Hulling comments that, for Cicero, "Roman foreign policy was the most just ever known"; for Machiavelli, "it was the most Machiavellian."²⁶ Which is preferable: hypocrisy or villainy? I prefer a world in which vice is made to pay some kind of tribute to virtue.

Such was Machiavelli's brilliance, such the ambiguity of some of his passages, that he can be claimed on more than one side of our political debates. From almost the first moments interpreters differed over whether Machiavelli's discussion of the *ars magna imperii*, the secret arts practiced by princes behind closed doors, was "a way of alerting the people to the tricks of their rulers or . . . a way of teaching rulers how to trick the people more expertly."²⁷ These "red" and "black" schools of thought have hovered about the interpretation of Machiavellian (and Tacitist) ideas from the very beginning, and the truth is surely that Machiavelli gives some ammunition to both camps. Very intelligent critics, like Rousseau and Diderot, were of the red republican school. Wrote Diderot: "It's as if he had told his fellow-citizens: 'Read this work well. If you ever accept a master, he will be as I describe him to you: there's the wild beast to which you will abandon yourselves.' So it was the fault of his contemporaries if they misunderstood his purpose: they mistook satire for encomium."²⁸

Others took Machiavelli as the farthest thing from a satirist, one who had taught awowedly the black arts. "It is seriously incongruous and dangerous," warned Jean Bodin, "to teach princes the rules of injustice in order to assure their power." Invoking Cicero, Innocent Gentillet observed, "Friendship is the true bond of all human society and whosoever wishes to do away with good will among men (as Machiavelli did among princes) will succeed in eliminating all the pleasure, consolation, contentment, and security that exists among men."²⁹ Making more concessions to Machiavelli's view, but still drawing back, was Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), a Flemish writer on reason of state much lauded

for his mastery of the classical sources. Lipsius, notes Noel Malcolm, exerted a huge influence. While subscribing to some Machiavellian assumptions and accepting that "the art of ruling must make some compromises with vice," Lipsius also distinguished among "three levels of fraudulent behaviour: 'light' (involving dissimulation, the concealment of intentions), 'medium' (involving the active deception, or corruption by bribery, of enemies), and 'great' (involving such actions as breach of treaty). The first, he wrote, was advisable, the second tolerable, and the third unacceptable." Lipsius believed that a moral politics was possible even with such dissimulation: "Wine does not cease to be wine if it is lightly diluted with water; nor does prudence cease to be prudence, if you add some little drops of fraud." As Malcolm notes, however, Lipsius also insisted "that the permitted frauds were tolerable only when done for the common good; any deception not aimed at that end was a great sin."³⁰

Machiavelli also believed in the subordination of reason to state to the common good, but in other respects he went too far. He crossed the line. He took his examples, as Hume wrote, from too many furious and disorderly governments. He too much relished domination and glory, as against the interests that would make men and women tractable. He minimized the degree to which justice must remain the great standing policy of civil and international society. To his credit, he saw that a prince must give justice to the people; to his discredit, he was unwilling to do justice to the nations. In the still relevant benediction of Henry Wheaton:

Unfortunately for his own fame, and for the permanent interests of mankind, this masterly writer, in his patriotic anxiety to secure his country against the dangers with which it was menaced from the Barbarians, did not hesitate to resort to those atrocious means already too familiar to the domestic tyrants of Italy. The violent remedies he sought to apply for her restoration to pristine greatness were poisons, and his book became the manual of despotism, in which Philip II. of Spain, and Catherine de Medici, found their detestable maxims of policy. But policy can never be separated from justice with impunity. Sound policy can never authorize a resort to such measures as

are prohibited by the law of nations, founded on the principles of eternal justice; and, on the other hand, the law of nations ought not to prohibit that which sound policy dictates as necessary to the security of any State. “Justice,” says Burke, “is the great standing policy of civil society, and any eminent *départure* from it, under any circumstances, lies under the suspicion of being no policy at all.”³¹

CHAPTER 7

Machiavelli's *Prince*

An Americanist's Perspective

THOMAS E. CRONIN

Machiavelli's *The Prince*, written in 1513 and published in 1532, is the most famous and provocative essay on political leadership ever written. Half a millennium later, we debate it, condemn it, and still learn from it. Inventive and disturbing, *The Prince* is rife with luminous and paradoxical propositions about governance.

Our destiny is determined not only by chance (*fortuna*), Machiavelli instructs, but also by prudent, disciplined leadership. Fortune may determine about half of what happens to a country or state, but it is the choices that leaders make—especially how they adapt to changing times and take advantage of opportunities—that are critical to the survival and success of a state.

Machiavelli dared to take on Plato and Cicero. With icy realism, he challenged long-held classical idealism and Christian beliefs. He mocked the Church and its unarmed prophets. And he shocked readers by suggesting what many considered to be immoral and unconstitutional strategies of leadership. But Machiavelli understood not only what we want to be but how we actually behave. His essay is a blunt dissection of contradictions inherent in political life.

Leadership is full of mystery and paradox. People everywhere despair when their leaders are ineffective. Yet we are also inherently suspicious of strong

20. On Machiavelli and Hobbes, see David Wootton, "Thomas Hobbes's Machiavellian Moments," in *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain: History, Rhetoric, and Fiction, 1500–1800*, ed. D. R. Kelley and D. H. Sacks (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 1997), 210–42.
21. Niccolò Machiavelli, *Selected Political Writings* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hacker, 1994).
33. Quentin Skinner, "Classical Liberty: Renaissance Translation and the English Civil War," in his *Visions of Politics*, vol. 2, *Renaissance Virtues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 308–43.
22. For Hobbes and Galileo, see Thomas Hobbes, *Critique de "De Mundo" de Thomas White* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1973), 178. On Galileo and Lucretius, see David Wootton, *Galileo: Watcher of the Skies* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010), 167–68, 194, 219, 242–45; and Michele Camerota, "Galileo, Lucrezio e l'atomismo," in *Lucrezio, la natura, la scienza*, ed. F. Beretta and F. Citti (Florence: Olschki, 2008), 141–175.
23. Stephen Greenblatt, "Marital Law in the Land of Cockaigne," in his *Shakespearean Negotiations*, 129–64 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 129–98.
24. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1981).
25. Alison Brown, *The Return of Lucretius to Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010).
26. In saying this I am defending the sort of enterprise embodied in Quentin Skinner's *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), an enterprise since disowned by Skinner.

CHAPTER 6. MACHIAVELLI AND MACHIAVELLIANISM

1. Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'État and Its Place in Modern History*, trans. from German by Douglas Scott (1924; 1957; New York: Praeger, 1965), 36.
2. Frederick of Prussia, *The Refutation of Machiavelli's Prince; or, Anti-Machiavel*, ed. Paul Sonnino (1740; Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981).
3. John Hale, *The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance* (New York: Scribner's, 1995), 190.
4. See Guicciardini's reflections in his "Considerations on the *Discourses* of Machiavelli": "It is advanced too absolutely [by Machiavelli] that men never do good except when forced to, and that anyone organizing a republic should assume them all to be wicked, for there are many who, even when they could do ill, do well, and all mankind is not wicked. It is true that in organizing a republic, or anything else, one should take care to prevent anyone harming it who might wish to, not because all men are always wicked, but as a precaution against those who are." Francesco Guicciardini, *Selected Writings*, ed. and intro. Cecil Grayson, trans. Margaret Grayson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 66–67. This edition contains both the "Considerations on the *Discourses*," written in 1550, after

- Machiavelli's death, and the last version of his "Ricordi" or "Reflections," a set of short observations and maxims he worked on at various times in his life.
5. Friedrich Schlegel, *History of Ancient and Modern Literature* (1815), quoted in Jean-Pierre Barricelli, ed., *Machiavelli's "The Prince": Text and Commentary* (New York: Barron's Educational Series, 1968), 286.
6. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Philadelphia: Anthony Finley, 1817), 350–51.
7. J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 2, *Narratives of Civil Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 370.
8. David Hume, "Of Civil Liberty," in *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene Miller (Indianapolis, Ind.: Liberty Fund), 88–89.
9. Daniel Deudney, *Bombing Power: Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), 130.
10. Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, bk. 21, chap. 20, pp. 389–90.
11. See Russell Price, "The Theme of *Gloria* in Machiavelli," *Renaissance Quarterly* 30 (1977): 588–631. In no writer of his times, Price notes, "is the theme of glory more prominent" than in Machiavelli (631).
12. I have used the edition of the *Discourses* available at Liberty Fund's Online Library of Liberty, <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1866>. This is the Christian E. Dermold translation, published as *The Historical, Political, and Diplomatic Writings of Niccolò Machiavelli*, 4 vols. (Boston, 1882). Subsequent quotations in the text are from book 2, chapters 1–4, of the *Discourses*.
13. The incapacity of those who were subdued to anticipate their subjection also astonishes Hume, in his essay "Of the Balance of Power," in *Essays: Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis, Ind.: Liberty Fund, 1985), 336. See also discussion in Thomas Pangle and Peter Ahrensdorf, *Justice Among Nations: On the Moral Basis of Power and Peace* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas), 1999.
14. Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, ed. Anne Cohler Basia Miller, and Harold Stone (1748; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), bk. 9, chap. 2, p. 132.
15. Machiavelli's expectation reflects a common delusion among great thinkers, especially marked the greater they are. First, there is no guarantee that many people will read them seriously; second, the more widely read they are, the more misunderstood they are likely to be. T. S. Eliot remarked that "Machiavelli has been called a cynic; but there could be no stronger inspiration to cynicism than the history of Machiavelli's reputation. No history could illustrate better than that of the reputation of Machiavelli the triviality and irrelevance of influence" ("Niccolò Machiavelli," *Times Literary Supplement*, June 16, 1927, cited in Barricelli, *Machiavelli's "The Prince"*, 295). At the time of his death, Machiavelli had no earthly consolation that he had been understood, and no expectation of a divine one. At the end, he was commonly reputed in Florence as "an evil man, a heretic, and an advisor to tyrants." The common people, said one contemporary, "hated him because of *The Prince*; the rich thought his *Prince* was a document written to teach the duke 'how to take away all their property, from the poor all their liberty; the

piagnoni [followers of Savonarola] regarded him as a heretic; the good thought him sinful; the wicked thought him more wicked or more capable than themselves—so they all hated him.” Maurizio Viroli, *Niccolò's Smile: A Biography of Machiavelli*, trans. Antony Shugar (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 257, citing Ridolfi, *Vita*.

16. Guicciardini, “Considerations on the *Discourses* of Machiavelli,” 113.

17. *Ibid.*, 92.

18. That lay in the future, as even Guicciardini, who wrote about the Italian balance of power with the most sophistication, was not recommending it as “a formula of general policy” but as “a historian diagnosing a situation that seemed unique.” Machiavelli, notes Herbert Butterfield, is a disappointment for diplomats, with little conception of the general balance: “He repeatedly deals with the question whether a state should remain neutral when its neighbors are at war; and he is aware that the result of the war itself may be the aggrandizement of one of the belligerents. If he presses the policy of intervention, however, this is not out of consideration for the balance, but because in his view the neutral loses the respect of both sides—he treats the problem as a question of prestige.” Only in the late seventeenth century, Butterfield argues, does the balance of power emerge as a coherent and well-thought-out doctrine. Herbert Butterfield, “Balance of Power,” *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, vol. 1 (New York: Scribner's, 1973), 180–81.

19. In practice, as Maurizio Viroli shows, Machiavelli did recognize the disease of excessive self-regard that made the Italian states incapable of effectual opposition to foreign invasion and occupation. Viroli presents an illuminating portrait and argument, but I am not sure that Machiavelli's biography can be successfully invoked against his books. That Viroli suggests there is a difference here—two different paths to understanding Machiavelli's political thought—makes his work intriguing. Viroli, *Niccolò's Smile*.

f Machiavelli's biography is to be invoked against his books, it would seem proper to admit as evidence at the bar all the salacious details of Machiavelli's sex life that are sprinkled throughout Viroli's biography. Machiavelli, it appears, was not unfamiliar with the splendid orifices of Florence, and seems to have explored them top to bottom and front to back. “Every day,” notes Viroli, Machiavelli “and his friends would visit some girl to recover their vigor.” The evidence suggests that he loved his courtesans more than his wife, and that men would do when women were not around. Viroli offers a simple defense and explanation: “where passions, desires, and pleasures were concerned, he listened only to nature, his own nature, and paid no attention to the views of moralists and prudes.” However, I imagine Niccolò today as the object of one of those all-points bulletins—mothers beware—warning that a man convicted of a sex crime has moved to your neighborhood. As Viroli shows, Machiavelli was a great lover of women, in both their earliness and their divinity—to think that he hated and scorned women shows appalling ignorance.” But though “fascinated by the power of love,” Machiavelli was also certainly transgressive in his complete indifference to conventional norms of sexual morality. Is that relevant? I think it may be. Both the allowance and control of the sex impulse (like that of impulses toward power and greed) are part of the business of every decent society. Given what Machiavelli said about politics, it would have been impossible for him to be a prude:

and had he been a prude, he would likely not have gone as far as he did in relaxing conventional restraints in politics that forbade lying and the breaking of oaths. I do not deny the obvious objection that people can put these things into separate compartments: the same man who is a rat in one context can be righteous in another. But there seems to me a relation here in how Machiavelli treats this trinity of appetites (the big three of Augustinian demonology). It may help explain Machiavelli's perambulations in chapter 25 of *The Prince*, where he compares the mastery of fortune to the thrashing of a woman. This is not only offensive; it is also untrue, as any gentleman knows. Only a barbarian would think of mastering a woman by beating her up.

20. G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011).

21. Richard Tuck, “Grotius, Hobbes, and Pufendorf on Humanitarian Intervention,” in *Ius and Ugius Military Interventions: European Thinkers from Victoria to Mill*, Stefano Recchia and Jennifer M. Welsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 98.

22. Thomas Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, ed. and trans. Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 3.

23. This contrast between Machiavelli and Hobbes runs in parallel with the contemporary distinction in international relations theory between offensive and defensive realism.

24. William Robertson, *The Progress of Society in Europe: A Historical Outline from the Subversion of the Roman Empire to the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century*, with an introduction and historical notes by Felix Gilbert, was published by the University of Chicago Press in 1972. The extract comes from the beginning of Robertson's *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V* (1759). Machiavelli's forecast of perpetual war: “For as long as I can remember, people have always been either making war or talking about going to war; it is now being talked about and in a short while it will be declared; when it is over, people will start talking about it again, so that there will never be any time to reflect about a thing.” Machiavelli to Guicciardini, January 3, 1526, in James B. Atkinson and David Sices, ed. and trans. *Machiavelli and His Friends: Their Personal Correspondence* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 378. Professor Mansfield's slighting reference to Guicciardini in this volume is quite unfair. Machiavelli loved Francesco Guicciardini and did not put on airs in his friendship with him. Mansfield's conceit is that Machiavelli was engaged in a dialogue with Plato and Aristotle that Guicciardini would not have understood; in fact, as is intimated in Viroli, Machiavelli would have surrendered the delightful though illusory prospect of clattering with Plato and Aristotle in the afterlife if he could have joined with Guicciardini in saving his country in the here and now.

25. Desiderius Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince* (1516). I hope someone somewhere celebrates the five hundredth anniversary of that. Even more likely to fire me with anticipation is the homage due to the quincentenary, in 2017, of *Querrela Paris*, Erasmus's *Complaint of Peace* (*Peace Speaks in Her Own Person*).

26. Mark Hullung, *Citizen Machiavelli* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), ix–x, 28.

27. See the long introductory essay by Noel Malcolm exploring the reason of state literature in Malcolm, *Reason of State, Propaganda, and the Thirty Years' War: An Unknown Translation by Thomas Hobbes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 95–98, 100–101.
28. Denis Diderot, “Machiavellism” (1773).
29. Jean Bodin, *The Republic* (1576); Innocent Gentillet, *Discourse . . . Against Machiavelli* (1576), quoted in Bartolucci, *Machiavelli's “The Prince,”* 283, 278–79.
30. Malcolm, *Reason of State*, 100–101.
31. Henry Wheaton, *Elements of International Law*, 8th ed., ed. Richard Henry Dana Jr. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1866), xv–xxiii.

CHAPTER 7. MACHIAVELLI'S PRINCE

Special thanks to Tania Cronin, Michael A. Genovese, Addis Goldman, James Earl Kiawoin, Robert D. Loevy, Norman W. Provizer, and several Colorado College students for their suggestions.

1. Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965). First published 1919.
2. This was what Machiavelli was learning on the job, according to biographer Maurizio Viroli, *Niccolò's Smile: A Biography of Machiavelli* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 94.
3. Quentin Skinner, *Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 22.
4. Countless authors have penned “advice to rulers” books or pamphlets over the centuries. Most of them encouraged wisdom, humility, and compassion. One of the most intriguing “mirror-for-princes” or kindred tutorials for would-be princes was written at virtually the same time as *The Prince* (see Desiderius Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince* [1516]). An earlier example is the thirteenth-century mystic Persian Sūnni philosopher and poet widely known to his followers as Saadi, whose advice on leadership is summarized, in translation, in Alsanah Nahavandi, *Ancient Leadership Wisdom* (Shelbyville, Ky.: Wasteland Press, 2012). Most of Saadi's advice encourages listening, kindness, and chess-master astuteness. But Machiavelli might have appreciated at least part of this proposition: “An intelligent person will submit to an unworthy person who is enjoying good fortune and has power. . . . Wait until fate ties his hands, and then rip out his brains to the delight of your friends” (74).
5. From Miles J. Unger, *Machiavelli: A Biography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011), 215–16.
6. See Harvey J. Mansfield Jr., *Taming the Prince: The Ambivalence of Executive Power* (New York: Free Press, 1989).
7. See David McCullough, *1776* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002).
8. James M. McPherson, *Tried by War* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 29–30.

9. Barack Obama, remarks in Oslo, Norway, 2009, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-acceptance-nobel-peace-prize.
10. Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow* (New York: Times Books, 2006).
11. John Keegan, *The Mask of Command: Alexander the Great, Wellington, Ulysses S. Grant, Hitler, and the Nature of Leadership* (New York: Viking, 1987), 11.
12. This idea is suggested by Corrado Vivanti in *Niccolò Machiavelli: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013), 98. Three generations after Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Shakespeare has his Henry V rally the troops at Agincourt by urging them to “imitate the action of the tiger,” disguise “fair nature with hard-favored rage.”
13. Scott Gordon, *Controlling the State: Constitutionalism from Ancient Athens to Today* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 161.
14. Alan Ryan, *On Politics: A History of Political Thought From Herodotus to the Present* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012), 359.
15. Gordon, *Controlling the State*, 361.
16. Jean Lipman-Blumen, *The Allure of Toxic Leaders: Why We Follow Destructive Bosses and Corrupt Politicians—and How We Can Survive Them* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 35.
17. Michael Walzer, *Thinking Politically: Essays in Political Theory* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007). Deciding what is moral or not is the subject matter of a huge intellectual field. See, for example, David Edmonds, *Would You Kill the Fat Man? The Trolley Problem and What Your Answer Tells About Right and Wrong* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014).
18. Max Lerner, introduction to “*The Prince*” and “*The Discourses*” (New York: Modern Library, 1950), xiv.
19. See Isaiah Berlin, “The Question of Machiavelli,” *New York Times Book Review*, November 4, 1975, 30–32; Ross King, *Machiavelli: Philosopher of Power* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007); and Ryan, *On Politics*.
20. Unger, *Machiavelli*, 228.
21. Maurizio Viroli, *Redeeming “The Prince”: The Meaning of Machiavelli's Masterpiece* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014).
22. See the examination of why leaders lie (sometimes wrongly, but sometimes justifiably) by John J. Mearshmeier, *Why Leaders Lie: The Truth About Lying in International Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
23. Discussed at length in Eyan Thomas, *The Very Best Men: Four Who Dared: The Early Years of the C.I.A.* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995).
24. Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History* (New York: Scribner, 1952), 157.
25. *Ibid.*, 133.
26. *House of Cards* writer Michael Dobbs based much of his original British TV series on Shakespeare's *Richard III* and Iago (from *Othello*). These characters doubtless were derivative from Machiavelli. But why did people enjoy the Frank Underwood character? Actor Kevin Spacey speculates that viewers are fascinated because, unlike the then