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Machiavelli's Prince: A renaissance pasquinade

Nancy A. Hahn

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MACHIAVELLI'S PRINCE: A RENAISSANCE PASQUINADE

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Interdisciplinary Studies

by
Nancy A. Hahn

June 1996
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ABSTRACT

This thesis will offer evidence for satire in Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince* (published in 1532), in three areas of inquiry.

The first is Machiavelli's life and character, from which his intent and motivation for writing a satire, relative to the Medici family in Florence and the political climate of his era, can be discovered.

Second, I will offer evidence from Machiavelli's other major writings, principally *The Discourses On the First Ten Books of Titus Livius* and *The History of Florence*, to demonstrate that Machiavelli satirized the 'new prince' by refuting or distorting the democratic principles he advocated in his other works.

Third, I will demonstrate the rhetorical elements of satire in *The Prince* that correspond with those devices commonly associated with the genre satire.

Rather than organize this thesis around general principles or topics, I have approached *The Prince* methodically, chapter by chapter, to better demonstrate the development of Machiavelli's satire, which evolves incrementally from the first to the last chapter.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Most especially, I want to thank Dr. Blackey for inspiring confidence in this project and in myself, the qualities of a great and good teacher.

To my family, I gratefully acknowledge the love and patience that found expression in so many unexpected and unique ways. If life is but a short dream, I say to you, let the games begin.

And to my good friend, Dr. Lanny B. Fields, whose enthusiasm for this project and generosity of spirit were beyond measure, thank you for your gifts of wisdom, time, and words of encouragement. The juggler lights his smile because you willed it so.
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GENEALOGY CHART:
The Government of Florence and the House of Medici

Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici

I.  Cosimo (1389-1464)  1434-1464
    II.  Piero The Gouty (1416-1469)  1464-1469

III.  Lorenzo The Magnificent (1449-1492)  Giuliano & Lorenzo 1469-1478

IV.  Piero (1471-1503)  1492-1494
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XIII. Cosimo II (1519-1574)  Grand Duke of Tuscany  1537-1574
INTRODUCTION

In less than two decades (2013), the world community of scholars will observe the 500th Anniversary of Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince,* a work that has provoked both ire and approbation throughout the intervening centuries. On that occasion, new interpretations and commentary on what Isaiah Berlin refers to as "the question of Machiavelli" will likely appear, further expanding "a bibliography that is vast and growing faster than ever." The spectrum of opinion and analysis surrounding the *Prince* is a controversial clamor of conflicting theories from which a consensus seems improbable in the near future. If we are to resolve the question of Machiavelli, it will be necessary to probe beyond the literal interpretation of that work offered in the past, from which a wealth of contradictory evidence and justification have been found.

From the early part of the sixteenth century, Machiavelli was "condemned" for his "political immorality and cynicism," an indelible mark against his reputation that finds expression in the term 'Machiavellian,' in reference to the political theory proffered by a man who "was (and is) popularly misunderstood to have advocated atheism, treachery, and criminality as preferable to other means of statecraft." Taken at his word in the *Prince,* Machiavelli did advocate atheism, treachery, and criminality, and his precepts have always found a receptive audience among the
unscrupulous. Thomas Cromwell had considerable influence with King Henry VIII, for example, and Cromwell took his inspiration from "a thin manuscript volume, recently procured for him at Florence, whose rubrics referred to 'cruelty and clemency, and whether it is better to be loved than feared'... and similar matters" which tended to inform his counsel to the King:

...the great art of the politician was to penetrate the disguise which princes usually throw over their real inclinations, and to devise expedients by which the prince may gratify his appetites without appearing to outrage morality and religion. The little book also contained an exposition of the weakness of the papacy more convincing to Cromwell's practical mind than all of Luther's thunder, and some happy suggestions for the combination of hypocrisy and terrorism. But chiefly Cromwell sucked from it the one heresy likely to appeal to Henry: the more than divine right of tyrants, the absolute sovereignty and unlimited independence of the omnipotent, amoral state.®

The Elizabethan scholars and dramatists took note of Machiavelli's ideas, reflected in "the 'murderous Machiavel' of the famous 400 odd references in Elizabethan literature,"™ and in France, the "infiltration of Machiavelli's ideas" was thought, by Alberico Gentillet, to have arrived "under the corrupt influence of the Italian queen mother, Catherine de' Medici."® Gentillet thought, however, that the Prince was a form of "satire,"™ and "the printer of the first edition of the Prince [in 1532] ...sought Church
protection against those who 'do not know that those who instruct in the use of herbs and medicine, also instruct in poisons, in order to know how to guard against them,' or, stated another way, that the Prince was intended to educate the unwary regarding the providence of princes. But these views did not prevail in majority opinion. Soon after its publication, the Prince earned Machiavelli a reputation as a 'toady' of princes, particularly of the Medici, or so thought the 'restorers of the short-lived [second] Florentine republic,' (1527-1530) who no longer trusted in Machiavelli's republican credentials. By the year 1559, "all of Machiavelli's works were condemned by the Roman Church and placed on the Index."

In the seventeenth century, Machiavelli was "denounced" primarily by the Jesuits, and by the eighteenth century, "clerics, philosophers, historians, and statesmen all inveighed against him and with equal vigor." Frederick of Prussia wrote his Anti-Machiavelli "rejecting the advice given by the Florentine secretary," which, as De Lamar Jensen observes, would have earned the commendation of Machiavelli, for "what could be more astute or more in tune with The Prince than a denunciation of it!" Voltaire, who "helped" Frederick write "his Anti-Machiavel" would have agreed that a "repudiation of Machiavelli would be the first step of any tyrant."

For Rousseau, "Machiavelli's notorious 'immorality'
simply does not arise since The Prince is a satire on princes written by a convinced republican: 'He proposed to teach kings; but it was the people he really taught. His Prince is the book of republicans,'¹⁷ and "the history of the Borgias is a warning to citizens to be on their guard."¹⁸ Rousseau "reinvoke[s] the standards of Roman republican virtue," and thus "Machiavelli leads away from the Enlightenment, not to it."¹⁹

Following the French Revolution, "it became fashionable" to examine the "works of Machiavelli" who was "only seeking the good of his native land by eliminating both national despots and foreign oppressors." The French "revised" their previous notions about "Cesare Borgia" and "Machiavelli," which gave rise to "the birth of the precious notion of historical relativity."²⁰

The great eighteenth century satirist, Jonathan Swift, may have borrowed liberally from Machiavelli in his works. F.P. Lock makes the point that Machiavelli "provided... practical political analysis for Swift to draw on in applying his political ideals to the contemporary situation," from the "Discourses," the "Art of War," the "History," and "The Prince." Lock observes that both men shared "common attitudes to the nexus of corruption, degradation, and the need for reform that connect their analysis of contemporary society."²¹

The rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century
ushered in a new perspective on Machiavelli. "Herder suggested that Machiavelli's motivation was a desire for the national independence of Italy," a view accepted by Hegel, Fichte, and Ranke as well. The Italians who championed this view following the unification of Italy, in 1871, included Pasquale Villari, Oreste Tommasini and Francesco De Sanctis. Machiavelli became a "saint of the Italian Risorgimento," Italy redeemed from the ashes of antiquity. Felix Gilbert challenged this notion, however, faulting the assumption that Machiavelli's desire to unify Italy "meant the same thing" to him "as it did to the nationalist patriots of the nineteenth century."24

The twentieth century view of Machiavelli, "as a scientist—as a true analyst of political situations and events, and formulator of general patterns and laws of political behavior... has gained wide popularity among political scientists and also among a substantial number of historians," a Machiavelli who "possessed a detached, impartial, scientific mind," a "founder of a modern school of political science, emphasizing power and how it is gained and held, not what should be done to fulfill a providential scheme."26 Frederick Meinecke, in his Doctrine of Raison d'Etat and the emergence of "Realpolitik," viewed the "very essence of the development of the modern state" as "the struggle for and against Machiavellianism."27 As Meinecke understood, there were "sinister aspects of reason of
state... when truth and justice are treated simply as elements in the empirical situation, to be weighed against material advantages, then the gates are opened to forces of active evil which traditional morality had opposed... the sources of a new dualism which plagues modern civilization."

Following World War I, many scholars "took up their pens to combat the leviathan," including G.P. Gooch and Jacques Maritain, who argued against the "myth" of Machiavelli's "realism," and for the "reassertion of moral courage and political justice" respectively. As Maritain remarks, if "absolute Machiavellianism triumphs over mankind," it will be because of corruption "within a denigrating civilization."" The notion that Machiavelli's Prince may be a satire, however, has not been fully explored, to my knowledge, by Machiavelli scholars. Rousseau and Gentillet acknowledged that the work was not what it pretended to be. Eric Whelpton makes the point that we "cannot determine" whether Machiavelli was "himself a Machiavellian," or "whether he did not write The Prince as a satire on the errors of tyrants instead of as a paean in praise of Cesare Borgia," having been "put on the rack for expressing his ideas too freely," and having "served the republic of Florence with great loyalty." Felix Gilbert and Quentin Skinner argue that Machiavelli satirized and parodied "the humanists and
humanist literature. Mark Hulliung observes, however, that "Gilbert and Skinner stop short of communicating what Machiavelli's 'satire' ultimately meant; that the world-view composed of Christian and Stoic values is to be not simply criticized but actively crushed and replaced by an alternative world view," which is to miss the point of his satire altogether. Christian and Stoic values had already been replaced to a large extent by the corrosive influence of corruption, as evidenced in the actions and character of the princes who ruled Italy in his time. If Machiavelli "crushed" traditional "Christian and Stoic values" in his satire, it was to make the point that if the present trends continued, Italy would be ruined.

The late Professor Garrelpt Mattingly, however, offered a satirical perspective on Machiavelli's *Prince* in his essay, "Machiavelli's *Prince*: Political Science or Political Satire," that has been described as "a bold foray into the region of Machiavelli studies, and from it [Mattingly] emerged somewhat less bashed-up than most of us who have ventured onto that dark and bloody ground of learning where muddled armies clash by night." Mattingly finds that the *Prince* "imitates, almost parodies... the handbook of advice to princes," but more importantly, he suggests that it was also "meant as a satire, as a taunt and challenge to the Medici and a Tocsin to the people of Florence." As a result of his insight and scholarship, then, the battle-
ground of Machiavelli studies should be less "muddled" today for his efforts. In his inimitable way, Professor Mattingly argues from the more obvious contradictions contained in the *Prince*, those positions and pronouncements that not only defy Machiavelli's political principles, but his life and character as well. His essay thus constitutes a hallmark contribution to future studies, in which the devious Machiavelli--long suspected but largely ignored--may at last come to light.

Machiavelli's intent in writing a satire was to issue a critique of corruption and the men whose actions and influence defined the quality of the times. Many aspects of his character and experience in political affairs suggest his motivation for targeting the modern princes, who threatened liberty and freedom across the Italian Peninsula. Machiavelli's preference for ancient modes and order rather than modern practices is clearly stated in his works that followed the *Prince*. When considered together, the fraudulent nature of the *Prince* is exposed, in which he not only mocks the aspirations of Italian princes, but his own political principles as well.

If truth is concealed in the artful rhetorical devices of satire, it is made plain in its essence, in which the satirist "perceives some absurdity inherent in the logic of some position," and "draws the absurdity out and isolates it, so that all can see it." I would argue that
Machiavelli attempted to isolate and magnify, for the benefit of those who understood, the abuse of power he witnessed in his time, a reality he masked in the benign concept of 'effectual truth,' and ridiculed in the guise of sincerity—a little pasquinade intended to amuse the few, but which has, rather, adorned the pages of history and confounded the many. As Machiavelli cautioned in his play Clizia:

Oh you, whose lofty souls
Have harkened to our true though humble story,
Its message monitory
Recorded henceforth in your memory's rolls,
You now may know which goals
May rightly be pursued, and which to flee,
That we may go to heaven;
And 'neath the comic leaven
Were other truths too numerous for me
To tell now; so, kind audience, we pray
You reap the fruit you merit from our play.

Niccolò Machiavelli³⁸
PART I: Citizen Machiavelli and the Magnificent Medici

Chapter I. Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici

A satirical interpretation of the Prince is most compelling when one considers Machiavelli's life and character, from which his motivation for turning to satire as a means of voicing his political concerns can be discovered. He might have chosen to write a scathing diatribe against the growing problem of political corruption (although at great personal risk), or concentrated his efforts solely on the Discourses on the First Ten Books on Titus Livius (hereafter referred to as the Discourses), in which he instructed his fellow Italians on the merits of democratic principles and how to found and maintain a republic as an antidote to the rising tide of tyranny—modeled on the Republic of Rome. He turned away from that work, however, to focus his attention on the Medici who symbolized the ambition of modern princes generally, the object of his contempt, who had contributed so much to the loss of liberty and the destruction of peace across the Peninsula.

The Medici not only destroyed the republican government he had served faithfully for fourteen years, but humiliated Machiavelli with imprisonment as well. In the political climate of 1513, however, the year he wrote the Prince, he could not have attacked the tyranny of the Medici openly, and thus he chose the path of his great predecessors, Phaedrus, Horace, Juvenal, and others, who, because the
times were not amenable to their views, voiced their grievances in works that disguised their true motives.

The first hint that Machiavelli provides regarding the true nature of the Prince is his dedication to the Medici. Had he only intended a polite recognition of that family as the first citizens of Florence, the dedication might be considered extraneous to the body of the Prince and thus of no particular significance in an interpretation of the work. Two considerations stand in the way of that view, however. The first is that Machiavelli’s desire for employment from the Medici is implied, which is not consistent with his political views and character, thus raising the question of his sincerity, which in turn reflects on the sincerity of the work as a whole.

The second is that the Medici became an integral part of the Prince as the designated beneficiaries of Machiavelli’s knowledge and advice, for the express purpose of Giuliano or Lorenzo becoming the new prince, destined to save Italy. Yet neither Medici demonstrated sufficient ability to merit Machiavelli’s confidence in meeting such expectations. Nor was Machiavelli one to be fooled by appearances, as a seasoned statesman with keen powers of observation.¹

Machiavelli’s dedication, then, was central to his design—a unifying device that personalized his message and enabled him to justify his precepts as necessary and urgent
to the immediate circumstances of Italy. Without it, his satire would have lost much of the flavor and luster that makes it such a pleasure to read, for lurking behind every page is the image of the heroic Medici, including Cardinal Giovanni who became Pope Leo X, taunted by Machiavelli to emulate rascals of every stripe, in all manner of villainy; a family that hardly needed instruction in the abuse of power or how to acquire it.

Giuliano is the first Medici associated with the dedication. He was the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and brother of Cardinal Giovanni. Bearing the title Duke of Nemours, he is described as having "much less ambition" than his brother, the pope, who relied on Giuliano to run the government of Florence on his behalf; "no longer able to exercise direct rule on the Arno, he was obliged to choose a Medici to serve as the visible head of the city." Giuliano was soon removed as the pope's representative, however, "by a lack of aptitude for dealing with Florentine affairs," and was permitted "to follow him to Rome and, apart from occasionally evolving an ambitious plan for his brother, he permitted Giuliano to live the obscure existence he preferred." In the opinion of Ferdinand Schevill, Giuliano "was unfitted by temperament to play a political role in a country so chaotic as Italy; and except for the fact that he was a gracious aristocrat with many friends in the literary and artistic circles... he cannot be said to have been much
of an asset to his family," nor did he demonstrate requisite ability in military affairs.

When Cardinal Giovanni became pope, Francesco Vettori, the Florentine ambassador to Rome, remained in his position. He and Machiavelli had become friends as diplomats serving the Republic of Florence. It is clear from the correspondence between them that Machiavelli first intended to dedicate the Prince to Giuliano. In a letter to Vettori (December 10, 1513), Machiavelli referred to this "little work of mine that I have spoken of, whether it is good to give it or not to give it, whether it would be good to take it myself or whether I should send it there. Not giving it would make me fear that at the least Giuliano will not read it, and that this rascal Ardinghelli will get himself honor from this latest work of mine." Scholars are in general agreement that Machiavelli first intended that the work be dedicated to Giuliano, whether or not he ever had any intention of actually presenting it to him. There is no evidence that it was presented to Giuliano before his death in March, 1516, nor is there evidence that Machiavelli ever had "kind words, if not favors, from Giuliano."

Precisely when the dedication was changed to Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino and grandson of Lorenzo the Magnificent, is not known. Roberto Ridolfi estimates that the earliest possible date for the change is September, 1515, and no later than September, 1516, as Lorenzo re-
ceived the title of Duke of Urbino October 8, 1516, and the dedication "does not address him with the title of Duke, and uses Magnificence, not Excellence." L. Arthur Burd suggests that Machiavelli may have "selected Lorenzo" before Giuliano's death, having discovered that Giuliano did not intend to devote himself to a military career and when he became better acquainted with his character..." but for the purpose of satire, Giuliano was a perfect candidate for his dedication and until his death, there was no particular reason to change it, precisely for the reasons given by Burd.

Lorenzo was chosen to represent Leo as a member of the ruling family of Florence, as Giuliano had been, "designated by the unwritten law of succession." In a letter to Vettori, August, 1513, Machiavelli describes Lorenzo in most excellent terms, alluding to qualities of humility and decorum; "though we see there much splendor and liberality, nonetheless he does not abandon his life as a citizen. Thus, in all his movements, outside and inside, nothing is seen that offends anybody or is to be censored; at which everybody appears to be much pleased." In his closing remarks, however, we are provided with a sideward glance into Machiavelli's humorous and often caustic observations as he observes of Lorenzo, "And although I know from many you can learn this same thing, I have chosen to describe it, so that from my account of it you can get that pleasure that
comes to all the rest of us, who continually experience it." Machiavelli probably viewed Lorenzo in much the same way as did many of his contemporaries; although he is remembered by historians as the father of Catherine, who married King Henry II of France, he is not distinguished by any noteworthy accomplishments. The Florentines had no particular fondness for him; "Unpopular in the city because of his behavior," he lived "the last years of his life... surrounded by a few trusted advisors like a prince, and would have liked to make himself absolute master" if Pope Leo had not "held in check" his behavior. Further, Roberto Ridolfi describes him as a "degenerate" in whom Machiavelli had "no hope" of gaining "affection" or "favor." The astute Machiavelli would not have failed to perceive Lorenzo's true character, and the implications of his rule for the future governing of Florence.

Lorenzo "had himself elected captain general of the Florentines in May, 1515," and "thereafter he had become increasingly authoritarian, requiring councils to meet in the Medici palace rather than in public places of government, rejecting the advice of the more moderate and experienced citizens while surrounding himself with young dandies as subservient as courtiers." With an eye toward a "unified state," Pope Leo and Lorenzo attacked the Duke of Urbino in 1516, the same duke that had sheltered Giuliano during the long Medici exile (1494-1512). Giuliano begged
[Leo] not to attack the duke "before his death." Lorenzo took Urbino easily, but "less than a year later... the Duke returned with Spanish troops... the short but arduous campaigns in the mountainous districts of Urbino cost the Florentines and the Pope a great deal of money... and resulted in Lorenzo's being so badly wounded by arquebus, that he was gradually to waste away in body and will," although his "enemies" would charge that his death, in 1519, was the result of his "numerous vices."

Most scholars do not question Lorenzo's ability, that merit which qualifies him as a credible liberator of Italy. Quite the contrary. Some critics have devised a means of explaining the highly charged rhetoric of chapter twenty-six, the exhortation to seize Italy, by linking the composition of that chapter to the later dedication to Lorenzo. The added benefit of this interpretation is that it eliminates the need to reconcile Giuliano's lack of interest and ability in undertaking such an enterprise. At least of Lorenzo, it can be said that he craved power; "for many critics, a gap of some years between the composition of the first twenty-five chapters and the writing of the last chapter supports the conviction that Machiavelli had one set of purposes in mind when he wrote the body of the work in 1513 and then, in different circumstances and for quite different purposes, altered its character by adding the passionate last chapter with its call for liberation and
Mario Martelli makes the point that "the sections of the text... that call for liberation... could only have been written with Lorenzo—and not his Uncle Giuliano—in mind, and that the only moment in which such an appeal would have been justified by circumstances was the second half of 1518, when, according to some contemporary accounts, Lorenzo contemplated the transformation of his still largely unofficial rule in Florence into a formal principate."^21

There is no evidence to support the notion that chapter twenty-six was written separately and after 1513, however, to accommodate Machiavelli's dedication to Lorenzo. The problem that these critics are really addressing is how to reconcile chapter twenty-six, "the opposite of a scientific or detached work"^22 because of its biblical language and emotional demagoguery, with a scientific treatise, which the Prince is thought to be by most scholars. And if chapter twenty-six was an integral part of the work from the beginning, and there is no documentation to suggest otherwise, then Machiavelli's intent would appear to be consistent in both dedications.

To these Medici, then, Machiavelli dedicated his Prince. In Giuliano, and then Lorenzo, he placed his confidence for seizing and uniting Italy. Even if we grant the desirability of such action, which is improbable given Machiavelli's distaste for "the rule of priests"^23 (repre-
sented in Pope Leo as head of the family), the enterprise demanded extraordinary military virtue, leadership ability, and political acumen. As Garrett Mattingly observes, however, "Who could really believe that the lazy, insipid Giuliano or his vicious successor were the liberators Italy awaited?" The effect of the dedication, therefore, was to mock and ridicule the ineptness of Giuliano and the arrogant and pretentious nature of Lorenzo, and in this aspect Machiavelli was quite brutal, for he not only revealed his contempt for the Medici, but effectively associated them with the tyrannical qualities of his new prince.

Before turning to the subject of Machiavelli's character and background (and that of the Medici in so far as one had an effect upon the other), I would make the point that when the Prince is read as satire, the problems concerning inclusion of chapter twenty-six are resolved, and the work flows from the dedication forward as one entity, each part dependant on its precedent, a perfect crescendo of irony upon irony that virtually explodes in condemnation, a supreme mockery of pretense to power in the great abyss of corrupt Italian political life.
Chapter II. Machiavelli and the Republic of Florence

Allan Gilbert suggests that Machiavelli's desire to serve the Medici can be explained by observing the operative modes of American political parties. "What blame at present would be laid upon a career diplomat who retained his position when a Republican regime in Washington gave way to a Democratic one? Machiavelli's situation was similar,"¹ In fact, Machiavelli's situation was entirely dissimilar, unless one can imagine the Democrats returning to Washington in the train of foreign arms, flying the papal banner, and prepared to alter the constitution to the benefit of their faction. The tendency of historians to minimize this important issue, the issue of Machiavelli's convictions, is puzzling unless, of course, it must be minimized to justify his apparent lack of conviction, if being a republican meant anything at all to him, in his hasty capitulation to the Medici with no evidence of conscionable objection.

Nor was the return of the Medici, in 1512, without extreme violence. Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, in accordance with the terms generated in the Congress of the League of Mantua (August, 1512), was to be reinstated as ruler in Florence, with the aid of the Holy League and Pope Julius II,"² the author of Machiavelli's long misfortunes,"³ who wanted to "subdue the Florentines... determined not to rest while the city remained under the rule of Soderini," Gonfaloniere of the republic."³ Soderini refused to join the
League in ousting the French from Italy. With the fall of Prato, just ten miles from Florence, the republic was forced to admit defeat. The ensuing carnage was described by Machiavelli as "an appalling spectacle of horrors," all the more so as Machiavelli's militia, the principle defenders of Prato, ran "as though the enemy had jumped on their backs." The Spaniards went on an unholy rampage, "killing priests at their alters, ransacking churches, burning monasteries, breaking into convents," while "the people of Prato were tortured to disclose the hiding places of their treasure chests; then they were killed, stripped of their clothes, and their naked bodies flung into ditches or wells already chocked with limbs." Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici witnessed the carnage and commented in a report to Pope Julius that the sack was "... not without some bloodshed as could not be avoided... the capture of Prato so speedily and cruelly achieved, although it has given me some pain, will at least have the good effect of serving as an example and a deterrent to others."

"Cardinal Giovanni made a ceremonial entrance into Florence on September 14..." and within two days, was approached by his partisans "to change the government." On September 16, "a parliament was called, and with the Medici mercenaries holding all the entrances to the piazza and letting only Medician adherents pass... a balia to 'reform' the state was accepted by acclamation." The balia, or
parliament, was "so thoroughly detested by the advocates of a free regime" that it had been "outrawed in the days of Savonarola." Force was required to return to this "banished institution," and the committees consisted of forty-five members (later increased to sixty-five), all trusty Medicans hand-picked by the Cardinal, which "went about its business of destroying the republic with the greatest good will," including the abolition of "numerous characteristic features of the constitution, more particularly the democratic Grand Council... and Machiavelli's militia... not because it had proved a poor prop of the State, but that it represented a concession to popular principles."

Machiavelli was responsible for having persuaded the republic to establish a militia to protect the liberty of Florence "from conquest in a voracious political world." In his own words, "For that liberty I believe you will have such regard as they always have had who are born free and hope to live free."

From a historical perspective, the events of 1512 define a long struggle for power going back many centuries. The political ideals that divided the Florentines emerged from "... two myths of origin that were in theory incompatible but in fact intertwined in the popular imagination: the myth of an imperial past and the myth of a republican past. The latter was associated with the city's link to republican Rome, the former with its almost miraculous restoration by
The myth of a republican past was advanced early in the fifteenth-century by "several Florentine humanists, principally Leonardo Bruni and Coluccio Salutati." They offered "the notion that Florence had enjoyed at its foundation a republican form of government... a colony of pre-imperial, republican Rome, and from this they concluded that its first government had been by representation rather than despotic." Further, as a "government responsible to the people," the "Florentine constitution, which stressed ius and libertas was not the product of generations of political struggle, but the simple birthright of all citizens of the city."17

The imperial myth was "chronologically older and also the more popular... fused with the related notion of a return to the past, especially of empire as a recurring phenomenon and therefore in some sense, a continuous entity."18 "Colonized by the Romans in the time of Julius Caesar," Florence was destroyed by Totila, and then "rebuilt by the Romans," assisted by Charlemagne, "thus associating independent Florence with Charlemagne," which "probably reflected the rise of Angevine power in Italy during the previous two centuries." In the fourteenth century, the "Second Charlemagne prophecies" appeared, "predicting a new Empire under a new French King Charles," which "foresaw that the King would descend into Italy, renew its political and cultural life, and eventually conquer the holy land," fol-
allowed, in "the fifteenth century," by the "Brigette Prophecy," which "substantially repeats these assertions, and, in a postscript to one manuscript, declares that this war of liberation will occur between 1460 and 1470."19

Preference for the imperial myth, in Florence, "was exploited by the Medici who demonstrated their enthusiasm for an imperialistic rather than a republican culture by their sponsorship of various festivals that took place in the city on great feast days." Further, Medici ambition to "dominate Italy" through unification "in the form of a Tuscan Empire" dates back to "Cosimo de' Medici,"21 grandfather of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and great-grandfather of Cardinal Giovanni, restored to power in 1512. If the myth of imperialism embraced prophecies of empire and kings, the republican myth, in contrast, is reflected in Machiavelli's view that the Romans of the republic "were enemies to the very name of King and lovers of glory and of the common good of their country."22

The two myths coalesced to some extent as the Medici began to consolidate their power during the fifteenth-century; "Despite a constitution that appeared to allow for representative government, decisions affecting the life of the city were, in the first half of the century, always (and increasingly) the prerogative of the citizens whose financial affairs had flourished."23 The form of government that proceeded from a republican foundation had, as its end, the
notion of common benefit, liberty, and faith in the citizens
to govern, while that which proceeded from the imperial
ideal sought consolidation of power and the promotion of
self-interest to achieve its end, empire. Thus, while the
"Medici supporters... could comprehend a party love founded
on self-interest," which leads to factionalism and strife,
Machiavelli contends that "it is not the well being of
individuals that makes cities great, but the well being of
the community; and it is beyond question that it is only in
republics that the common good is looked to properly in that
all that promotes it is carried out; and, however much this
or that private person may be the loser on that account,
there are so many who benefit thereby that the common good
can be realized in spite of those few who suffer in conse-
quence." (II. 2, 275)—Machiavelli "always inclined with all
his heart to the popular state, and this inclination he long
nourished on the deeds of Republican Rome, the only Rome he
ever loved." 

In Citizen Machiavelli, Mark Hulliung makes the point
that "today, almost no one doubts [Hans] Baron's contention
that Machiavelli was fundamentally a republican in his
political outlook." Garrett Mattingly refers to Alberico
Gentili, as far back as the reign of Elizabeth I, "An Ital-
ian who lectured on the civil law at Oxford," who said of
Machiavelli, "He has been much calumniated and deserves our
sympathy. He was, indeed, a praiser of democracy (Democrat-
iae laudator) and its most zealous champion. Born, educated, and honored with office in a republic, he was a supreme foe of tyrants. It was his purpose not to instruct tyrants but to reveal their secret machinations, stripping them bare before their suffering people... he aimed to instruct the people under the pretext of instructing the prince, hoping that thus his teaching might be tolerated."

Perhaps Machiavelli's most important contribution to modern political thought is the *Discourses*, which provide an important link from the Roman republic to the present in the evolution of republican government. In his introduction to the *Discourses*, Bernard Crick describes Machiavelli as one whose "main substantial preoccupation, indeed his good obsession, was with the condition for republican government. The republic to him was the best of all possible worlds, and he tried to show that it had to be and could be, not merely should be, remarkably tolerant of internal conflicts and dissent. Not merely does he have a coherent theory of the condition for republican rule, but in many vital respects it is more fully worked out than Aristotle--and there is no rival in between."28

Machiavelli's republicanism should not be viewed as a quiescent intellectual construct, however, for he demonstrated his commitment by fully participating in the government of the republic. The Machiavelli were "an old Florentine family, noted for their devotion to the republic.
In the two centuries before Niccolò was born, they had given Florence twelve gonfaloniere and fifty-four priors. Mattingly refers to Francesco Machiavelli, who said in a public speech, "It is freedom that makes cities and their citizens great. This is well known. Tyranny makes only desolation. For Tyrants must always fear good citizens and try to exterminate them." Mattingly contends that "Niccolò made this assertion one of the central theses of his Discourses, thus prolonging the family tradition in which he was brought up nearly one hundred years later."  

Another Machiavelli, Girolamo, is mentioned by Niccolò in the History, in connection with the corrupt government (of Cosimo) in 1458: "So when the government had been taken over and the balia and then the chief magistrates elected according to the desire of the few, in order with terror to give a beginning to the government which they had set up by force, they banished Messer Girolamo Machiavelli with some others, and also deprived many of their offices. Thus Messer Girolamo, who did not keep the rules of his banishment, was declared a rebel, and as he went traveling around Italy, stirring up the princes against his own city, he was arrested in Lunigiana through the treachery of one of those lords; being taken to Florence, he was put to death in prison."  

Machiavelli married Marietta di Ludovico Corsini in August, 1501. They had six children, four sons and two
daughters. Two of his sons were involved in liberation enterprises. Ludovico was killed defending Florence in the long siege of 1530,\(^{33}\) which ended the heroic but short-lived Republic of Florence, reconstituted in 1527 following the sack of Rome by the imperial forces of Charles V of Spain, and the subsequent expulsion of the Medici from Florence. Another son, Piero, together with Gerolamo Muzio, "proposed liberation projects to the Medici dukes of Tuscany," which were impossible to implement "in pre-1494 terms, but had to be seen in the perspective of great powers."\(^{34}\)

Machiavelli's republicanism, then, was well established within the traditions of his family, a tradition that had historical significance in the city of Florence. Evidence of his own devotion to the democratic principles that define that tradition resides in his enthusiastic and selfless years of service to the government of the Republic of Florence, from 1498 to 1512, as secretary of the Second Chancery.\(^{35}\) A chronological review of his many activities in that capacity is not pertinent to the question of his intent in writing the *Prince*, but certain points should be made with regard to his participation in that government.

The first is that Machiavelli did not participate in the government of the Medici, terminated in 1494, nor that of the Savonarolan period, which ended with the friars' execution in 1498. In fact, nothing is known about his life, prior to 1498, with the exception of certain informa-
tion regarding his education, found in a diary kept by his father, Bernardo. If it mattered little to Machiavelli what master he served, one would expect to find him seeking employment in some capacity in the city prior to 1498, at almost thirty years of age. As Nicolai Rubinstein suggests, "it is unlikely that he would have been elected in June 1498 by the Great Council to the post of Second Chancellor, if he had been known as an adherent of or sympathizer with the Medici. The more so as he had no professional qualities to recommend him for this post, as was, for instance, the case of Alessandro Braccesi, his predecessor as Second Chancellor, who was a notary and had served in the Chancery at least since 1479." As there is no evidence to affirm that Machiavelli attempted to gain employment from the Medici, and reason to doubt that he would have been inclined to do so, it seems probable that he did not.

Despite Savonarola's theocratic inclinations, he was a "democratic champion," who, "in a succession of fiery sermons... declared in favor of the democratic principle as represented in the Grand Council" which resulted in a new constitution in 1494. Savonarola, however, looked to King Charles VIII of France (whose invasion of the peninsula in 1494 precipitated the slow decline of Italy over the next half-century) as the savior of Italy, to "reform the church which lies prostrate on the ground," and "to cure the ills of Italy," which resonates a lot like the Florentine myth of
imperialism and its prophecies of a savior king, although Savonarola was not a monarchist. Schevill alludes to this prospect when he suggests that Savonarola might "have reduced this imaginary Charlemagne to the simpleton that he was," had his "inner voices" not interfered with his appraisal of Charles VIII. Machiavelli may, as Allan Gilbert observes, have realized Savonarola's "capacity as a political thinker and practical statesman" while he "deplored his partisan violence, his egotism, his reliance on histrionic effect, [and] his mixture of the ecclesiastical with the political." Machiavelli would indeed have disliked the Frate's partisanship which lead, in his opinion, to disorder and ruin in a republic. His tolerance of conflict and dissent, as indicated by Bernard Crick above, should be understood within the context of lawful restraint, for in the larger framework of Italian city-states, Machiavelli warns that warring factions turn to arms, "overthrow the laws," and "those who are deprived of their offices [then] turn to foreign arms." In discussing party strife in Florence, Machiavelli states that "the enmities in Florence were always those of factions and therefore always dangerous." Thus, Savonarola's factionalism and theocratic tendencies offer sufficient cause for Machiavelli not to have become involved in the partisan disputes of that period, which ultimately led to Savonarola's death, although the inauguration of the new government, in 1498, opened the door
of opportunity for him.

As I mentioned above, another important consideration was the creation of Machiavelli's militia, for which he fought hard in principle. It was customary in Italy to fight battles with mercenary and/or auxiliary troops, as he criticizes at great length in his works. "The idea of a citizen army was so alien to the Florentine mind after a lapse of nearly two centuries, as to appear extravagant and fantastic," yet Machiavelli succeeded in securing funding for the militia in April, 1503. He was "the first to make political theory of the national militia, the first to give it practical application with regular levies and stable ordinances under the control of a government official." Machiavelli was made secretary of the Nine, who were in charge of the newly formed militia, and Cardinal Francesco Soderini (brother of Piero Soderini, gonfalonieri) wrote to Machiavelli in praise of his efforts; "We do not believe that in Florence anything as worthy and well-founded as this has been done for some long time in defense of its new freedom, 'a divine gift not a product of men.'" In the spring of 1509, with Machiavelli "substantially in charge," the Florentine militia, combined with mercenary forces, recovered Pesa after fifteen years of turmoil for the Republic of Florence. There was great celebration over the victory in Florence, an honorable triumph for Machiavelli. In Schevill's judgment, the "Florentine republic reached its
apogee" the day Pisa surrendered, and "the statement applies with equal force to the public career of Niccolò Machiavelli." That the militia failed, in 1512, when confronting the Spaniards at Prato, was undoubtedly a grave disappointment for Machiavelli, but it should be recalled that the Spaniards were seasoned veterans of war, while the militia was comprised primarily of peasant stock, "a serious flaw" in the opinion of Schevill, as it "cut down" the number of men, and "excused from a primary obligation of patriotism the very people who were the masters of state and its leading beneficiaries." Machiavelli’s interest in military affairs never diminished over the years. In 1521, he wrote The Art of War, the only one of his major works that was published during his lifetime.

There was one Medici to whom Machiavelli might have dedicated the Prince with probity--Giovanni delle Bande Nere, great-great-grandson of Giovanni di Bicci (as was Pope Leo). From a secondary line of the Medici family, Giovanni was married to Lorenzo the Magnificent’s granddaughter. Suggesting that the people of Florence wanted Giovanni as their general, Machiavelli lavishly praised him in 1526 for his warrior ability, praise he was not willing to grant to Giuliano or Lorenzo, whose military ability was significantly inferior. Of Giovanni, Machiavelli writes "I believe anyone who believes that among the Italians there is no leader whom the soldiers would more gladly follow, and whom
the Spanish more fear and respect; everybody also thinks that Lord Giovanni is bold, prompt, has great ideas, is a maker of great plans. When Machiavelli wrote the Prince, in 1513, Giovanni was only fifteen years old. However, after the death of Lorenzo (1519), he was twenty-one, and in 1521, had "distinguished himself" in the battle at Vauri. Machiavelli could have changed the dedication once again following Lorenzo's death, calling upon this young Medici of great promise, had he really intended that anyone from that family should be called upon as liberator of Italy. It is ironic that this Medici, Giovanni, is the ancestor of those Medici who later became the grand-dukes of Tuscany under Spanish hegemony.

Machiavelli's missions as a Florentine diplomat extended to the courts of kings, princes, popes, and condotteri in the field. In his position as envoy, he was sent to "observe and report" his findings. In 1500, he made his first trip to France, followed by others in 1504, 1510 and 1511. He was sent to Cesare Borgia's camp in 1502, where he witnessed "the bloody vengeance taken by Cesare on his mutinous captains at the town of Sinigaglia," and visited Borgia once again in 1503, following the death of his father, Pope Alexander VI, which precipitated Cesare's demise. In 1507, he traveled to Germany to the court of Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor. In Montefiascone, Machiavelli "recorded without comment" the words of Pope Julius II, who "talked of
delivering Italy from servitude and out of the hands of the French, "strange words from Pope Julius," who had himself contributed so much to bringing them into the country, and was indeed 'the fatal instrument of the ills of Italy.'"  

On a visit to Rome, in 1503, Machiavelli was given to understand that he should "pretend not to see" Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, which he observed.

During the Savonarola period and the republican government which followed (1494-1512), the Medici were in exile. Piero de Medici's surrender of Florence, in 1494, to Charles VIII, which humiliated and angered the Florentines, ultimately led to the Medici fall from power. During his exile, Piero "remained in Italy... offering his services to the republic's enemies, making repeated attempts to reinstate himself in Florence by force, joining forces with Cesare Borgia... who hoped that by re-establishing the Medici in Florence he would make a valuable ally for himself in Tuscany," although the "Florentines were not in the least disposed to favor a Medician restoration under Piero's leadership." Piero drowned in the Gargliano River while serving with French forces, "the worthless Piero [who] had never ceased to harass the republic either by joining with its enemies or by plots of his own devising."  

After Piero's death, the "Medici interests" passed to Cardinal Giovanni and Giuliano. The cardinal spent most of his time in Rome, while Giuliano "found shelter and hospi-
tality at the court of Guidobaldo de Montefeltre,\textsuperscript{60} in Urbino, as mentioned above. With the return of the Medici to Florence in 1512, Machiavelli's career came to a close, nor could he have expected more, for "if he were under the illusion of still living in times when his good sense and the style of his writings could bring him praise and favor, [he] was soon to be disillusioned," for the Medici could "not forget the coldness he had shown them—as indeed he was obliged to do—as exiles in the courts of Rome and France. Besides, they had their own creatures to reward."\textsuperscript{61}

Unlike the families of Francesco Guicciardini and Francesco Vettori, Machiavelli had no past association with the Medici from which he might expect consideration for continued employment, which they obtained. Peiro Soderini fled the city under duress, but Machiavelli remained. Perhaps he thought his reputation as statesman would protect him from his adversaries, the Medici faction and others opposed to the republic. Of this uncertain time, Machiavelli does not inform us of his expectations.
Chapter III. Machiavelli: Honest and Good

On November 10, 1512, the Signoria restricted Machiavelli to Florentine territory for one year. His dismissal "was to mean blame, punishment, revenge...," for he was fined one thousand gold florins, "a huge sum," which he managed to find with the help of "three friends."¹

Machiavelli had not sought wealth or personal advantage while in office. His expenses had often exceeded his income. On one of his missions to France, he "lacked funds even to send urgent letters by special messenger,"² and while at Imola, his private "capital was diminishing, as he had to spend for his own honor, and that of the republic, more than he earned."³ As Garrett Mattingly reminds us, "He has left proof of his devotion in the record of his activities and in the state papers in which he spun endless schemes for the defense and aggrandizement of the republic, and constantly preached the same to his superiors... after fourteen years in high office, in a place where the opportunities for dipping into the public purse and into the pockets of his compatriots and of those foreigners he did business with were practically unlimited... Machiavelli retired from public life as poor as when he had entered it... if this was not a unique feat in his day, it was a very rare one."⁴

Most profound, however, is Machiavelli's own testimony to his character, shared with Francesco Vettori in a letter,
December 10, 1513; "And of my honesty, there should be no doubt, because having always preserved my honesty, I should hardly now learn to break it; and he who has been honest and good for forty-three years, as I have, cannot change his nature; and as witness to my honesty and goodness, I have my poverty."  

On November 17, 1512, Machiavelli was forbidden to "set foot for twelve months in that palazzo where he had done so much for fourteen years," although he was required to return to settle "accounts" regarding pay for the battalions which had fought at Prato. His former position in government was taken by Nicolo Michelozzi, "former secretary of the Medici who now served and spied on the Signoria... for their benefit." Could Machiavelli possibly have desired such employment, as a subservient lackey to the Medici? Except for the pressure of need, collusion with the Medici seems altogether improbable, and need had not caused him to flinch in his principles or accommodate himself or his family at the expense of his integrity for the previous fourteen years.

Machiavelli, who advised Cardinal Giovanni to "adopt a wise and politic magnanimity" toward those who had confiscated property from the Medici in 1494 (advice that was not heeded), who had seen the "Great Council abolished" and with it the "system of magistrates and all the popular liberties," and, above all, who saw the "nine in charge of the militia" dismissed and the "military organization" he
had "created... dissolved," scholars ask us to believe, then began, in his leisure, to contemplate a little manuscript calling upon the oppressors of Florence to extend their oppression to all of Italy! There is no logical reason for Machiavelli to abandon every defining notion we have about him as a man or as a political servant of the Republic of Florence that he loved. 

"... he is not among those who exert themselves to flatter and court the new powers, nor among those who, as he will shortly write, 'prostitute themselves to the people and the Medici... '"

Considering the events that transpired through December, 1512, it is difficult to imagine that Machiavelli put forward the principles he expounds in the Prince with sincerity and earnest desire for service in such a government. His imprisonment which followed should serve to eradicate any lingering doubt, but scholars tend to dismiss that as well, having accepted the Prince as a work of integrity unencumbered by the other reality, so often ignored, that the Prince "has to contend not only against Machiavelli's life but against his writings as, of course, everyone who wants to use The Prince as a centerpiece in an exposition of Machiavelli's political thought has recognized." Machiavelli's arrest and imprisonment prompted the last defining experience, the last direct association he had with the Medici government before he began, in his exile, to write the Discourses on republican government, and the
Prince, perhaps the most concise repository of tyrannical precepts ever written, a reflection of the times and the vile contempt for liberty and freedom that had destroyed the Republic of Florence.

Machiavelli's arrest resulted from a conspiracy plot against Cardinal Giovanni and Giuliano de' Medici, perpetrated by two Florentines, Pietro Paolo Boscoli and Agostino Capponi. Many Florentines at that time probably still remembered the Pazzi conspiracy of 1478, which resulted in the death of Giuliano, the brother of Lorenzo the Magnificent, who barely escaped death himself. Even Machiavelli may have had faint memories of that event, which occurred when he was nine years old. Unfortunately for Machiavelli, his implication in the present conspiracy would occasion new trials and difficulties.

The plot was discovered in February, 1513, when "a paper containing a list of eighteen or twenty names, written by Pietro Paolo Boscoli, a well-known enemy of the Medici, [was] found by chance in the house of the Lenzi family, who were related to the Soderini; it [was] taken to the Otto di Balia; Boscoli and his friend Agostino Capponi [were] arrested." The list contained "names of some friends whom they knew or considered to be enemies of the Medici... the only ones they had approached were Niccolò Valari and Giovanni Folchi, who received them coldly... the Eight did not hesitate to have all the people mentioned in the list
arrested. The seventh name was Niccolò Machiavelli.\textsuperscript{13} Niccolò Valari was godfather to one of Machiavelli's children,\textsuperscript{14} and he and Machiavelli had served in government together in 1502.\textsuperscript{15} Machiavelli dedicated his Tercets On Ingratitude Or Envy to Giovanni Folchi (written between 1507 and 1515).\textsuperscript{16} Machiavelli, then, had close acquaintance with three of the four conspirators mentioned above.

Only Capponi and Boscoli admitted their guilt, stating "they had wanted to assassinate the Cardinal or, according to others, Giuliano."\textsuperscript{17} Machiavelli may have had no interest in entering into a conspiracy against the Medici, but clearly Boscoli, who created the list of names, had reason to think that he might have.

The arresting officers did not find Machiavelli at home, and it is a matter of speculation whether he was warned and thought of "hiding", or was simply away at the time; "A proclamation was issued 'calling for anyone who knew him' to denounce him within the hour under pain of being declared a rebel and forfeiting his goods."\textsuperscript{18} Machiavelli came forward, and was placed under arrest; "They could find nothing against him except some acquaintance with Boscoli, his friendship with Valori and Folchi, and certain jibes with which he probably repaid the Medici for some of the harm they had done him in recent months."\textsuperscript{19}

Nevertheless, Machiavelli was subjected to the pain and humiliation of torture which, if not to be relied upon for
discovering the truth, does measure the resolve, courage, and strength of its victim. "Four drops on the rope were usually enough to subdue any body and spirit, and if they did not suffice, the torture went on even though their hands were dislocated and their flesh torn. Niccolò had six drops...," and he confessed nothing. He was returned to his cell, to wait.

On February 22, "just before dawn," his friends, Boscoli and Capponi, were led to the scaffold, to the sound of funeral hymns. On March 7, the trials ended. Valori and Folschi were "sentenced to two years imprisonment in the dungeons of Volterra," and Machiavelli was fined. He waited, "needing only the money to buy back his freedom." In the meantime, Pope Julius died February 21, and Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici was elected pope on March 11, taking the name of Leo X. The celebrations continued in Florence for five days, each Florentine "thinking of the honour and profit which could be expected in public and private affairs from a pope who was a fellow-citizen and lavish in spending and giving." In the spirit of the occasion, "the prisons were opened," and Machiavelli was set free, his "fine and prison sentence being entirely remitted."

Virtually no scholars question Machiavelli's innocence in this conspiracy. It is not known whether or not he was approached. The fact that he withstood torture, however,
does not prove or disprove his guilt or innocence, and the appearance of his name on the list of potential conspirators raises questions that, unfortunately, cannot be answered. Had this been the only conspiracy implicating Machiavelli, one could more readily dismiss it, but there was another, in 1522, against Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, the illegitimate son of Giuliano (who was stabbed to death in the Pazzi conspiracy, 1478), who later became Pope Clement VII following the death of Pope Leo, in May, 1521, and Leo's successor, Pope Adrian VI, who died in 1523.

Cardinal Giulio granted the opportunity for Florentines to submit proposals for the reform of their government. "It was a clever way of investigating people's thoughts and discovering what ambitions were fermenting in certain Florentine minds," or perhaps his intentions were sincere, reflecting a concern for the future governing of Florence, as no legitimate heirs remained in the Medici line.

Meanwhile, many proposals had been submitted to the Cardinal. Among them was a plan formerly presented to Pope Leo by Machiavelli, A Discourse on Remodeling the Government of Florence, written about 1520, which involved "a return to the popular state to be governed by the Medici during the cardinal's lifetime, and thereafter to be free." As late as 1522, then, Machiavelli continued as an advocate of Florentine liberty, despite his failure to persuade Leo to adopt such a plan. Further, he had obtained his commission
from Pope Leo, in 1520, to write the History, reflecting a modicum of favor from the Medici which, if Machiavelli really desired it, one would expect he would not compromise with the flagrant pursuit of republican principles. Yet, he continued to press for such reforms.

When it became evident that Giulio was evading reform, a conspiracy to assassinate him was planned and subsequently discovered, a conspiracy that "was to be one of the expeditious ways of reforming the state." Zanobi Buondelmonte (to whom Machiavelli's Discourses are dedicated, with Cosimo Rucellai) and Luigi Alamanni, "Machiavelli's two greatest friends," were the primary conspirators, although several others were involved. "It was a gloomy prospect for Niccolò, who was one of their friends and a reputed former conspirator against the Medici. Worse still, Buondelmonte was supposed to have mentioned his name to one of the accomplices, among those of several citizens whom it was suggested should be invited to join the plot." The accomplice advised against it, because in his view, as "Machiavelli was a poor man and known not to be a great friend of the Medici, he would not be able to do the things they wanted without arousing suspicion." It is not known whether Machiavelli ever knew of the plot, but it would seem that if anyone could be said to have understood Machiavelli's mind and his inclinations, it would have been these old republican friends of many years.
Buondelmonte and Alamanni fled. Two of the other conspirators were beheaded. In 1526, it was learned by the Medici government that Machiavelli might have been implicated in this conspiracy, by mention of his name, but "a lot of water had flowed under the Arno bridge in the meantime," and nothing was ever proven.

In any case, Machiavelli was more inclined, it seems to me, to use his literary gifts to attack his enemies, which is evident not only in his satire in the *Prince*, but also in his sonnets to Giuliano de' Medici, written perhaps in the spring or summer of 1513, when Machiavelli emerged from prison. Machiavelli began his correspondence with Francisco Vettori at this time, in which he makes reference to Giuliano. In his first letter (March 13), he informed Vettori that he was released from prison "amid the universal rejoicing of this city, even though I hoped for it because of your doings and those of Pagolo, for which I thank you. I won't go over the long story of my misfortune, but will merely say Luck has done everything to cause me this trouble. Yet, thanks be to God! It is over. I hope I won't run into it again, both because I shall be more careful and because the times will be more liberal and not so suspicious." The words "even though" suggest that Machiavelli did not attribute his release to the efforts of the Vettoris, and his statement "I shall be more careful" intimates that he was, perhaps, not careful enough in the past,
either in his associations, or in his remarks regarding the Medici government if, in fact, he was not involved in the conspiracy.

In his second letter, (March 18), however, Machiavelli thanks Giuliano de’ Medici for his release, although the occasion and influence to open the prison doors resided in Pope Leo, not Giuliano; "I thank you as much as I can and pray to God that to your profit and benefit he will give me power to do something that will please you, because I can say that all of life that is left me, I consider I owe to the Magnificent Giuliano and your Pagolo." Giuliano was not responsible for Machiavelli’s release however; "On his elevation to the papacy [Pope Leo] was inspired to publish an amnesty, by which Machiavelli and all other suspects were set free. Thus was the ex-secretary officially cleared of specific charges but his person remained under a cloud." In fact, there is no evidence to suggest that Giuliano made any attempt to facilitate Machiavelli’s release from prison, nor is there reason to think that he would, given the nature of the conspiracy for which he was incarcerated. As the amnesty was made public, Machiavelli could not have mistaken the circumstances of his release.

The Vettoris may have attempted to intercede on Machiavelli’s behalf, in which case his gratitude to them is well deserved. To Giuliano, however, his grateful appreciation smacks of sarcasm, particularly if the Vettori appeals
to him found no response. Therefore, when Machiavelli remarks that he prays that God "will give me power to do something that will please you," having little in his baggage but his wits, he may have had the sonnets in mind—the means by which he might entertain Vettori with a proper acknowledgement of the role Giuliano had played in the humiliation Machiavelli suffered, even if that role was one of silent acquiescence. The sonnets are probably the first satire he directed toward the Medici, although they are not generally acknowledged as such; and they echo typical Machiavellian condescension and redress with keen subtlety. As Jonathan Swift once remarked, with regard to a satirist's intent:

I have a mind to be very angry, and let my anger break out in some manner that will not please them at the end of my pen.  

The sonnets were ostensibly written while Machiavelli was in prison, which Roberto Ridolfi argues were not only written in prison, but may have helped in his release. Allan Gilbert disagrees, however, as the sonnets were not discovered until 1828 and, therefore, "their real date can only be inferred." Further, Gilbert observes that while they may have been written "before Giuliano's death,.. obviously they were not intended to be sent to him."  

Machiavelli's sonnets to Giuliano are tailed sonnets, which are "satirical," a "fourteenth century vogue... in
which a couplet was added after the second tercet," as demonstrated in Milton’s ‘On the New Forces of Conscience under the Long Parliament’ [which] adds six lines... to allow him through insistence and perseverance to raise his scornful voice even more loudly... than he could manage in a conventional fourteen lines." Because they are tailed sonnets, then, Machiavelli betrays his intent in form.

The first (of three) has been described as a "comic poem," and "not to be relied on for accuracy." Machiavelli would have seemed unfeeling indeed, if he had actually written this sonnet on the day that Agostino Capponi and Pietro Paolo Boscoli were executed, the confessed conspirators in the plot Machiavelli was accused of, as the content suggests. His sardonic humor is apparent when he asks Giuliano to (now) turn his pity (for them) toward himself.

I

I HAVE, GIULIANO, ON MY LEGS A SET OF FETTERS
With six pulls of the cord on my shoulders; my other miseries I do not intend to recount to you, since so the poets are treated!

5 These broken walls generate lice so swollen that they look like flies; never was there such a stench at Roncesvalles, or in Sardinia among those groves,

9 As in my so dainty hospice; with noise such as if truly jove on earth were thundering, and all
Mongibello.

12 One is chained up and another is unironed with a pounding of locks, keys and bars; another shrieks he is too high above the ground!

15 What gave me most torment was that, sleeping near dawn, I heard them chanting the words: "We are praying for you."

18 Now let them go away, I beg, if only your pity may turn itself toward me, good father, and loosen these cruel bonds.\textsuperscript{44}

The comedy that Machiavelli refers to in the second sonnet may have been written "toward 1504... a work called \textit{Le Mashere} [the Masks] in imitation of Aristophane's \textit{Clouds},\textsuperscript{45} which is no longer extant due to an unfortunate decision made by Machiavelli's nephew, Giuliano de' Ricci, who served as his "literary executive" after his death.\textsuperscript{46} Ricci found "among his uncles manuscripts... a damaged, imperfect draft of a ragionamento in a comic vein, reminiscent of The Clouds and other Aristophanic comedies... so full of reckless accusations, of both ecclesiastics and laymen alike, that he decided not to copy it... the people thus slandered were still alive in 1504."\textsuperscript{47} Further, "under fictitious names he works over and badly treats many citizens,"\textsuperscript{48} which may well have included references to the Medici, a compelling reason for Ricci to destroy it. The fact that Machiavelli demonstrated slander against citizens
and ecclesiastics in a comic vein in this work offers early
evidence for Machiavelli's proclivity to express himself
with humor and satire.

Dazzo is in reference to "Andrea Dazze... a pupil of
the first chancellor, Marcello Virgilio [who] was trying
desperately to keep afloat in the rather stagnant waters of
Florentine letters." 49

II

LAST NIGHT, BESEECHING THE MUSES THAT WITH
their sweet cither and sweet songs they would, to
console me, visit your magnificence and make my
excuses.

One appeared who embarrassed me, saying: "Who are
you, who dare to call me?" I told her my name;
and she, to torture me, hit me in the face and
closed my mouth for me,
saying: "You are not Niccolò but Dazzo, since you
have your legs and your heels bound and you sit
here chained like a madman."

I wished to give her my arguments; she replied to
me and said: "Go like a fool with that comedy of
yours in rags."

Give her proofs, Magnificent Giuliano, in the name
of high God, that I am not Dazzo, but am myself. 50

Machiavelli's third sonnet to Giuliano does not refer
to the days of his incarceration, but to a gift of thrushes
which "here become in his imagination, his poor present to Giuliano," although it might be closer to the mark if one thought of the birds in the context of a bribe, from a poor Machiavelli shut away in his exile at his farm, for which he has the Medici to thank in his leisure.

As Allan Gilbert explains, "the Italian word mordere means to bite both literally and figuratively; the latter sense, to speak evil of, is now obsolete for English bite except in backbite. Machiavelli plays with the two senses throughout the poem." In lines fifteen and sixteen, Machiavelli is perhaps warning Giuliano that he should not judge his sonnet by appearances.

III

I SEND YOU, GIULIANO, SOME THRUSHES, NOT because the gift is good or fine, but that for a bit Your Magnificence may recollect your poor Machiavelli.

And if you have near you somebody who bites, you can hit him in the teeth with it, so that when he eats his bird, to rend others he may forget.

But you say: "Perhaps they will not have the effect you speak of, because they are not good and are not fat; backbiters will not eat them."

I will answer such words that I am thin, even I, as my enemies are aware; and yet they get off me
some good mouthfuls.

Won't Your Magnificence give up your opinion, and feel and touch, and judge by the hands and not by the eyes?\textsuperscript{53}

The sonnets are important because they reflect Machiavelli's impulse to convey, through satire, his contempt for the Medici. The political reality of Florence provided fertile ground for satire, between the opposing forces of republican ideals and the relentless pursuit of power symbolized in the Medici. Thus, when Machiavelli appeals to his superior, Giuliano (whom he could not have considered superior in the least), the irony of the sonnets is apparent, yet they constitute but a humble prelude to his greater satirical work, the \textit{Prince}. Machiavelli's anger, like the "fury" of Juvenal, "is appropriate only to great, obvious and widespread evils, the very putrification of society,"\textsuperscript{54} the Italy Machiavelli described as "besmirched with filth."\textsuperscript{55} As Garrett Mattingly expressed it, "Indeed the satirist seems to put forth his greatest powers chiefly when goaded by anger, hatred, and savage indignation. If Machiavelli wrote \textit{The Prince} out of fullness of these emotions rather than out of the dispassionate curiosity of the scientist, or out of the base willingness to toady to the destroyer of his country's liberty, then one can understand why his words bite and burn like acid, and why the whole style had a density and impact unique among his writings."\textsuperscript{56}
Machiavelli's writings are consistent with his character and the political views represented in his service to the Republic of Florence, with the exception of the Prince—and when the Prince is recognized as satire, it proves to be the strongest statement of all made by Machiavelli, in defense of the democratic principles he believed in. From the defeat of the republic, his dismissal from office, the dark days of his imprisonment, and his exile, one can discover ample cause to motivate him to voice his contempt, not only for those responsible for his own misfortune and that of Florence, but for the misfortune that had befallen Italy generally. His humor often disguised the agony that he suffered, but he could not hide it from himself:

I hope, and hope increases my torment: 
I weep and weeping feeds the weary heart; I laugh and my laughter does not touch my soul. I burn and no one sees my passion; I fear what I see and what I hear; everything gives me fresh pain; Thus hoping, I weep and laugh and burn, and I fear what I hear and see. 

If criticism is the "common purpose" of satire, it is fueled by the "passion to make known," although, unfortunately, "satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own; which is the chief reason for that kind of reception it meets in the world, and that so very few are offended with it."

Pope Leo made Florence "an annex of the papacy" following his election, and wasted no time in his efforts "to
make the House of Medici once more a dominating influence in Italian politics [and] also to drive the foreigners from Italian soil, "those same Spaniards who were so instrumental in returning his family to its former position of power in Florence." He intended to form central Italy into a single state by uniting the duchies of Ferrera and Urbino, and by joining to them the cities of Parma, Modena, and Piacenza. This new unified state was meant eventually to be placed under the rule of the Medici, perhaps under that of the Pope's nephew, Lorenzo... ." After driving out the Spaniards from the Kingdom of Naples, through "diplomacy rather than by war," that kingdom "would subsequently be given to Giuliano de' Medici who, after his brother's election as Pope, had been recalled from Florence to be created gonfaloniere of the Church and who seemed prepared to embark on greater enterprises," although, as discussed above, the Pope soon realized Giuliano had no aptitude for such enterprises.

No longer in a position to participate in or influence the political affairs of Florence, Machiavelli began to write, turning first to the subject of republics, motivated perhaps by the need to discover the causes which, over an extended period of time, had created the climate in which the Medici succeeded in elevating themselves to a position of authority, which threatened the liberty of all Florentines. The existence of the Discourses and the nature of
that work offer significant evidence for the notion that Machiavelli did not forsake his republican principles to embrace a new doctrine of absolute power in the Prince which was indeed not new at all, but as old as the first glimmer of covetous hoarding, most certainly older than the Italian Renaissance; more ancient than the Roman Empire which fell from the weight of its own ambition.
Chapter IV. The Dedicatory Letter

How gentle is deception
When carried to fruition as intended,
For it defies perception
And soothes the blissful dupes we have befriended
Oh draught of heaven blended,
You show the quickest way to true contentment,
And with your magic power
You comfort those whose wealth we would devour
And vanquish, by your devious presentment,
Stone walls, and arm'd resentment.

Niccolò Machiavelli

In his dedicatory letter, Machiavelli justified himself with regard to his intent in approaching the Medici. He gives the appearance of sincerity with the gift of his knowledge and experience (although his political beliefs and principles are misrepresented throughout the Prince to accommodate his satire), but his intent in the dedication was to gain the confidence of the Medici, his prey. With pretended innocence, exaggerated sentiments, and rhetoric designed to trap the unwary, Machiavelli cleverly manipulated his intended victims. His profuse flattery of the Medici, although fraudulent, was also his best defense should his motives be questioned. Nevertheless, it took considerable daring on his part to satirize his enemies, particularly while reaffirming his devotion to republican principles at the same time, in the Discourses. Thus, Machiavelli was remarkable not only for the genius that inspired the Prince, emphasizing the Medici above all others, but for his courageous spirit that braved infamy in
It is customary most of the time for those who desire to acquire favor with a Prince to come to meet him with things that they care most for among their own or with things that they see please him most. Thus, one sees them many times being presented with horses, arms, cloth of gold, precious stones and similar ornaments worthy of their greatness. Thus, since I desire to offer myself to your Magnificence with some testimony of my homage to you, I have found nothing in my belongings that I care so much for and esteem so greatly as the knowledge of the actions of great men, learned by me from long experience with modern things and a continuous reading of ancient ones. Having thought out and examined these things with great diligence for a long time, and now reduced them to one small volume, I send it to your Magnificence.

And although I judge this work undeserving of your presence, yet I have much confidence that through your humanity it may be accepted, considering that no greater gift could be made by me than to give you the capacity to be able to understand in a very short time all that I have learned and understood in so many years and with so many hardships and dangers for myself. I have not ornamented this work, nor filled it with fulsome phrases nor with pompous and magnificent words, nor with blandishment or superfluous ornament whatever, with which it is customary for many to describe and adorn their things. For I wanted it either not to be honored for anything or to please solely for the variety of the matter and the gravity of the subject. Nor do I want it to be thought presumption if a man from a low and mean state dares to discuss and give
rules for the governments of princes. For just as those who sketch landscapes place themselves down in the plain to consider the nature of mountains and high places and to consider the nature of low places place themselves high atop mountains, similarly, to know well the nature of peoples one needs to be prince, and to know well the nature of princes one needs to be of the people.

3. Therefore, your Magnificence, take this small gift in the spirit in which I send it. If your Magnificence considers and reads it diligently, you will learn from it my extreme desire that you arrive at the greatness that fortune and your other qualities promise you. And if your Magnificence will at some time turn your eyes from the summit of your height to these low places, you will learn how undeservedly I endure a great and continuous malignity of fortune.2

The indirect satire of the Prince is apparent in the dedication, which, "instead of meeting the foe upon the field [as in direct satire]... may pretend to be neutral and undermine him by suave and diplomatic ways. It may masquerade as a friend or as one of his own defenders and insidiously destroy his faith in himself."3 Wearing the mask of deceit, the satirist conceals his or her true intent, protected from the danger of reprisal. One must "be careful not to assume that everything the poet says about himself is true to his actual character," for "there may be little similarity" between the two.4 With "pretended innocence," the satirist becomes a "disinterested arbiter judiciously weighing pros and cons... a friendly onlooker [who] cries out encouragements, even seizes weapons and offers [self] as
an ally," an apt description of Machiavelli’s dedication to
the Medici.

In arguing against the notion that Machiavelli is a
"scientific historian," Allan Gilbert reflects on
Machiavelli the "artist" with the "political mind," who
desired that the results distilled from his observations and
study be useful, that his readers profit from the example of
the Roman republic... the men and women on the comic
stage." Thus, the Machiavelli of "the Prince and the
Discourses, as well as in Mandragola and the verses on
Ambition is a poet with a difference, wearing the mask--
indeed for some readers too effectively disguised--of his-
torian and political observer, so the reader must needs be
alert, for the more dispassionate Niccolò appears, the more
political his words become." Thus, while Gilbert does not
argue that the Prince is, in all respects, a satire, he
acknowledges the element of deception in Machiavelli’s
writings, and the art of deception is nowhere more apparent
among his works than in the Prince, in which his dedication
sets the stage much like a prologue to one of his plays.

Machiavelli justifies his approach to the Medici in the
first paragraph of the dedication by establishing his pur-
pose and credentials, thus masking his true intent. His
alleged purpose is to "acquire favor," to "offer" himself
with some testimony of my homage to you." His testimony,
however, is his gift of the Prince. Therefore, in effect he
honors the Medici with a book that recommends dishonorable practices, and compounds the irony by expressing a desire to participate in such a government himself, in the den of his enemies, at a time when he was most suspect to them.

His purpose is further elaborated in paragraph two, in which he states, "no greater gift could be made by me than to give you the capacity to be able to understand in a very short time all that I have learned and understood in so many years and with so many hardships and dangers for myself."

To fully comprehend Machiavelli's intent in this passage, I refer to chapter twenty-two of the Prince, in which he defines his notion of three kinds of brains: "one that understands by itself, another that discerns what others understand, and the third that understands neither by itself nor through others; the first is most excellent, the second excellent, and the third useless... ." (Ch. 22, 92)

When Machiavelli suggests that he can give the Medici the "capacity to be able to understand," he defines them as having the second kind of brain, which is blatantly uncomplimentary given their status and position, a mockery of their political acumen. What Machiavelli could not say is that, in reality, the Medici brain was of the third rank, for he could never give them the capacity to understand the value of popular government, organized on the model of the Roman republic, as presented in the Discourses. From the time of Cosimo, the Medici ruthlessly corrupted the consti-
tution of Florence, for the benefit of themselves and their faction. It would have been useless, indeed, for Machiavelli to attempt to persuade them to accept his views as represented in that work. He could, however, make them understand the precepts of the *Prince*, to better refine those attributes they and others like them already possessed, and with pretended innocence, expose their tyranny and corrupt practices by appearing to justify them. His imper- tinence in the assumption that his brain is of the first order, sharing his knowledge with the inferior brain of the Medici, is cleverly concealed.

Machiavelli's reference to Pandolfo Petrucci as an illustration of the second kind of brain, (Ch. 22, 92) then, ranks the Medici with his kind, a petty tyrant who rose to power with the aid of Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan (Il Moro), who was Petrucci's principal adviser and benefactor.⁸

Although Machiavelli refers to Petrucci as the "prince of Siena" in the *Prince*, (Ch. 22, 92) he calls him "Pandolfo, the tyrant of Siena" in the *Discourses*.⁹ As Garrett Mattingly observes, in the *Prince*, Machiavelli "never quite uses the word [tyrant] except in illustrations from classical antiquity, but he seems to delight in dancing all around it until even the dullest of his readers could not mistake his meaning."¹⁰

Machiavelli's discussion of brains, in the *Prince*, is offered in the context of choosing ministers, the employment
the Medici are to imagine he desires, for "governing through
the chancellors was an old Medician art" \(^{11}\) which fit appro-
priately with Machiavelli's experience as head of the second
Chancery. Of course, "Machiavelli cannot refer, not even in
the Epistle Dedicatory, to the fact that he once had honor-
able employment in which he loyally served. For he was a
loyal servant of the republican regime in Florence, and this
fact by itself might compromise him in the eyes of his
prince." \(^{12}\) Indeed, Machiavelli faced almost insurmountable
problems in convincing the Medici of his sincerity, and all
the more so with the intent to satirize "his prince," for
the dangers were great. If the Medici ever read the \textit{Prince}
and recognized the satire, perhaps they did not react for
the reasons suggested by Garrett Mattingly: "A rasher
ruling family than the Medici might have answered the chal-
lenge by another round of torture and imprisonment or by a
quiet six inches of steel under the fifth rib. But brother
Giovanni and brother Giovanni's familiar spirit, cousin
Giulio, though in fact they were aiming at exactly the kind
of despotism that Machiavelli predicted, hoped to achieve it
with a minimum of trouble by preserving for the time being
the forms of the republic. It would not do, by punishing
the author, to admit to the pertinence of his satire. So
the Medici did nothing. But they were not a stupid family,
and they cannot have been very pleased." \(^{13}\) In any case, the
Medici would have appeared comically naive to have taken
into their confidence as adviser an exiled, suspected conspirator, prominent in a former government opposed to their own faction. Nor would that suit the historical reality of Florence, where victorious factions often mobbed, maimed or killed the defeated officials, confiscated their property, and banished their families. Machiavelli was fortunate that his own dismissal by the Medici only resulted in a fine and his exile, given their cause to distrust him.

Phaedrus observes that "no one likes to revisit the place which has brought him injury," and Machiavelli reminds us that one should beware of anyone who does. In the Discourses, he states, "a republic should take care not to give any administrative post of importance to anyone to whom notable wrong has been done," (III. 17, 454) to avoid the opportunity for revenge. In reference to Claudius Nero, he remarks, "If the passions aroused by such offenses could have so great an effect on a Roman citizen at a time when Rome was as yet free from corruption, one can well imagine how great an effect injuries are likely to have on a citizen of some other city which is not constituted as Rome then was," (III. 17, 454-5) as was Florence.

Machiavelli also states in the Discourses that "... malice is not to be placated with gifts," (III. 30, 487) especially with a gift as impudent as the Prince. These statements from the Discourses reflect on Machiavelli's intent in dedicating the Prince to the Medici, as he had
been offended by them, and warns that it would be imprudent to involve anyone like himself in "any administrative post of importance," although that is precisely what he pretends to desire from the Medici.

In Machiavelli's masterful construction of the Prince, he cleverly protected himself by appealing specifically to the Medici while, at the same time, he exposed the growing threat to liberty and freedom in Italy from all those seeking princely status by corrupt and vile means in ambitious enterprises that depended for success on an equally corrupt population, in which the Medici only represented one example of such native tyrants. Just as he did in his plays, Machiavelli endeavored to "root out ...corruption and boldly hold it up for our scorn" in the Prince. Perhaps the greatest irony of all is that we have not only failed to share Machiavelli's contempt for the corrupt practices of his time, which he took considerable risk to reveal in the Prince, but we have gone to great lengths to justify them. As Machiavelli well knew, men are easily deceived. (Ch. 18, 70) He exploited the desire of the Medici to expand their power by recommending those practices that betrayed his own beliefs, just as Horace "with fine subtlety... puts in Tieresia's mouth words that are the very opposite of all his own beliefs," the art of deception ever nurtured by the great dissemblers.

Machiavelli establishes his credentials in paragraph
one of the dedication when he refers to his "knowledge of the actions of great men, learned by me from long experience with modern things and a continuous reading of ancient ones." The Medici were, of course, very much aware of Machiavelli's credentials. By emphasizing "knowledge," however, his experience is equated with his study of the ancients as a secondary consideration, a source rather than a statement that speaks for itself. Machiavelli informed Vettori that the Medici, "through this thing, if it were read, would see that for the fifteen years while I have been studying the art of state, I have not slept or been playing."18 Indeed, Machiavelli learned a great deal from his observation of the princes in his time, from "his long experience of modern things," but there is little evidence in the Prince of a practical application of those things he learned from a "continuous reading" of the ancients, with regard to liberty and justice.19

One must turn to the Discourses to discover those principles of governing that he found admirable in antiquity. In that regard, certain distinctions can be made between the two works, including the dedicatory sentiment in each, for the tone and emphasis in the Discourses is so far removed from that of the Prince, it is difficult to reconcile them as companion works.20

Machiavelli dedicated the Discourses to his republican friends, Zanobi Buondelmonte and Cosimo Rucellai, which
marks an immediate distinction between the two works, having
dedicated his book on tyranny, the *Prince*, to the tyrants of
Florence, the Medici. At first glance, there appears to be
a striking similarity in the way Machiavelli begins both
dedications. To Buondelmonte and Rucellai, he states, "I am
sending you a present which, if it does not come up to the
obligations I owe you, is at any rate the best that Niccolò
Machiavelli is able to send you. For in it I have set down
all that I know and have learned from a long experience of,
and from constantly reading about, political affairs."21 In
the *Prince* Machiavelli finds nothing he values so much as
"the actions of great men," learned "from long experience
with modern things, and a continuous reading of ancient
ones."22 In comparing the two statements, one finds that the
emphasis in the *Discourses* is on "political affairs," while
in the *Prince*, it is on "great men," with a specific refer-
ence to the "ancients" as a source of his knowledge. The
distinction between the two is not as trivial as it may
appear. Rather, it reflects Machiavelli's purpose for
writing a satire on the modern era, if one considers his
remarks in the preface to books one and two of the *Discours-
es*, with regard to antiquity.

In book one, Machiavelli states that he is "impelled by
the natural desire I have always had to labour regardless of
anything, on that which I believe to be for the common
benefit of all, I have decided to enter upon a new way, as
yet untrodden by anyone else," to examine the wisdom of the ancients and, because those who read about historical "incidents" never think of "imitating" them, to compare "ancient and modern events... so that those who read what I have to say may the more easily draw those practical lessons which one should seek to obtain from the reading of history."  

Further, in the preface to book two of the Discourses, Machiavelli offers his argument for praising the past more than the present,

Hence, I am not sure but that I desire to be reckoned among those who thus deceive themselves if in these my discourses I have praised too much the days of the ancient Romans and have found fault with our own. Indeed, if the virtue which then prevailed and the vices which are prevalent today were not as clear as the sun, I should be more reserved in my statements lest I should fall into the very fault for which I am blaming others. But as the facts are there for everyone to see, I shall make so bold as to declare plainly what I think of those days and our own, so that the minds of young men who read about what I have written may turn from the one and prepare to imitate the other whenever fortune provides them with the occasion for doing so.

Although there is no preface to book three, Machiavelli states in the first Chapter that he will discuss the actions of "particular men" and their contribution "to the greatness of Rome... I begin, then, with Brutus, the father of Rome's liberties."  

His emphasis in the Discourses, then, is on "particular
men" and the city's greatness as opposed to the idea of great men seeking personal glory and preeminence in the *Prince*. In the *Discourses*, he offers "practical lessons" on political affairs concerned with the common benefit, comparing "ancient and modern events" from which he concludes that the "virtue" and "wisdom" of the past, particularly that which he discerns from the actions of the Roman republic, are regrettably absent in the present era.

The notion that Machiavelli was a scientist who remained neutral in moral and ethical concerns or who, as an author of real politic, divorced morality and ethics from politics, is disputed by his remarks concerning duty in his conclusion to the preface of book two; "For it is the duty of a good man to point out to others what is well done, even though the malignity of the times or of fortune has not permitted you to do it yourself, to the end that, of the many who have the capacity, someone more beloved of heaven, may be able to do it." 27 The words "duty" and "good man" express moral and ethical sentiment, and he conveys a sense of hope that some individual will emerge to teach the value of virtue and wisdom, learned from the study of antiquity so that, when fortune provides the opportunity, that example will be imitated. Machiavelli admired leaders like "Moses, Lycurgus, Solon, and other founders of kingdoms and republics who assumed authority that they might formulate laws to the common good." (I. 9, 133) Those who "read history" and
"make use of the records of ancient deeds... would prefer to conduct himself in his fatherland rather as Scipio did than as Caesar did, or, if he be a prince, as did Agisilaus, Timoleon and Dion, rather than as did Nabis, Phalaris and Dionysius, for he could not but see how strongly the latter are dismissed with scorn, and how highly the former are praised." And of those who become prince in a republic, "after Rome became an Empire, how much more praise is due to those emperors who acted, like good princes, in accordance with the laws... [who] had no need of soldiers to form a praetorian guard... for their defense lay in their habits, the goodwill of the people, and the affection of the senate," (I. 10, 135-6) unlike those in Rome who "looked upon [virtue]" as a "capital crime," from which example one "will thus happily learn how much Rome, Italy, and the world owed to Caesar." (I. 10, 138)

Unlike the man "more beloved of heaven" whom Machiavelli awaits in the Discourses, who will teach others what is "well done" from the examples of antiquity, his new prince typifies the practices in modern Italy, where "there is no observance either of religion or of the laws, or of military traditions." In fact, Machiavelli subverts the wisdom and virtues of the past in the Prince, so critical to his idea of good government in the Discourses, by appearing to transform virtue and vice into their opposites to accommodate the modern practices he recommends both in his pre-
cepts, and in his choice of exemplars—primarily that of Cesare Borgia. In praising Borgia, he praises the modes and orders of the modern age; "for I don't know what better teaching I could give to a new prince than the example of his actions," (Ch. 7. 27) an appropriate illustration of the "actions of great men" that Machiavelli referred to in his dedication of the Prince. Both the Borgia and the Medici represented the rise of private individuals who advanced their interests by pernicious methods. Cesare was violent and ruthless, a man of "foul reputation," the "exemplar" of Machiavelli's instruction in the Prince regarding "how to go beyond morals, laws, and customs in order to gratify one's own will," by the use of force and deceit.

The Medici acquired their power and influence by fraudulent means, from behind the facade of custom, tradition, and constitutional convention. Over several decades, beginning with the government of Cosimo in 1434, they gradually achieved prominence and control of the government of Florence during which time Italy declined, mired in corruption.

In the Prince, then, Machiavelli emphasizes great men, whose object it is to further their own greatness and personal glory (exemplified in the Borgia and the Medici), while in the Discourses, he refers to particular men who contribute to the city's greatness (a republican ideal), and his first example of a particular man is Brutus, who assassinates a man of the other class, Julius Caesar. (III. 1,
Further, Machiavelli expands on the theme of Brutus by including a chapter on conspiracies, the longest chapter in the Discourses, in which he gives "excellent lessons on the methods of conducting conspiracies." In significant ways, Cesare Borgia was reminiscent of Julius Caesar, and the sort of new prince that Machiavelli might have a modern day Brutus do away with, to preserve the liberty of Italy. In grandiose imitation of Caesar, Borgia "took as his model his illustrious namesake from the days of ancient Rome, Julius Caesar," his aim "to win absolute power for himself alone," his banner arrogantly emblazoned with "aut Caesar aut nihil" (all or nothing).

Although there are numerous references to modern examples throughout the Discourses, only passing mention is made of Cesare Borgia, who should have figured prominently in both works, having received so much praise from Machiavelli in the Prince. That he is ignored in the Discourses, even in discussions of military virtue, is not surprising, however, if one accepts the Prince as a satirical work, for he not only personified all that was evil and corrupt in modern Italy, but chose to imitate, from the examples of antiquity, a man Machiavelli also found contemptible, Julius Caesar, who, when he became "head of the [Marian] faction," manipulated the people in such a way as to gain personal advantage and power. (I. 17, 158) As Bernard Crick observes, Julius Caesar "was, in a word, a tyrant, [and]
therefore detestable and traditionally the proper object of assassination."

Nor does Machiavelli refer to the Medici at length in the *Discourses*, a significant omission in a work devoted to the study of republics if one recalls that the Medici were the first citizens of Florence (a city having at least the appearance of a republic), and called upon as the saviors of Italy in the *Prince*, which greatly expands the importance Machiavelli assigned to that family. In fact, Machiavelli indicates considerable lack of enthusiasm for the Medici by making only scant reference to them in the *Discourses*, and then, for the most part, holding them up as negative examples.38

By directing attention to the Medici and the Borgia in the *Prince*, however, Machiavelli provided the focal point for his satire, as primary exemplars of modern corruption. Those who knew him and were familiar with his admiration of ancient virtue and wisdom would have understood his intent to satirize the modern age, particularly with those examples before them.

The artifice employed by Machiavelli in his dedication to the Medici becomes yet more apparent when it is compared to the remainder of his dedication of the *Discourses* to his republican friends, for in the latter, he conveys a tone of sincerity rather than flattery, the reflection of a work that is in harmony with his life, his character, and the
expectations of those who knew him best.

And believe me when I say that I have in this just one consolation. It is that when I reflect on the many mistakes I have made in other circumstances, I know that I have made no mistake at any rate in this, that I have chosen to dedicate these my discourses to you in preference to all others; both because, in my doing so, I seem to be showing some gratitude for benefits received, and also because I seem in this to be departing from the usual practice of authors, which has always been to dedicate their works to some prince, and, blinded by ambition and avarice, to praise him for all his virtuous qualities when they ought to have blamed him for all manner of shameful deeds. 39

In this paragraph, Machiavelli may have made a direct reference to the Prince when he remarks that one should not praise a prince for "virtuous qualities" when, in fact, his "deeds" are "shameful" and "blameworthy." One does so from "ambition" and greed. If Machiavelli was accusing himself of making the mistake of dedicating the Prince to the Medici, he dignifies the Discourses in doing so, for he negates the substance of the Prince when he suggests that one should not falsely attribute virtue to those qualities deserving blame (precisely his satire, particularly flagrant in chapters fifteen through eighteen). At the same time, Machiavelli falsely attributes blame to himself, for greed and ambition that were foreign to his character. He was not the sort of man to seek personal gain, yet his admission gives the impression that his attempts to seek favor with
the Medici were sincere. Thus, he maintained the mask of innocence while, at the same time, he hinted at the true nature of the *Prince*, further elaborated in his concluding remarks:

So, to avoid this mistake, I have chosen not those who are princes, but those who, on account of their innumerable good qualities deserve to be; not those who might shower on me rank, honours, and riches, but those who, though unable, would like to do so. For, to judge aright, one should esteem men because they are generous, not because they have the power to be generous; and in like manner, should admire those who know how to govern a kingdom, not those who, without knowing how, actually govern one. There are, indeed, writers who praise Hiero the Syracusan though but a private person, in preference to Perseus, the Macedonian though he was a king, because Hiero to become a prince lacked but a principality, whereas the other had no kingly attributes save his kingdom. Entertain yourselves, then, with what you were anxious to get, whether it be good or bad; and should you be so mistaken as to find my views acceptable, I shall not fail to follow this up with the rest of the history, as I promised at the start. Farewell.40

Roberto Ridolfi makes the point that "the dedicatory letter he wrote [in the *Discourses*] is perhaps the most important document we have for his state of mind at this time, and it surprises me that other biographers have not understood it for what it is; a protest against the man who had so long despised his talent and held his book of the *Prince* to be of no account. One can almost read between the lines the name of Lorenzo himself where the author declares
that he did not wish to dedicate this other book of his to any prince, but to private citizens who for their infinite good qualities would greatly deserve to be [[princes]]. Ridolfi singles out Lorenzo as the target of Machiavelli's protest, but Machiavelli did not simply protest one particular Medici. He certainly had that family in mind when he wrote his dedication of the Discourses, but not to the exclusion of modern princes generally, and it is doubtful that he would miss any opportunity to chastise their ambition in one literary form or another. If the Prince is understood as satire, his "state of mind" would appear to be no different when he wrote the Discourses than when he wrote the Prince, for he is critical of tyranny in both works, although by different routes. If he attributed lunacy to a prince "who does what he likes" in the Discourses, (I. 58, 256) he provides us with an unforgettable portrait of that madman in the Prince.

There were immediate and unfavorable reactions to the Prince, which may have prompted him to "reflect on the many mistakes I have made in other circumstances," for there were many who read his manuscript then, as now, who did not appreciate the work as satire. "Everyone hated him because of The Prince: the rich thought that 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 regarded him as a heretic, the good thought him sinful, the
wicked thought him more wicked or capable than themselves, so that all hated him." Yet, "the ardent republicans among Machiavelli's friends, like Zanobi Buondelmonte, were not alienated by the Prince." Had they not understood Machiavelli's intention, they would have considered him a traitor for appealing to that family, having encouraged them to observe oppressive and tyrannical practices. As late as 1527, "Buondelmonte and Alammaneri began working at once to bring their old friend back to the service of the restored republic." These passionate patriots who, finding no remedy for the liberty of Florence but the sword, conspired against the Medici in 1522, could hardly have viewed Machiavelli as a dispassionate observer of political affairs; Buondelmonte, it will be recalled, wanted to invite Machiavelli to join them in that affair. If the Prince was an unfortunate mistake for Machiavelli, it was because he proved too clever for his own good.

Daniel Defoe suffered the consequences of his own cleverness when he carried the "pretense of innocence too far in his irony." In his The Shortest-Way With the Dissenters (1702), Defoe, "to discredit the highfliers [the High-Church Tories]" wrote "as if from their viewpoint but reducing their arguments to absurdity," with the result that "the uncovering of Defoe's hoax alienated both sides," and he wound up in the pillory.

Machiavelli used a similar tactic in the Prince, writ-
ing from the viewpoint of a new prince, which resonated in the Medici, Borgia, Petrucci, and others, while reducing their tyrannical methods to the absurd when contrasted with the ancient examples of virtue and wisdom that inspired the Discourses.

The pretense of innocence is "an important characteristic of all successful irony... the facts seem their own satire... we have the pleasure, invisibly aided by the satirists' hand, of detecting the prey and bringing it down ourselves... we may flatter ourselves that we have seen through the deceptions by which he appears to have been taken in. And when we no longer subscribe to this delusion we are not apt to be enraged, for we have now penetrated the ingenious trickery of a very clever fellow. The cleverer he was to have almost fooled even us for so long, the cleverer we are in having been able to join his sport. The whole process of understood irony is a delightful massage to our vanity."

Unfortunately, Machiavelli never reveals that the Prince was a satire, nor could he. The times were too dangerous while he was alive, the Medici too powerful. Regrettably, his pretended innocence was altogether convincing to those who were influenced by the times, who represented the very state of mind he satirized, for those who misinterpreted the Prince had become so accustomed to the ways of the powerful, even Machiavelli could be imagined as
a lackey of the Medici. And the greater irony is that the corruption he criticized in the *Prince* was given new and lasting legitimacy with the appearance of reasoned justifications by numerous commentators, justifications for that which constitutes the heart of his satire, and reflects Machiavelli's true originality.

One means by which the aura of innocence can be achieved, acknowledged by Machiavelli in the *Discourses*, is in the value of playing the fool. Citing the example of Junius Brutus, he recommends that "it is a very good notion at times to pretend to be a fool," by "pretending to be stupid," in part "to escape observation and that [one] might get a better opportunity of downing the kings and liberating [one's] country," whenever given the "chance." (III. 2, 390-1) That is, if one is "ill content with a prince," and lacking sufficient forces to make war openly, one should "use every endeavor to acquire the prince's friendship... by becoming obsequious to his wishes and taking pleasure in everything in which he takes pleasure" which provides for safety and the "opportunity for fulfilling your intentions... to play the fool, as Brutus did, and to act more or less like a lunatic, admiring, talking about, attending to, and doing things in which they have not the slightest interest in order to ingratiate themselves with the prince." (III. 2, 391-2)

In this sense, the *Prince* is an artful representation
of Machiavelli's notion of pretending the fool. In an attempt to gain the confidence of the Medici, Machiavelli humbled himself and assumed a chameleon quality, becoming "obsequious" to the wishes of the Medici, in compliance with their ambition. His recommendations were not new to the Medici and other modern princes, however, and by instructing them in how to proceed, he actually exposed them for what they were—dishonest, faithless, and immoral tyrants. In regard to the Medici, he not only encouraged them to advance their personal interests in and around Florence but extended that interest to the entire Italian Peninsula, in his call for liberation and unity in the closing chapter of the Prince. Thus, Machiavelli's satire contains "cosmic irony... entwined in human fate," which "may inspire the insights that shape a satirist's entire design." Like Brutus, Machiavelli said things "against his opinion," but, unlike Brutus, he had no real hope of getting "tied up with them" (III. 2, 392) "Machiavelli was writing under the rule of the Medici which forced him to disguise his love of liberty," and even as late as the 1520's, while he was writing his History, Donato Giannotti relates that Machiavelli expressed the following concerns:

I cannot write this history from the time when Cosimo took over the government up to the death of Lorenzo just as I would write if I were free from all reasons for caution. The actions will be true, and I shall not omit anything;
merely I shall leave out discussing the universal causes for events. For instance, I shall relate the events and the circumstances that came about when Cosimo took over the government; I shall leave untouched any discussion of the way and of the means and tricks with which one attains such power; and if anyone nevertheless wants to understand Cosimo, let him observe well what I shall have his opponents say, because what I am not willing to say as coming from myself, I shall have his opponents say."  

Allan Gilbert notes that "even in such speeches, Machiavelli sometimes substituted for his first draft softer, second thoughts." 

In oppressive societies, it is often dangerous to openly criticize those in power without great personal risk. Phaedrus' poetry contained "enough suggestion of criticism of existing evils" that it "did him harm," and Juvenal took care to name "only names from the past." Machiavelli states in the Discourses that writers were not permitted "to speak freely" of Julius Caesar, but if "anyone desires to know what writers would have said, had they been free, he has but to look at what they say of Cataline. For Caesar is more blameworthy of the two in that he who has done wrong is more blameworthy than he who has desired to do wrong."  

Clearly, Machiavelli understood the need for caution when writing about the Medici, if Donato Giannotti is credible in that regard, and had cause to fear them--nor could he have been so naive as not to have understood what the Medici
thought about him and his republican sentiments. With the exception of his comedies, Pope Leo did not, in fact, "esteem Machiavelli... highly."59

Another indication of the Medici dislike for Machiavelli can be traced to Piero Ardinghelli, secretary to Pope Leo, whom Machiavelli comically referred to in his letter to Francisco Vettori (December 10, 1513) as "this rascal Ardinghelli" who "will get himself honor from this latest work of mine," in reference to the Prince.60 Ardinghelli wrote to Giuliano on behalf of Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, in response to discussions that Machiavelli was rumored to have had with Pagolo Vettori, concerning how Giuliano should govern his new state should it materialize;61 "Cardinal de' Medici questioned me yesterday very closely if I knew whether Your Excellency had taken into his service Niccolò Machiavelli, and as I replied that I knew nothing of it nor believed it, His Lordship said to me these words: 'I do not believe it either, but as there has been word of it from Florence, I would remind him that it is not to his profit or to ours. This must be an invention of Paolo [Pagolo] Vettori: ... write to him on my behalf that I advise him not to have anything to do with Niccolò.'"62 Roberto Ridolfi offers the opinion that "If it were not clearly expressed in the unadorned eloquence of these documents, it would be difficult to believe in so implacable a hatred!"63 If one considers the reality of the relationship
between Machiavelli and the Medici, however, rather than the imagination of it, there is no basis whatever to assume that the Medici ever had anything but distrust and dislike for Machiavelli. As for Piero Ardinghelli, Machiavelli mentions him once again in a letter to Lodovico Alamanni, in Rome, December 17, 1517. In closing, he writes, "Give my regard to Messer Piero Ardinghelli, because I forgot to ask you to." In this playful innuendo, Machiavelli seems to suggest a less than congenial attitude toward Ardinghelli, which Alamanni was expected to appreciate or Machiavelli would likely not have bothered to amuse him with it.

In addition to playing the fool in the *Prince*, one could say that Machiavelli played to fools as well. Lois Spatz makes the point that in Aristophane's *Clouds*, "members of the audience... are not only spectators of a comedy but judges of the value of the play and the divinity of the Clouds... manipulated by a chorus skilled in rhetoric to decide both on the basis of nomos (aesthetic standards) and physis (advantage to themselves). They are called alternately wise men and fools." So, too, can the readers of Machiavelli's satire be characterized. The wise discern the critical air of his intent, as he hoped the audience of his play, *Mandragola*, would discover:

The sole reward he may hope to reap
Is for all to stand aside and snicker,
Decrying what they see and hear.

In like sense, Dante also distinguishes the wise:
O you whose intellects keep their sanity,
Do you mark well the doctrine shrouded o'er
By the strange verses with their mystery.\textsuperscript{67}

Machiavelli's satire was best understood by those "who knew the thinker and his thoughts,"\textsuperscript{68} and who shared his grievances, as when he states that it is his "intent to write something useful to whoever understands it," (Ch. 15, p. 61) for "If Machiavelli's friends were meant to read the manuscript of the Prince and if they took it at face value—an objective study of how to be a successful tyrant offered as advice to a member of the species—they can hardly have failed to be deeply shocked."\textsuperscript{69} But the evidence indicates that he was not abandoned by his circle of friends, as discussed above.

Unlike the wise, however, fools fail to recognize that "not always are words what they seem to be. The look of things deceives... ."\textsuperscript{70} Ashley Brown and John L. Kimmey make the point that, "Satire flourishes in homogeneous society where satirist and audience share the same view as to how normal people can be expected to behave, and in times of relative stability and contentment, for satire cannot deal with serious evil and suffering. In an age like our own, it cannot flourish except in intimate circles as an expression of private feuds; in public life the evils and sufferings are so serious that satire seems trivial and the only possible kind of attack is prophetic denunciation."\textsuperscript{71} Machiavelli did not deliver a diatribe, however, and the subtlety of his
satire missed the mark, so to speak, in the upheaval that defined his times:

[He] came into the world at a moment when political corruption was general throughout Europe, but more predominant in Italy than elsewhere on account of the greater number of persons taking part in public life. Hence the evil effects of this corruption infected every section of society in our country. Our culture enhanced the criminality of the vices and misdeeds of a statecraft no longer ruled by the blind and ungoverned passions of the Middle Ages, but the product of refined calculation and cunning, full of cruelty and devoid of scruples. With us, medieval institutions rapidly fell into decay, leaving individual members of the community deprived of all guidance save that of their own instincts.  

In the corrupt climate of his age, then, Machiavelli's *Prince* was more likely to be taken at face value, and perhaps the same could be said for our own century.

If the wise discerned his intent to criticize, fools were easily manipulated by his satire for, like the fools in his comedies, "the distinction between wise man and fool presumes a cosmos in which everything does have its proper place, its fixed limits and determinations. The fool does not know this; he is a fool precisely because he has no sense of the proper limit to, and of the appropriate context of, things, words, and acts. He is, therefore, out of harmony with the nature of things... an aberration," or, as Machiavelli himself states it, "It is no marvel if in a crazy time, the crazy come out well." So crazy were the
times, that Pope Leo presided over the Roman Catholic Church which had become so corrupt, Martin Luther precipitated the Protestant Reformation on his watch; while Luther hammered his Ninety-five Theses on the door of All Saints Church in Wittenburg, Leo revelled in having gained, once again, the duchy of Urbino for the aggrandizement of his family.

Thus, just as Phaedrus wrote for an intelligentsia that could "discern even hidden meanings," Machiavelli wrote for a circle of friends, utilizing a literary mode that would be understood by them, yet one that would protect him from his adversaries. Horace chose "to forego publication and restrict his readership to an elite circle of friends," which may have been Machiavelli's intent as well, when he first circulated the manuscript. The irony in satire is "a kind of 'double talk' which insiders understand," and the greater the degree of distortion, the greater the need for a "select audience... otherwise, as happened to Swift with The Modest Proposal, the readers may think that the distortion is the work of a lunatic, a man whose own values have been disturbed. Beneath its surface of detachment irony conceals a passion of the deepest involvement," which may account for the sense of detachment that has mislead scholars in the assumption that Machiavelli was but a clinical observer of political affairs.

Machiavelli makes the point in his History that "tyrannical and wicked" rulers fear those who understand their
ways, and "do not want anybody" to "censure" them," for which Machiavelli's *Prince* is all the more brilliant in his implicit censorship of the Medici while praising, with all manner of flattery, their person and their vices. The *Prince* must indeed have appeared comic to those who knew Machiavelli, both for the Medici model of political corruption (yet anointed as the saviours of Italy), and for his absurd vindication of tyrannical practices, what Henry Fielding describes as the general "mischief [brought] on mankind" by the aspirations of "great men," in his *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great*; as "when the mighty Caesar, with wonderful greatness of mind, had destroyed the liberties of his country, and with all means of fraud and force [had] placed himself at the head of his equals... [and] corrupted and enslaved the greatest people whom the sun ever saw... ." In this work, Fielding's praise of Jonathan Wild constitutes "a comment on [the reader's] sense of values in choosing to bestow a quite spurious glorification on such an utter rogue. Its mode of proceeding is ironic. It pretends to glorify Wild as a hero, an example of true greatness," an "ironic eulogy of a criminal, by which the destructive evil of his ways may be made clear," and this is precisely what Machiavelli did in his treatment of Cesare Borgia in the *Prince*. Machiavelli's ironic portrayal of Borgia pretended to glorify him as an example of greatness, but in describing his modes of proceeding, particularly with regard to the
elimination of his enemies, he also exposed Borgia as a criminal, as well as the failure of his enterprise, and the evil of his ways.

Machiavelli often repeats words or phrases "several times in close proximity, and such density of usage can alert us to the importance of that word in that context," a rhetorical device he employed in his dedication of the Prince, providing an indication (or marker) of the humor he has invested, albeit in a very sly fashion, in his flattering epistle. The word in question is magnificent (or magnificence) which he repeats seven times. It first appears in the title; "Niccolò Machiavelli to the Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici" (reminiscent of Il Magnifico, his grandfather), followed by two appearances in the first paragraph, one in the second, and three in the third and last paragraphs. Granting that the word magnificent reflects common usage, including that found in handbooks for princes, his redundancy nevertheless calls our attention to it.

In the first place, he seems to be overextending his sense of humility by placing exaggerated emphasis on the magnificence of the Medici, a magnificence he could not have admired, for traditionally the City of Florence had always been wary of those fellow citizens who sought elevated status or inequality.

Secondly, if Machiavelli seemed to be emulating the literary custom of superfluous embellishment common to the
traditional handbooks for princes, one should note that such works were presented to legitimate princes and kings, not to those who, like Cosimo de' Medici, "lack [ed] nothing of being prince but the title."  

In the second paragraph, however, Machiavelli gives full play to his use of the word magnificent; "I have not ornamented this work, nor filled it with fullsome phrases nor with pompous and magnificent words, nor with any blandishment or superfluous ornament whatever, with which it is customary for many to describe their things." Although he announces that he is not going to "ornament" the work with magnificent words, he proceeds to not only use the word, but to virtually crowd his little dedication with it, and the resulting effect is not only a tone of false humility and insincerity, but ridicule as well. 

Perhaps it is no coincidence that Machiavelli's dedication bears some similarity to the Proem of Savonarola's political tract, De Regimine Principum, written in 1494, a work that extols the "Consiglio Grande [Grand Council] as the proper government for Florence... handed as a major idea on the Florentine constitution to Machiavelli and the later Florentine theorists... and since the pamphlet is the theory of vivere libero, not the practice of Savonarola which may destroy it for its own purposes, we may guess that they were not wholly hostile eyes."  

J.H. Whitfield observes:
In his Proem, Savonarola proposes to discuss the new government of Florence in a manner appropriate to his modest station, without superfluous adornment of style, and for the common good... in the Discorse', Machiavelli will make, with conviction, the claim to be writing for the common good, but meanwhile in the Prince, and in a very famous passage (since it governs the whole style of the book) he repeats these Savonarolan statements, that of omission of superfluous ornaments as well as that of modesty of station, and in language which might even be reminiscence:66

In fact, Machiavelli calls attention to this passage by repeating the word ornament twice, and it is the same passage in which he states that he will use no magnificent words, quoted above from the second paragraph. If Whitfield's proposition is correct—that Savonarola's statements may have served as a "model" for Machiavelli— it is indeed ironic (and very clever) that he should have incorporated language into his dedication to the Medici from a political tract in opposition to the Medici and tyranny generally. Strongly anti-Medician, Savonarola "did not aim at monarchy in Florence, but away from one, and that the whole conclusion of his matter, and of his treatise, is to be the necessity of democratic government to avoid the rise again of tyranny à-la-Medici."88

If Machiavelli intended to reflect the language of Savonarola's treatise in his Prince, it serves as a satirical marker, designed to entertain the informed who were familiar with the political writings of the Frate, and it
probably came as no surprise that Machiavelli neglected to say he was writing for the common good as did Savonarola, who feared the "rise again" of Medici tyranny. In the *Prince*, Machiavelli not only sanctions the Medici tyranny, he pleads to participate in it.

The tone of feigned humility that permeates the dedication is intended to reflect Machiavelli's modest station, the result of his dismissal from office by the Medici. In paragraph two, he deems "this work undeserving of your presence... nor do I want it to be thought presumption if a man from a low and mean state dares to discuss and give rules for the governments of princes." In a famous passage from the same paragraph, he refers to the nature of princes and that of the people; "For just as those who sketch landscapes place themselves down in the plain to consider the nature of mountains and high places, and to consider the nature of low places place themselves high atop mountains, similarly, to know well the nature of peoples one needs to be a prince, and to know well the nature of princes, one needs to be of the people." Machiavelli creates the illusion of humility by placing himself, as one of the multitude, virtually at the feet of the Medici, but this passage is a thinly veiled fabrication on his part, for to consider the nature of a prince from a distance has everything to do with appearances and little to do with reality. In the *History*, Machiavelli remarks that "so much more at a dis-
tance than nearby the things that make a show are feared," for appearances often deceive until it is too late to apply a remedy. In the Prince, Machiavelli likens appearances to consumption, "easy to cure and difficult to recognize" in the early stages, but when it is far enough advanced to be recognized, it is "difficult to cure," just as "in the affairs of state... because when one recognizes from afar the evils that arise in a state (which is not given but to one who is prudent), they are soon healed; but when they are left to grow because they were not recognized, to the point that everyone recognizes them, there is no longer any remedy for them." (Ch. 3, 12)

Machiavelli offers the example of Cosimo de' Medici, in the Discourses, whose reputation "began to arouse alarm for the security of [Florence's] government; with the result that his fellow-citizens thought it dangerous to touch him, and still more dangerous to let him alone." (I 33, 192) Failure to recognize such evils results from the art of deceptive appearances. "Men in general judge more by their eyes than by their hands because seeing is given to everyone, touching to few. Everyone sees how you appear, few touch what you are... ," and thus the prince should "appear all mercy, all faith, all honesty, all humanity, all religion," (Ch. 18, 70) to better achieve his design, although he need not actually have those qualities. The people, then, cannot know the true nature of a prince from a dis-
tance, as Machiavelli suggests, for that is given only to those who can touch. As his satire unfolds, however, he will expose the true nature of princes, and in that sense touching will be given to all.

Conversely, a new prince who elevates himself above the level of his fellow citizens succeeds precisely because he does understand their nature having touched them, so to speak (and for his own self interest) with his wealth and his influence, making them his partisans, as did the Medici in Florence. Thus, when Machiavelli states that "to know well the nature of the people one needs to be a prince," he alludes to the corrupt means by which the new prince attained his position. In order for such a man to triumph, however, the people must also be corrupt; "If anyone, then, wants to seize supreme power in a republic and to impose on it a bad form of government, it is essential that he should find there a material which has in course of time become disordered and that this disorder shall have been introduced little by little and in one generation after another," (III. 8, 429) as in his example of Spurius Cassius, whose ambition became suspect to the people because they were not corrupt, and thus they "closed the way to tyranny." (III. 8, 426)

Despite Machiavelli's attempt to segregate the natures of the prince and the people in his dedicatory remarks, for the purpose of exposing the means by which a private indi-
vidual rises to princely status, he did in fact think their natures "pretty much the same, or, if one be better than the other, it is the populace... due to the greater or less respect which they have for the laws under which both are living," and "a prince who contemns the laws [as would be consistent with the nature of a tyrant], will be more ungrateful, fickle, and imprudent than the populace." Thus, "the nature of the masses, then, is no more reprehensible than is the nature of the princes, for all do wrong and to the same extent when there is nothing to prevent them doing wrong." Further, there is more "inconstancy and changeability in behaviour" in the prince, and Machiavelli argues against the "common opinion which asserts that the populaces, when in power, are variable, fickle, and ungrateful... were the accusation made against both the masses and the prince, it would be true, but if princes be excepted, it is false." (I. 48, 254) Yet, as though the people were in power which they were not, Machiavelli incorporates that "common opinion" into his assessment of the populace in the Prince, "that they are ungrateful, fickle," and variable as "pretenders and dissemblers," "evaders of danger," as well as "eager for gain," (Ch. 17, 66) without making the same accusations against the prince, who is in power, but "excepted" by Machiavelli. In fact, he praises faithlessness, deception, and gain in the policies and personal characteristics of the new prince which, in its irony, reflects the
seductive distortion he creates in the Prince.

Although Machiavelli almost treats the populace as a non-entity in the Prince, susceptible to manipulation by the new prince but of little more account, he does not fail to issue a warning to the prince, implied within the context of variability, charged against the people: "While you do them good, they are yours, offering you their blood, property, lives, and children... when the need for them is far away; but when it is close to you, they revolt," (Ch. 17, 66) which prompted Garrett Mattingly to observe, "the only lesson for princes would seem to be: 'Run for your life!'"90

In the last paragraph, Machiavelli begins, "Therefore, Your Magnificence, take this small gift in the spirit with which I send it." Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. notes that "animo refers to the 'spirit' with which human beings defend themselves, [and] never to a capacity for self-detachment (anima, [or] soul, does not occur in The Prince)."91 It is quite provocative to imagine that Machiavelli may have intended the word "spirit" to imply that his little gift was, in reality, a contrived defense against his enemies, the Medici, and the power they represented. Mansfield also provides a second interpretation; spirit "can also mean 'mind' in the sense of 'intent', but not in the sense of 'intellect',"92 and as I do not think it was Machiavelli's intent to grovel at the feet of the Medici, begging for his part in the destruction of liberty not only in Florence, but
in all of Italy, he could only have intended to raise his voice in denunciation of the "great, obvious, and widespread evils"\(^93\) that lead free cities to slavery. In the Italy of his time, Machiavelli blamed the "princes," those "who have done everything to bring us here,"\(^94\) described in chilling detail, in his *Prince*.

And when Machiavelli expresses his "extreme desire," in which the word "extreme" exaggerates his point, that Lorenzo (and formerly Giuliano) should "arrive at the greatness that fortune and your other qualities promise you," in his closing paragraph, he omits virtue, nor can fortune be considered a human quality. In fact, he is alluding to "fortunate astuteness," that oblique term he uses to describe the attribute of those who become "prince of their Fatherland," in a "civil principality" where "neither all virtue nor all fortune [are] necessary to attain it," a form of principality in which "his citizens, always and in every quality of time, have need of himself and of the state," (Ch. 9, 39-42) the promise of Medici principality.
PART II: The Prince

Chapter V. Comic Writer

Therefore if I sometimes will laugh or sing,
It is because I have no other way
To conceal my distressful suffering

Petrarch

So then if sometimes I laugh or sing
I do it because I have just this one way
For expressing my anxious sorrow.

Machiavelli

Machiavelli had a wonderful sense of humor and extraordinary wit, as those who are familiar with his plays would undoubtedly acknowledge, and his ability and inclination to write a political satire, such as the Prince, would likely come as no surprise to those who are so informed. Scholars, however, who have focused primarily (if not exclusively) on his political works have resisted a satirical interpretation of the Prince, with very few exceptions, despite the fact that viewing it as satire "not only clears up puzzles and resolves contradictions; it gives a new dimension and meaning to passages unremarkable before." For the most part, however, consideration of the Prince as satire has been excluded from the debate regarding the mystery of Machiavelli (prompted by those puzzles and contradictions that abound in his works) and a satisfactory resolution to the problem of interpretation has not found general agreement among scholars after nearly five centuries.

Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. remarks that "although
Machiavelli scholars permit themselves most of the human indulgences, there is one rule of sobriety they observe with monastic strictness: never laugh! If they laugh just once, it may be because the preacher told a joke, and if he told a joke, how can he be a preacher?" Thus, Machiavelli's political views might be compromised in some way by admitting to his humor and wit, if not his chicanery. Perhaps the Prince will never be recognized as satire without admitting to those attributes, but the fact remains that his sense of the comic is evident in many of his writings.

Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. refers to a passage in the Discourses, in which Machiavelli, "In one of his objections to the modern reliance on cavalry, compares this situation to a spirited horse ridden by a cowardly man, or a cowardly horse ridden by a spirited man... This remark becomes more and more funny the longer one thinks about it." In another example from the Discourses, in commenting on the good effects of encouraging words in battle, Machiavelli advises that, "if on a well disciplined army such remarks have a great effect, on a disorderly and ill-disciplined army they have a still greater effect, for the whole is swayed, as it were, by the wind." (III. 14, 446)

We have an occasional glimpse of his humor in the History, as well. In the chapter following his discussion of papal nepotism, he refers to the election of Peter of Marrone, as Pope Celestine, who "being... altogether holy,
after six months he renounced the papacy."

And in his discussion of Antonio Tassino of Ferrara, who served Duke Galeazzo of Milan as Chamberlain to the Duchess, his wife, Machiavelli explains that, "Either because he was handsome or because of some secret ability, after the death of the Duke he rose to such influence with the Duchess that he almost ruled the state."7

Machiavelli's playful nature is often in evidence in his letters as well. Writing to Lodovico Alamanni, December 17, 1517, he remarks, "I have just read Orlando Furioso by Ariosto, and truly the poem is fine throughout, and in many places is wonderful. If he is there, give him my regards, and tell him I am only sorry that, having spoken of so many fine poets, he has left me out like a dog, and has done to me in his Orlando what I shall not do to him in my Ass."8 Machiavelli is referring to his poem The Golden Ass, which Tommasini maintains is properly titled The Ass.9

While on a mission to the Franciscan friars in Carpi, in the spring of 1521, Machiavelli made the most of his poor circumstances by sharing his comic observations in a letter to his friend, Francesco Guicciardini, written in response to one received from Guicciardini "while sitting on the privy seat... thinking of the absurdities of this world."10 To ease the idle hours, Machiavelli speculated as to "how I can sow so much discord among them that either here or elsewhere they may start hitting each other with their
sandals," and he pleads with Guicciardini to send a letter by servant everyday:

... you would give me light on some things quite to my purpose... you would make me more esteemed by those in the house, seeing the messages come thick. And I can tell you that on the arrival of this arbalester with the letter, and making a bow down to the earth, and with his saying that he was sent especially and in haste, everybody rose up with so many signs of respect and such noise that everything was turned upside down, and I was asked by several about the news and I, that its reputation might grow, said that the Emperor was expected at Trent, and that the Swiss had summoned new diets, and that the King of France wanted to go in person to speak with that king, but that his councilors advised him against it; so that they all stood with open mouths and with their caps in their hands; and while I write I have a circle of them around me, and seeing me write at length they are astonished, and look on me as inspired; and I, to make them wonder more, sometimes hold my pen still and swell up, and then they slaver at the mouth; but if they could see what I am writing, they would marvel at it more. Your lordship knows that these friars say that when one is confirmed in grace, the Devil has no more power to tempt him. So I have no more fear that these friars will make me a hypocrite, because I believe I am very well confirmed."

There is a compelling tone of anguish throughout this letter, despite its humor, for clearly he misses his former position in the government of Florence, reveling in the significant and often urgent affairs of state. That he viewed his misfortune in comic relief reflects his true character, as he who ridiculed others did not exempt him-
self. And this letter testifies to his ability to mask his agony with comic absurdity as, I would argue, he did in the
Prince, written at a time when his personal loss was inextricably joined to the misfortune of Florence as well. If
the absurd notions he championed in the Prince are not recognized as such by us, his readers, it is because how we
look determines what we see, and in every corrupt age, we can be fooled by "the false semblance of good and the false
semblance of renown." (I. 10, 135)

Nor did Machiavelli lack the skill to employ subtle and clever rhetorical devices. Writing to Gucciardini in Au-
gust, 1527, he described a farm in Tuscany; "I shall begin everything from Finochieto,"\(^13\) which was the "name of the
farm" and the "diminutive of finocchio (fennel), proverbially the last thing to come to the dining table."\(^14\) James B.
Atkinson makes the point that Machiavelli "is not above manipulating language," and acknowledges his use of "poly-
ptoton, a reiteration of words derived from the same root, but with different endings or forms," as well as his use of
puns.\(^15\)

Machiavelli's works are entertaining, even when the subject matter is grave; "No paragraph in The Prince and The
Discourses has been understood until you have found something funny in it. If you are not in more or less constant
amusement when reading Machiavelli's books, you should consider yourself bewildered,"\(^16\) as for example in his refer-
ence to the people under a 'prince' in a "civil principality" as "his citizens," in chapter nine. (Ch. 9, 42) Failure to recognize Machiavelli's humor has created scholarly problems as well. Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. illustrates the point by referring to Machiavelli's discussion of a Publius Ruberius in the Discourses:

In example, Machiavelli cites the tumults over the Terentillian law, proposed to limit the power of the consuls, and remarks that on one occasion they were stopped when 'one Publius Ruberius, a grave citizen of authority, came out of the Senate and with words partly loving, partly menacing, pointed out to them the danger to the city,' and got the plebs to swear not to depart from the wish of the consul. Now the trouble is that the grave citizen's name according to Livy was Publius Valerius, not Publius Ruberius, and Machiavelli in fact names him correctly in the next sentence. Walker, the pre-Straussian commentator, looked high and low in the annals of the Roman republic to find 'Publius Ruberius,' and reports his failure. Strauss offhandedly suggested translating 'publius Ruberius' into Italian, by which it becomes 'public robber.' Two post-Straussian commentators, Bertelli and Puppo, who are well acquainted with Walker's commentary and not afraid to borrow from it, pass over this difficulty in silence."

Thus, Machiavelli's humor seems everywhere apparent, even in the letters he wrote from the "gloomy court of Cesare Borgia" at Imola, to his colleagues in Florence, letters that "made everyone die laughing! Unfortunately, these are lost, and judging by the others he wrote to friends, it is a serious loss to Italian literature."18 That
Machiavelli used humor, then, as a means of criticizing and exposing the nature of a corrupt society should not surprise anyone. In Mandragola, he revealed "the baseness of Italian society,"¹⁹ and in his comedies generally, he sought "to teach lessons useful to life... by holding up a mirror to domestic life."²⁰ So, too, in the Prince, he unmasked the greed and ambition prevalent in political life, the destructive influence of power in the service of self-interest; "Satire offers considerable evidence that the good often suffer, the wicked prosper, and lions prefer eating lambs to lying down with them."²¹ If there is levity to be found in such circumstances, trust the satirist to provide that as well. The greater the danger, the more the poet must trust in his own cleverness. We, his readers, may not laugh out loud. We may not laugh at all. But no matter how perverse the satire, if the poet's intent is understood, and his wit is equal to the task, we will be entertained—and perhaps enlightened as well.

Like the ever-laughing Sage
In a Jest I spend my Rage
(Tho' it must be understood
I would hang them if I cou'd:)

Jonathan Swift²²
Chapter VI. Kinds of Principalities

Machiavelli originally titled his work "De Principatibus (of Principalities)," and it is not known exactly when the title was changed to the Prince. All of the early printed editions give the title "Il Principe," but it was not published in Machiavelli's lifetime. Therefore, one cannot "say with absolute certainty what title he would finally have given it." Ivan Cloulas suggests that "the character most often referred to is in fact Cesare Borgia. In his honor posterity would change the book's title to The Prince." While Machiavelli referred to the work as On Princedoms, however, in a letter to Vettori (December 10, 1513), and again, generalized in book two of the Discourses On the First Ten Books of Titius Livius in reference to "my treatise on principalities," he calls it "The Prince" by the time he had written Book Three of the Discourses. Therefore it is reasonable to surmise that perhaps posterity did not title Machiavelli's work The Prince but Machiavelli himself, if not officially. At any rate, in the earlier manuscript form, he titled it Of Principalities, and it was by that title that readers first became familiar with his work.

L. Arthur Burd remarks that it is not "easy to see why such importance should have been attached to the question [of the title]," but for an interpretation of the Prince as satire, it is a significant consideration, for it appears to
be a work concerned with principalities generally under the original title, *Of Principalities*. Yet, it soon becomes clear that Machiavelli is concerned with only one kind of principality, that which is acquired by a new prince of the sort, described by Garrett Mattingly as those princes "who have newly acquired their principalities and do not owe them either to inheritance or to the free choice of their countrymen. The short and ugly word for this kind of prince is 'tyrant'... Opinions about relative merits of republics and monarchies varied during the Renaissance, depending mainly upon where one lived, but about tyrants there was only one opinion... 'If we consult the laws of any well-constituted republic, we should find them to decree no greater reward to anyone than to the man who kills the tyrant'... so said the Italian Renaissance with almost unanimous voice."" 
Machiavelli thus does not go directly to his target by beginning his work with a discussion of the new prince. Rather, he begins by generalizing about principalities, as the title *Of Principalities* would lead one to expect of the work. Had he not done so, having dedicated the work to the Medici, the parallels between the Medici and the new prince would have been all too obvious, defeating the literary advantage of satire, which masks intent when there is reason for caution.

Chapter one, "How many are the kinds of principalities and in what modes are they acquired," (Ch. 1, 5) is remark-
able for its brevity (one short paragraph), in which he presents the subject in mere perfunctory statements. As Machiavelli did not write a preface to the *Prince*, his introductory paragraph seems all the more abrupt. Further, the lengthy title is in Latin, which lends an even greater import to his brief narrative, symbolizing the learning, dignity, and air of antiquity. Although it was not uncommon for Machiavelli to give "Latin titles to his vernacular works," in the *Prince* he gives Latin titles to the chapters as well, a practice he did not observe in the *Discourses*, despite the fact that both works were begun at about the same time, and are viewed by many scholars as "interdependent aspects of an organically unified outlook," or, as Machiavelli might describe it, "... one soul in two bodies, or rather two souls in one body, in order not to make a mistake." 

Superficially, this discrepancy between the two works does not seem an important one, merely reflecting a variation in form. Machiavelli may, however, have intentionally used Latin chapter titles in the *Prince* to amplify, in the minds of those who understood his intent, his view of the clear departure of modern practices from ancient modes of proceeding. That is, Latin was "the language of traditional learning." Thus, his chapter headings allude to the traditions and ancient wisdom he admired, while the body, written in the vernacular, reflects the vulgar and corrupt present
in which "one comes across nothing but extreme misery, infamy, and contempt, for there is no observance either of religion or of the laws, or military traditions... and so much the more are these vices detestable when they are more prevalent among those who sit in the judgement seat, prescribe rules for others, and expect from them adoration."^12

The symbolism of Machiavelli's Latin chapter titles, then, is the key, which not only suggests the ancients in terms of practices, but in literary form as well. Petrarch, who is often quoted in Machiavelli's works, examined the "literature of the ancients" for "their style and their ethical value, for what they could teach about human nature and human society,"^13 that which inspired the great poets of the Italian Renaissance, and Machiavelli as well.

Felix Gilbert offers Machiavelli's Latin chapter headings as evidence for his assertion that "Machiavelli endeavored to adapt the form of his book to the conventional literary form of this genre... like the works of [his] predecessors," the "humanist prince-literature," in which he "was consciously refuting his predecessors and that his intention has left its mark on The Prince."^14 The similarities between the traditional handbook for princes and Machiavelli's Prince are quite apparent, although I would suggest that his refutation was not aimed solely at the humanists in the interest of power politics. Rather, he took aim at the broad spectrum of political life that formed
his experience, the people and events that contributed to his cynicism, from which emerged an explosion of contempt. As Garrett Mattingly observes, "The Prince imitates, almost parodies, one of the best known and most respected literary forms of the three preceding centuries, the handbook of advice to princes... In some ways, Machiavelli's little treatise was just like all the other mirrors of Princes; in other ways it was a diabolical burlesque of them all, a political Black Mass."^{13}

Leo Strauss refers to the Prince as combining "a traditional surface with a revolutionary center," in which at first sight, The Prince belongs to the traditional genre of Mirrors of Princes, which are primarily addressed to legitimate princes; and the most familiar case of the legitimate prince is the undisputed heir. Machiavelli almost opens The Prince by following custom in calling the hereditary prince the 'natural prince.'"^{16} Strauss is referring to Chapter Two on hereditary principalities, (Ch. 1, 5-6) in which Machiavelli abruptly dismisses the general topic of hereditary principalities while, as Strauss observes, adhering to the traditional form of the genre of handbooks for princes. He effectively preserves just enough of the form to give the appearance of a traditional handbook. Why would he bother with such trivia, or trouble himself to frame his new revolutionary ideas in a traditional genre? He was not reluctant to state, in his preface to Book I of the Discourses,
that "I have decided to enter upon a new way, as yet untrodden by anyone else," a remark that would have provided a provocative introduction to the *Prince*.

The traditional handbook for princes reflected an old literary form which "occupied the center of the stage in the intellectual discussions of his day." Begun in antiquity, it "developed into a complete and compact literary form, that of the 'mirror of princes,' which survived until the nineteenth century." During the second half of the fifteenth century... it re-emerged as a favorite topic of discussion."¹⁷ At issue was the medieval concept of the prince, as "intermediary between God and man,"¹⁸ and the Humanists view, which "abandoned religious motives in political theory," and "founded their arguments on historical example instead of abstract theoretical deduction."¹⁹

Ferdinand Schevill reminds us that if Machiavelli thought the "ideology of Christianity... dead," this was not true in the "rest of Europe... at the very time that Machiavelli propounded his doctrine of the state as power, Erasmus set forth a diametrically opposed and strictly pacifist view in his *Plea of Peace* and his *Education of a Christian Prince,*" while Sir Thomas More "projected, in his *Utopia*, an ideal society patterned on apostolic Christianity."²⁰ The shock value of the *Prince*, then, can be attributed both to its substance, and to Machiavelli's clever adaptation of the traditional handbook for princes, that which
made the Prince "so provocative [with] its transformation of a Christian and humanist genre, the moralistic 'mirror of princes' literature, into a platform for expounding the thesis of power politics," what J.R. Hale refers to as "a bomb in a prayerbook." 

As a vehicle for satire, the handbook for princes was a perfect choice, for certain expectations of tradition accompanied it as a literary form, which intensified the degree of distortion achieved by Machiavelli, between the ideal and the reality. He could not have accomplished the effect of a "bomb in a prayerbook" with the same blush of humor had he chosen another literary mode.

In yet another context, Machiavelli makes sport of prince-literature when he discusses the "character of Cosimo" in the History; "If when writing of the things done by Cosimo, I have imitated those who write the lives of princes, not those who write general histories, nobody should be astonished; since he was a man rare in our city, I have been obliged with an unusual method to praise him." That is, to categorize him as a prince; a subtle criticism. In the History, Machiavelli commends Cosimo for his corrupting influence; "But after he was forty years old, he lived very happily, so that not merely those who sided with him in public affairs but also those who had charge of his property in all Europe shared in his prosperity. From this very great riches came to many families in Florence... and in
addition to these, all who depended on his advice and fortune grew rich," creating inequality in Florence, which ultimately leads to acquiring "sole authority," and factional disunity. By using his wealth and influence, Cosimo aided both "individuals" and the "people," and while being "compassionate, helpful, liberal, and loved by everybody" are all "methods that bring men flying to the principate," the people don't realize it, and do "not lend [their] ears to such accusations."^25

If Machiavelli's Prince is a burlesque of the original prince-literature, it was not simply an effort to satirize the genre itself but, rather, in the spirit of the Latin satirists, "to set up in the reader's mind a contrast between the circumstances where such passages were appropriate and the ridiculous and often sordid situations to which they applied them."^27

In Chapter Two, Machiavelli also dismisses the subject of hereditary principalities with considerable economy. Machiavelli's target, in the Prince, is new principalities, acquired by a new prince. In the first three chapters, however, he maintains the appearance of a comprehensive analysis of principalities generally, at least with his chapter titles. In Chapter Three, Machiavelli discusses new acquisitions added to an old principality, "so that taken as a whole it can be called almost mixed," (Ch. 3, 7) to make way for the principality that is altogether new.
In Chapter Three, Machiavelli remarks that there is a certain "instability" brought about by the "natural difficulty that exists in all new principalities," (Ch. 3, 7-8) even when they are acquired by an established prince. To illustrate the point, Machiavelli turns to King Louis XII of France, citing the mistakes he made in his acquisitions of Milan and Naples, in effect demonstrating how it could be better accomplished another time! Leo Strauss remarks, "the primary example in Chapter Three is the policy of conquest practiced by King Louis XII of France; but the country in which he tried to acquire new territory was Italy... Machiavelli discusses the difficulties obstructing foreign conquests in Italy, a subject important to the liberator of Italy. By discussing the mistakes the French King committed in attempting to make lasting conquests in Italy, Machiavelli undoubtedly gives advice to foreign conquerors as to how to go about making conquests in his own fatherland."28

If we grant that Machiavelli did indeed give such advice, what was his purpose? Strauss explains it as "the reverse side, if the odious side, of advice as to how to defend Italy against foreign domination or as to how to liberate Italy,"29 certainly a convoluted approach to a straightforward problem. Keeping in mind that the Prince is a satire, however, there are two possible explanations. The first is that by instructing the French as to how to
invade Italy successfully, Machiavelli contradicts his exhortation to "free" Italy "from the barbarians," in Chapter Twenty-six. (Ch. 26, 101) Contradictions of this sort create confusion in the text, as he intended.

The second explanation is less obvious. Throughout the Prince, Machiavelli takes on the qualities of the new prince himself. That is, he offers advice that accords with his impressions of modern princes generally, although he disapproves of their ambition and character. Therefore, in suggesting the ways that Louis XII might successfully invade Italy, he commits the error—a most grievous one—of those princes who have invited foreigners into the country to aid them in their enterprises. He is not so obvious as to invite the French, but his counsel hints at that objective. It is probably not a coincidence that he chose the example of the French, in Chapter Three, who descended on Italy at the request of Ludovico Sforza, which launched four decades of war and chaos, thus constituting a subtle criticism.

Machiavelli faults Louis, however, for "making the Church great by adding so much temporal greatness to the spiritual one that gives it so much authority," (Ch. 3, 14) which directs our attention to the Medici who are, after all, the intended liberators of Italy in the Prince. Further, to emphasize his point, Machiavelli refers to his conversation with the Cardinal of Rouen, who remarked that the "Italians do not understand war," to which Machiavelli
replied, "the French do not understand the state, because if they understood, they would not have let the Church come to such greatness," (Ch. 3, 16) which not only upset the balance of power among the Italian states, but contributed to the ruin of France in Italy as well.

Further, Machiavelli was opposed to the power of the Church "because he did not like the rule of priests, who had ruined both the religion of Christ and his other religion, the state... as a Florentine and an Italian he hated the temporal power of the Church." Yet, through his appeal to the Medici in the Prince to seize and unite Italy, he invited the expansion of the temporal power of the Church through Pope Leo X; "Now the Church was led by a Florentine, who united the power of the Florentine State with his ecclesiastical power, he had a young brother and a young nephew, both seeking to rule, and he himself was marvelously 'favored by heaven and by fortune,'" as Roberto Ridolfi describes the Medici. While Ridolfi finds Pope Julius II an undesirable model for the Prince, in part for having been "the destroyer of Florentine freedom," and the fact that Machiavelli did not like the rule of priests, he curiously accepts the Medici model, whose re-constituted rule was the ultimate destroyer of Florentine liberty and the republic, and who now occupied the throne of papal authority, the first necessity for expanding Medici power.

The sense of urgency that Machiavelli expresses in
Chapter Twenty-six, then, with such remarks as "one should not let this opportunity pass," (Ch. 26, 105) and "I do not know what time has been more apt for it," (Ch. 26, 102) with regard to seizing Italy and liberation, suggest the extent of Machiavelli's satire which targets the temporal (and corrupt) power of the Church, and the abuse of that power by the Borgia Pope and others before him, whose nepotism allowed their family members to reach heights otherwise inaccessible to them. To further amplify his point, Machiavelli deliberately mentions that he had the conversation with the Cardinal of Rouen "when Valentino (for so Cesare Borgia, son of Pope Alexander, was called by the people) was occupying the Romagna." (Ch. 3, 16) If the French did not "understand the state... or they would not have let the Church come to such greatness," (Ch. 3, 16) mention of Cesare Borgia emphasizes his point, which extends to the ambition of the Medici, as well. Thus, while Borgia is developed in succeeding chapters as the primary model for the Prince, Machiavelli makes first mention of him in what I would argue admits to his true assessment of that family, deserving of blame for advancing the secular power of the Church, and using that power to install a family member as a new prince in Italy. The Medici were blameworthy, as well, for harboring similar ambitions.

Pope Leo is conspicuously absent in the Prince, although the Medici power was dependent on his influence.
Machiavelli cleverly focused (in his dedication) on Giuliano and Lorenzo, but the Church is implied, particularly in Chapter Twenty-six, in which Machiavelli calls on Leo to redeem Italy, "supported by God and by the Church of which it is now prince." (Ch. 26, 102-3) Pope Leo is only mentioned once by name, however, in the Prince, in Chapter Eleven on ecclesiastical principalities in which Machiavelli expresses the hope that he will continue to bring the Church to greatness. (Ch. 11, 47) But that is precisely what Machiavelli opposed, "a Church come to such greatness." (Ch. 3, 16) As was the case with Cesare Borgia in the Romagna, neither Giuliano or Lorenzo had the slightest hope to achieve princely power beyond Florence without the aid of Vatican resources and political influence.

Nor did Machiavelli have faith in the Church to unite Italy in common cause, for the Church lacked "power" and "virtue." He accuses the Church of causing "weakness" in Italy, and illustrates his point with the example of the Swiss, "who are the only people who today, with respect both to religion and to military institutions, live as the ancients did," and were the Court of Rome to take "the authority it has in Italy" to the Swiss "territories," it would "cause" more "disorder in that country" than any other event at any time whatsoever has been able to bring about." (I. 12, 145-6) If Machiavelli had so little faith in the ability of the Church to unite Italy, it is ironic that he called
on the Medici, then, to lead Italy's liberation. Only in satire can Machiavelli's appeal to that family be understood, for not only was he opposed to priestly rule and increasing the power of the Church, but he blamed the Church for its inability to ward off aggressors and for Italy's state of disarray. Nor were there secure foundations in states acquired by popes on behalf of their sons and relatives, for the fortune and authority of such princes were tied to that of the pope, the most ill-conceived of foundations owing to their relatively brief reign (as exemplified in the Borgia), and thus deserving of blame, not praise.

Machiavelli was aware of Pope Leo's grandiose ambitions for his family before he wrote the Prince, evidenced in his correspondence with Francesco Vettori who, from his close association with the pope in Rome, learned of Leo's plans and attempted to dissuade him from them. Machiavelli received a letter from Vettori (July 12, 1513), in which Vettori refers to the "contradiction between Leo's ambition for the Church and those for his family." John M. Najamey makes the point that "this letter contains the first mention in the correspondence of the idea of installing Giuliano and Lorenzo in territorial states of their own," in reference to Pope Leo's "purpose... to maintain the Church in the prestige... in which he found it, not to allow any loss of territory... unless what is lost be given to members of his family, namely Giuliano and Lorenzo, to whom he plans in any
case to give territories [(over which they can rule)].”

While Vettori was convinced that Leo would ultimately lose Parma and Piacenza (reacquired in May, 1513), due to forthcoming agreements among the major powers, and he argued his reasons before the pope "on more than one occasion," nonetheless, the pope "followed his own plan," and was "ultimately unable to realize his objectives in Lombardy... It would have been wiser, if his purpose was indeed 'to maintain the Church in the prestige in which he found it,' to forget about Parma and Piacenza and not to put himself in a situation in which he might have to yield, as a result either of military defeat or an embarrassing concession, territories whose prompt reacquisition he himself had made the first and most urgent aim of his pontificate," all of which calls into question Machiavelli's remark concerning Pope Leo, in the Prince, having "found this pontificate most powerful... he with his goodness and infinite other virtues, can make it very great and venerable." (Ch. 11, 47) If, in fact, Machiavelli was in agreement with Vettori, his words concerning Leo in the Prince are a mockery, for Leo's actions were imprudent, impetuous, and highly questionable as to motive. As Vettori suggests, "The pope was thus undermining his own objectives," whose policies (Leo's) were "similar" to those "pursued by nearly all the popes since the previous century and that his relatives in Florence hardly thought of anything else... so little did Vettori
think of the idea that he did not even wish to speculate about what territories the pope had in mind for this project, 'because in this matter he will switch his plans as circumstances require'... a final confirmation of the gap between Leo's stated purpose and his actions, between the ends he said he was pursuing and the means he claimed to be using in that pursuit.' Vettori's views, it seems to me, reflect those one might expect from the republicans of Florence, including Machiavelli, who anticipated with disdain the Medicean efforts to expand their power, as evidenced by the conspiracies against that family.

While Machiavelli's response to Vettori's letter is not extant, he seems to have given full impetus to the notion of Leo's nepotism in the Prince, and in his letter to Vettori (January 31, 1514 or 1515), in which he also makes reference to Cesare Borgia. The date that appears on the original copy of this letter is January 31, 1514. The alternative and generally accepted date is 1515. Machiavelli's mention of Reggio and Modena as cities to be governed by the Medici suggest the later date as the correct one, although the text of this letter seems more appropriate to the year 1514, upon Machiavelli's completion of the Prince. Perhaps the letter was altered by Machiavelli himself at a later date, to accommodate the acquisition of Reggio and Modena by the pope (1514), which further enhances the opportunity taken by Machiavelli, in the letter in question, to advance his
counsel concerning the governing of a new Medicean state. And perhaps, in the larger view, it is possible that Machiavelli used this letter as a means of protecting himself by rendering added credulity and sincerity to his intent in the Prince, not for Vettori's benefit, who understood, but for the benefit of others who might become familiar with the correspondence between them. In fact, Machiavelli, given his familiarity with ancient literati, may have borrowed the idea from Horace that letters can serve the intent of the satirist, and in this regard, Machiavelli's letter is both pertinent and revealing.

Just as he did in the Prince, Machiavelli presumes to instruct Giuliano in the governance of a new "sovereignty," and he advises that Giuliano, "if he is going to govern it well, he needs to understand well the nature of the subject." As he did in the Prince, Machiavelli established the mask of innocence by pretending sincerity. The interesting (and comic) aspect of this letter, however, is that he gives practical and personalized application of his precepts from the Prince in the example of Francesco Vettori's brother, Pagolo, who hopes for appointment from the Medici as governor in their new, unified state; "your Pagolo has been here with the Magnificent [Giuliano], and in the course of his discussions with me on his hopes, he said His Lordship has promised to make him governor of one of those cities of which he is now taking the sovereignty."
Machiavelli gives the example of Cesare Borgia and Remirro de Orco, to make a mockery of what the appointment could mean for Vettori's brother, Pagolo:

Duke Valentino, whose works I should always imitate if I were prince... make Messer Remirro President in Romagna; that decision made those people united, fearful of his authority, fond of his power, and trustful in it; and all the love they felt for him, which was great, considering his newness, resulted from this decision. I believe this thing can easily be demonstrated, because it is true; and if it should happen to your Pagolo, this would be a step in making him known not merely to the Magnificent but to all Italy; and with honor and profit to his Lordship, he could give reputation to himself, to you, and to your family. I spoke of it with him; it pleased him, and he will consider making use of it. I have thought it well to write about it, so that you will know our discussions and, wherever it is necessary, can pave the way to this thing.\textsuperscript{43}

Urging the Medici to follow the example of Cesare Borgia is but to repeat a familiar theme from the Prince, but in associating Pagolo with the fate of Remirro, Machiavelli makes a joke of Pagolo's aspirations and ridicules his own recommendations at the same time, for Remirro was sacrificed at the behest of his prince, Duke Valentino. As Ivan Cloulas describes the event, "the people of Cesena found [Remirro's] headless body lying in the middle of the piazza. He was dressed in his rich suit and purple mantle. His head, with its black beard, was impaled on a pike, while beside the corpse lay the bloodstained execution block and
blade," from which "Machiavelli drew a moral... the reason for his death is not known, save that the Prince willed it so, which shows that he can make and unmake men at his will, according to their merits," as he recorded in a dispatch from Cesena, December 26, 1502.44

Machiavelli gave yet another explanation in the Prince, however. In Chapter Seven, he notes that, in order to "reduce" the Romagna to "peace and obedience to a kingly arm," Cesare installed Remirro, "a cruel and ready man, to whom he gave the fullest power," and then "to purge the spirits of that people and gain them entirely to himself... to show that if any cruelty had been committed, this had not come from him but from the harsh nature of his minister," (Ch. 7, 29-30) he had him hacked to pieces. The reference to Remirro, then, with regard to Pagolo Vettori, is meant to be a humorous one, a hint of the reputation that Pagolo can expect from the new prince, which would make him "known not merely to the Magnificent but to all Italy," whose actions (and fate) would reflect on his family, as well, including Francesco Vettori. Machiavelli makes no mention of Remirro's untimely death in the letter, of course, which he leaves to be inferred by Vettori, and savored as the great irony of his recommendations to Giuliano and Pagolo.

If Cesare was loved by the people of Cesena for killing Remirro, he was "hated, feared, and despised" everywhere else, "even by most of the faction who had stood by the old
pope [Alexander VI]."\(^{45}\) Machiavelli does not state that he was loved in the *Prince* or the *Discourses*, as he does in this letter, but he does observe, in one of his dispatches, that Cesare was "universally feared."\(^{46}\) And in the *Discourses*, he observes that those princes who have "become tyrants in their own country" will find the people desire to "avenge themselves against the persons who have become the cause of their servitude," as did Clearchus, who "cut to pieces all the nobles to the immense satisfaction of the popular party, and in this way satisfied one of the demands of the populace, namely, the demand for vengeance." (I. 16, 156) Machiavelli, recognizing that such methods are useful tools for tyranny, then, appropriately applied them in the *Prince*.

There is, of course, a third explanation for Remirro's death, not referred to by Machiavelli in the *Prince*. He was "condemned to death for embezzlement, accused of exporting huge quantities of wheat he was suppose to bring back." As Ivan Cloulas points out, however, "What really earned him the death penalty was that he had treacherously plotted with the condottiere to trap Il Valentino,"\(^{47}\) at Sinigaglia. Cesare put down the plot in ruthless fashion, having discovered it from Remirro after his arrest.\(^{48}\) Rather than make the point that Cesare was threatened by Remirro, an associate of long standing, however, he encourages the new prince to betray others at will. If the prince avoids hatred and contempt, he "will find no danger in his other infamies,"
(Ch. 19, 71-2) but "infamies" of the sort he recommends in the *Prince* breed hatred and contempt.

Even when Machiavelli touches on the topic of conspiracy, he advises that the prince will prevail "provided he has ordered and lived as I said, as long as he does not forsake himself, he will always withstand every thrust as I said Nabis the Spartan did." (Ch. 19, 72) Nabis, however, was killed in a conspiracy,\(^{49}\) which Machiavelli records in some detail in the *Discourses*. (III. 6, 414-15) Therefore, Machiavelli not only demonstrates a difference in emphasis in the *Prince* and in the *Discourses* but often leaves it for the reader to discern, from what he does not say, the message he is trying to convey in the former work which, in this case, is that the prince has much to fear. As in his letter to Vettori associating Pagolo with the fate of Remirro, what is left unspoken has yet its own voice, and Machiavelli took great delight in flirtatious implication concerning the comically grave in his writings.

One of the mechanisms used in verbal irony is to "[refer] vaguely to important people as nonentities or subordinates,"\(^{50}\) which describes the manner in which Machiavelli refers to Ludovico Sforza, in Chapter Three. In his discussion of how Louis XII lost Milan, Machiavelli remarks, "So it was that, if one Duke Ludovico stirring up commotion at the border was enough to make France lose Milan the first time... ," (Ch. 3, 9) Machiavelli treats Sforza as an insig-
nificant interloper, although it was Sforza's state that Louis XII seized when he took Milan. If this humorous remark eludes the modern reader, it must certainly have amused Machiavelli's contemporaries, who understood Sforza's unscrupulous rise to power followed by his demise at the hands of the French, his former allies. Because Sforza exemplified the new prince in many significant ways, as both ruthless and cunning, it seems remarkable that Machiavelli makes no other mention of him in the Prince. Perhaps he refrained from doing so because "no contemporary Italian with as much as a touch of patriotism can have viewed the catastrophe of the Moor with any other feeling than that a traitor had received his reward," strong emotions that Machiavelli wisely avoided to preserve credulity in his satire.

Machiavelli makes a distinction, in Chapter Three, between states that are acquired of the same province and language, and those that are not. The former "may be held with greater ease," and he cites the examples of "Burgundy, Brittany, Gascony, and Normandy, which have been with France for so long a time." (Ch. 3, 9) Brittany, however, had only been "with France" since 1491, acquired through the marriage of Anne of Brittany to King Charles VIII, further preserved for France by the marriage of Anne to Louis XII, after the death of Charles VIII. In fact, Brittany was not actually incorporated into France until 1547. The "ease" that
Machiavelli refers to, then, with which Brittany was held, had more to do with a marriage alliance than with language or geography. In Machiavelli's *First Decennale*, a poem written in 1504, he writes of the agreement made between Pope Alexander VI and Louis XII, that made the marriage possible:

> So because by himself alone the Pope had no strength to do Anything great, he set out to win the new king's favor, Granted his divorce, and gave him Brittany, and in return the king promised him the lordship and the states of Romagna.\(^5\)

In reference to the errors made by Louis and faith kept by princes, however, Machiavelli dismisses out of hand the agreement made between Alexander and Louis by simply stating, "And if some others should bring up the faith that the king had pledged to the pope, to undertake that enterprise for him in return for dissolving his marriage and for the hat of Rouen, I reply with what I will say below on the faith of princes and how it should be observed," (Ch. 3, 15-16) a reference to Chapter Eighteen. Although Machiavelli faults Alexander for not keeping faith in that chapter,\(^4\) he does not expound on the agreement between Alexander and Louis in the *Prince*, because the initial terms of the agreement were kept. Louis obtained his divorce from Jeanne of France to marry Anne of Brittany, and Georges d'Amboise was granted the position he sought as Cardinal. In return, Alexander not only secured the aid promised by Louis in his
Romagna enterprise, but also Louis' word that he "would do what he could to promote Cesare's marriage to the princess," Carlotta of Aragon, a marriage objected to by her father, Federigo, King of Naples, and by herself as well. Further, Cesare acquired the "counties of Valence, and Die in the Dauphine." Valence was "made a duchy," granting title to Cesare, in 1498. He made a trip to France to receive his property and honors with such pomp and ostentatious splendor that the "chronicler Brantôme" said of it, "There is little doubt that he [Louis] and his courtiers laughed at such a grand display for the petty duke of Valence," upon his arrival at the king's chateau. Added to the agreement between Alexander and Louis was the provision that the county of Asti would be granted to Cesare, when Louis reached Milan.

So adamant was Louis in keeping his part of the bargain, having been granted his annulment December 17, that when Carlotta failed to respond to Cesare, he sought yet another bride for the fledgling prince. His second endeavor failed as well, refused by his niece, the "daughter of Jean de Foix." Alexander feared the "his son would soon be the laughingstock of all Europe," but Alain d' Albret offered the hand of his daughter, Charlotte, "whose brother, Jean, was King of Navarre, which proved agreeable to all parties." As Ivan Cloulas observes, "since the ultimate goal of this marriage was to ensure that the king receive the pope's help
in the coming Italian wars, Louis had a clause added to the
effect that the duke, together with his relatives, friends,
and allies, would aid him in the conquest of Naples and the
duchy of Milan; in return he promised the Vatican the assis-
tance of the royal armies if the pope requested, which
Cesare used to his great advantage in his future enterpris-
es.

Thus, the marriage of Louis XII to Anne, Queen of
Brittany, and the preservation of Brittany for France,
developed upon favor received from the pope, which ultimately
led to an agreement with far reaching consequence for the
Italian Peninsula, beneficial to both the Borgias and the
King of France; an agreement which the short-sighted Louis
failed to see would promote the power of the Church, seed of
the kings own demise. By trivializing the importance of
their agreement, Machiavelli touched on "irony by under-
statement, the appearance of representing something as much
less serious than it really is," which "requires a select
and responsive audience to recognize its peculiar direction
of meaning."60

With regard to states acquired "in a province disparate
in language, customs, and orders," as was the difficulty
that confronted Louis XII in Italy, (Ch. 3, 9) Machiavelli
faults the king for having made five errors: "he had elimi-
nated the lesser powers; increased the power of a power in
Italy; brought in a very powerful foreigner; did not come to
live there; did not put colonies there." (Ch. 3, 15)

In considering that Louis should have come to Italy to live, "one of the greatest and quickest remedies for whoever acquires it," (Ch. 3, 16) could Machiavelli really have imagined that the king of France would make his residence in Milan? Or the head of any other great power, such as Maximillian I? The suggestion is absurd, and meant to be so.

Machiavelli also mentions living there as an option in Chapter Five, concerning administration of those cities or principalities acquired which are accustomed to liberty and freedom, but he does not elaborate on the benefits that would accrue from doing so, perhaps because there are none, as he "should expect to be destroyed by it," (Ch. 5, 21) for those accustomed to liberty never forget it, that which "no force crushes, no time wears away, and no gain counter-balances." As the Florentines would recall, Charles VIII of France, "resided in the Medici palace" after his triumphant entrance into Florence in 1494, "as though he were a conquering hero." The young republic responded to his demands with aplomb, demonstrated in the courage of Peiro di Gino Capponi, who warned the king, "If you sound your trumpets, we will ring our bells," words that became a Florentine proverb, symbolizing the will to fight foreign oppression.

Machiavelli ends Chapter Eight with the advice that a prince should live with his subjects, a chapter that is
devoted to the subject of crime, injury, and cruelty. Machiavelli might have recommended that the prince live with his subjects to promote the welfare and security of all but, unlike the Discourses, that is not the emphasis he wishes to convey in the Prince. Rather, he offers his notion of living there in the context of securing the welfare of a tyrant, as is the sum of his advice throughout the Prince, having more concern for the security of the new prince than the security of his subjects—and in this he is wholly consistent.

Machiavelli's treatment of colonies in Chapter Three is also transparent and revealing. He had great respect for the Roman practice of colonizing, which offered "protection on Rome's boundaries," and provided "a garrison there at no expense to themselves," but, as he notes in the History, this "great and wonderful provision of ancient republics and principalities" that "filled empty places with inhabitants, and kept men well distributed within the provinces" resulting in the rise of cities "has vanished" in "present times." 65

And in the Discourses, he states that in the conduct of war, the Romans, "when they had won, the enemy, to prevent them devastating the surrounding country, came to terms; and the Romans confiscated some of his lands, which they handed over either for private use or to a colony which they placed on the enemies frontiers for the protection of Rome's bound
aries, with the advantage both to the colonies who had the land and to the Roman public who had a garrison there at no expense to themselves." (II. 6, 292)

In the Prince, however, his tone is markedly different; "The other, better remedy is to send colonies that are, as it were, fetters of the state, to one or two places, because it is necessary either to do this or to hold them with many men-at-arms and infantry." (Ch. 3, 10) He is not suggesting here that colonies function as protection for the boundaries, or that they serve to inhabit desolate places from which cities might rise and flourish. Rather, he implies that colonies, as an extension of the state, restrain the subject people—a better remedy than holding them by military means. He neglects to explain how colonies, small in number, will succeed in holding the people in check. He refers to the despoiled, in this case his fellow Italians, as those "from whom one takes fields and houses in order to give them new inhabitants—who are a very small part of that state." (Ch. 3, 10) By representing the despoiled as "a very small part of the state," he diminishes the importance of their loss. Jonathan Swift used diminution as a satirical device, in A Tale of a Tub, when he wrote, "Last week I saw a woman flayed, and you would hardly believe how much it altered her person for the worse." Had Machiavelli not had reason for caution in writing his satire, his own penchant for quick-witted humor would likely have graced the pages of
the Prince in a more overt manner than he managed under the circumstances—but the humor is there nonetheless.

Machiavelli observes that "those whom [the new prince] offends, since they remain dispersed and poor, can never hurt him." (Ch. 3, 10) This is untrue, of course, for it is from the ranks of malcontents that conspiracies are formed, who may call in outsiders to avenge their complaints. He emphasizes the point by repeating this assertion; "and those who are offended can do no hurt, since they are poor and dispersed, as was said." (Ch. 3, 10) Yet, as he states in the Discourses, a prince should always beware of the vengeance of those he has despoiled. (III. 6, 400)

One does find similarity, however, in the Discourses and the Prince, in what Machiavelli has to say about punitive colonization, despoiling and dispersing the people, and in connection with avoiding a middle path. In the Discourses, he cites the action taken by the Roman Senate against rebellious Latium, which considered each town individually, rendering either pardon or punishment for their rebellion. The latter was administered "by demolishing the towns... sending colonies there, and taking the inhabitants back to Rome or so dispersing them that they could no longer do harm either by appeal to arms or by their machinations," (II. 23, 348) in which case the possibility for revenge is indeed reduced. Leaving the despoiled "poor and dispersed," however, as he stated in the Prince, (Ch. 3, 10) would not have

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the same effect, in providing security for the prince.

The other similarity that is distorted in the *Prince* is the notion of avoiding a middle path or middle course. In both works, he recommends that the middle path is least desirable. "Men should either be caressed or eliminated," (Ch. 3, 10-11) as he states in the *Prince*, and in the *Discourses*, with reference to Latium, he remarks that the Romans, to their credit, never "adopt[ed] a middle course as I have said... and other rulers should imitate them in this," (II. 23, 348) The fact is, however, Machiavelli did recommend a middle path in the *Prince*, rather than an extreme. Leaving the despoiled homeless and poor did not eliminate them, and those he has injured, though despoiled, "still have arms." (II. 24, 353) Nor did the prince "caress" the others, whom he merely left alone. The real operative is fear. "They are afraid to err from fear that what happened to the despoiled might happen to them," and so they should "be quiet." (Ch. 3, 10) Failure to win them over, however, could prove costly to the prince.

Machiavelli also advances his argument for colonies by criticizing the use of arms. "But when one holds a state with men-at-arms in place of colonies, one spends much more since one has to consume all the income of that state in guarding it. So the acquisition turns to loss... ," (Ch. 3, 11) with no profit to the prince. "... And one offends much more because one hurts the whole state as one's army moves
around for lodgings. Everyone feels this hardship, and each becomes one's enemy: and these are enemies that can hurt one since they remain, though defeated, in their homes." (Ch. 3, 11) If the people are defeated, however, and in their homes, how will they "hurt" an invading army? It is the people who will be hurt by such practices. A prince who has so little discipline over his troops that "all the income of that state is consumed in guarding it" is imprudent and unwise. The methods of such a prince do, however, bring Cesare Borgia to mind.

In passing through Tuscany, Cesare's troops left terrible carnage. In 1502, Machiavelli wrote (in a dispatch from Imola), "they have devoured everything here except the stones... here in the Romagna they are behaving just as they did in Tuscany last year, [of their passage then, Landucci noted in his diary that none of the foreign armies that had crossed Tuscany in the past seven years had behaved so abominably as these Italians under the papal banner] and they show no more discipline and no less confusion than they did then.' There is no subsequent indication that Machiavelli ever changed his mind." Machiavelli criticizes such practices in his remarks concerning men-at-arms, in Chapter Three, but the irony of his criticism is not apparent, until he unveils Cesare Borgia as his model prince, particularly when he states, "I shall never hesitate to cite Cesare Borgia and his actions," (Ch. 13, 55) whom he never
criticizes in the *Prince*, and in the *Discourses*, he ignores.

Machiavelli also faults Louis XII for having "eliminated the lesser powers," (Ch. 3, 15) in part by "giving aid to Pope Alexander so that the pope might seize the Romagna." (Ch. 3, 14) A wise prince would "make himself head and defender of lesser powers," (Ch. 3, 11) and Machiavelli lists several such powers of the Romagna that came to meet Louis as friends, after he acquired Lombardy. What Machiavelli does not say, however, is that it was part of Louis' agreement with Alexander that he assist the Borgias in their Romagna campaign in exchange for Borgia's assistance in his own enterprises in Italy. That is, Louis did not have the choice that Machiavelli faults him for not making. He needed the help of the Borgia to consider his campaign in the first place.

Further, to better inform the present by making reference to the ancients, Machiavelli cites the Roman example in Greece; "And I want the province of Greece alone to suffice as an example," (which should alert the reader to be wary, as Machiavelli has employed the device of omission, excluding all other examples), in which the Romans indulged the lesser powers, "the Achaeans and the Aetolians," (Ch. 3, 12) to achieve their objective in Greece and Macedonia, from which example we are to draw a comparison between the legendary and formidable Achaeans and Aetolians, and the petty lords of the Romagna. As Leonard Feinberg observes, "Humor
is always a distortion of the familiar, and the humorous comparison is simply one form of distortion."^{68}

The remaining errors for which Louis XII is blamed, "increasing the power of a power in Italy [the Church]," and bringing in "a very powerful foreigner [Spain]," (Ch. 3, 15) led ultimately to the defeat of France. Louis was himself, of course, a powerful foreigner who invited himself into Italy. As for bringing Spain, it was not Louis, but the actions of Charles VIII and, even more directly, Pope Alexander, who bore the responsibility. When Charles entered Naples in 1494, "Alfonso fled, and Charles entered without firing a shot." When he attempted to leave, however, he encountered the forces of an alliance put together by Pope Alexander, and was defeated at Fornovo, in 1495. "The son of Alfonso, Ferrante II, returned [to Naples] but with troops furnished by his Spanish relative King Ferdinand... and thereafter the Spanish monarchy no more let go from southern Italy."^{69}

Machiavelli devoted Chapter Three to the five errors committed by Louis XII, but in his conclusion, he remarks, "Yet if he had lived, these errors could not have hurt him if he had not made a sixth; depriving Venice of their state," (Ch. 3, 15) which effectively negates the importance of the original errors, including the error of increasing the power of the Church, which ultimately ruined Louis. And if Louis "had lived," he would have encountered the Medici
pope, who did not "favor" France,™ and who found the Church
greater than when Louis first arrived in Italy.™

In Chapter Three, then, Machiavelli gives us our first
glimpse of modern Italy. He sets the tone with respect to
the "quality of the times." (III. 8, 428-9) There is no
mention of nor concern with the common good or the common
benefit, a central principle in the Discourses. Nor does
Machiavelli make any reference to letting the people "live
by their laws" (Ch. 5, 20) and retain their institutions.
Louis is portrayed as a tyrant whose intent was to exact
complete control and authority over his new subjects--in
effect to enslave them. By associating Louis, who repre-
sents a country with good civic order,™ with tyrannical
practices, Machiavelli creates a transition in the minds of
his readers toward acceptance of such practices. One of the
rhetorical devices employed by Swift in his Modest Proposal
was "the progression of diminution," of "man to animal to
food," which means "the impression of normalness (and the
reluctant acceptance) is gradually achieved."™

By means of the errors that Louis committed,
Machiavelli reveals how a tyrant must view his subjects, as
an enemy against whom he must guard. By living there, he
can guard them himself. Or he could use military force.
The better remedy, however, is to plant one or two colonies,
which would never be sufficient to contain a people accus-
tomed to "liberty," whose "refuge in rebellion" and "its own
ancient orders... are never forgotten." (Ch. 5, 21)
Machiavelli does succeed in ridiculing France, however, for its pretensions to empire, by suggesting that France colonize in Italy, in imitation of the Roman Empire.

Machiavelli also reveals the growing power of the Church in secular affairs in Italy. And, by mentioning the Borgias in the context of the Romagna, he suggests the corrupt state of the Church in his time, a standard against which his satire unfolds, inherited by the Medici pope in whom the Medici power resides.
Chapter VII. Slavery and Freedom

By its title, "Why the Kingdom of Darius which Alexander Seized did not Rebel from his Successors after Alexander's Death," Chapter Four gives the appearance of a digression, having no apparent connection to the preceding chapter. As L. Arthur Burd remarks, "the following chapter [four] is one of those which have received the least attention from the critics and commentators. It is not difficult to see why this should be so, for it is indeed hardly more than a digression." Burd suggests that Machiavelli may have anticipated objections to his conclusion in Chapter Three; "If the difficulties of establishing and maintaining a government absolutely new are so great, why did the successors of Alexander find no other difficulty in maintaining his 'new conquests' except that which arose from their own ambition?"

I think the answer to that question depends on whether or not the conquered people were accustomed to living in servitude or in freedom. In Chapter Four, Machiavelli distinguishes between two different kinds of states in which servitude is the norm, yet governed in "two diverse modes: either by one prince, and all the others servants who as ministers help govern the kingdom by his favor and appointment," in which case the prince will find them difficult to conquer because they are "united," but easy to hold, once the "blood line of the prince is "eliminated." The other
mode is represented by France, "by a prince and by barons who hold that rank not by favor of the lord but by antiquity of blood line" which, while easier to conquer as "you can easily enter there, having won over to yourself some baron of the kingdom," it will be harder to hold, due to difficulties arising from "those who have helped you and from those you have oppressed." (Ch. 4, 16-19) In neither case, however, is the prince attempting to subject a populace accustomed to freedom.

As the kingdom of Darius was like that of the Turk, Alexander had no difficulty in maintaining it, once it was conquered, and his successors (had Alexander provided for this eventuality) would have maintained it as well, if united, for as Machiavelli states in the Discourses, "cities accustomed to subjection are usually not so particular about changing masters: on the contrary, they are often glad to do so." (III. 12, 441)

The tone of Chapter Four is significantly different than that of Chapter Three. I detected none of the satirical malice and contempt that animated the pages of the previous chapter. As a digression, however, it serves a function within the satire. Digression is an element of classical rhetoric, employed by Swift in his Modest Proposal, in which the "projector" digressed into subject matter that contained a "historical parallel" to the subject matter of the essay," followed by the proof, which contained rea-
sons why the proposal should be accepted. There are similarities in Chapters Four and Five of the Prince with the classical form followed by Swift. In Swift's digression, the historical parallel is provided by relating the custom of the Formosan Court in eating the flesh of young girls whose bodies have just been cut down by the public hangman. Machiavelli's historical parallel is demonstrated in the progression from freedom to servitude exemplified by the "frequent rebellions in Spain, France, and Greece against the Romans" that, for "as long as their memory lasted," caused the Romans to be "uncertain of their possessions, but when their memory was eliminated with the power and long duration of the empire, the Romans became secure possessors of them." (Ch. 4, 19) The historical examples of servitude in Chapter Four, and particularly the gradual movement from freedom to servitude over time, corresponds with the rise of the Medici. Thus, the threat of slavery was as great from within Italy as from without. As Francesco Guicciardini said of Lorenzo the Magnificent, "He had such great authority that one may say that the city was not free in his time, even though it was rich in all those glories and good fortune which a city may enjoy when free in name but in fact ruled as a tyrant by one of its citizens."

In one of his earliest letters, to Ricciardo Bechi, Machiavelli gave an account of one of Savonarola's sermons and observed, "He said next--having digressed, as his custom
is, further to weaken his adversaries, and also to make a 
bridge to his next sermon—that our discords might cause a 
tyrant to rise up who would destroy our homes and lay waste 
to our fields." In so far as a digression can be employed 
to "weaken" one's adversaries, then, Machiavelli's attention 
to the subject of servitude, like Swift's reference to 
eating human flesh in Formosa, disarms the reader by lessen-
ing the shock of what one is asked to believe as the satire 
unfolds. We are desensitized in a gradual process of ac-
cepting the unacceptable.

Despite its brevity, Chapter Five constitutes an impor-
tant segment of Machiavelli's satire. The key to its sig-
nificance resides in his statement, "And whoever becomes 
patron of a city used to being free and does not destroy it, 
should expect to be destroyed by it," (Ch. 5, 201) because 
it is clear from his Discourses that he does not suggest to 
every new prince that a free city must be destroyed to hold 
or maintain it. As Leo Strauss reminds us, "In the Dis-
courses, he says that precisely a prince, as distinguished 
from a republic, provided he is not a barbarian, would spare 
and protect conquered cities and would leave intact, as much 
as possible, their autonomy." Further, it is Machiavelli's 
opinion that as people are "frequently influenced more by 
appearances than reality," a new government introduced in a 
free city should "retain as much as possible of what is 
old... by one who proposes to set up a political regime
whether by way of a republic or by way of a monarchy." (I. 25, 175-6) Yet Machiavelli is quite emphatic in Chapter Five that if a prince wants to be certain of possessing a free city, he must "ruin" or "destroy" it. The explanation is that the new prince is not setting up a "political regime" for a republic or monarchy, but, rather, a despotism: "But he who proposes to set up a despotism or what writers call a tyranny, must renovate everything," (I. 25, 175-6) that is, to make everything new, the old must be destroyed, including the destruction of cities. Thus, a new prince should

... appoint new governors with new titles and new authority... make the rich poor and the poor rich... build new cities and destroy those already built... move the inhabitants from one place to another far distant from it... such methods are exceedingly cruel, and are repugnant to any community, not only to a Christian one, but to any composed of men. It behooves, therefore, every man to shun them, and to prefer to live as a private citizen than as a king with such ruination of men to his score. None the less, for the sort of man who is unwilling to take up this first course of well doing, it is expedient, should he wish to hold what he has, to enter on the path of wrong doing. Actually, however, most men prefer to steer a middle course, which is very harmful. (I. 26, 176-7)

Without exception, Machiavelli will advise, in the Prince, that the new prince follow the "path of wrong doing" as distinguished from the "course of well doing," and by so advising it can be inferred that his new prince is, by his own description, a tyrant.
Further, Machiavelli used the word "patron" rather than prince, which is inconsistent with his usual habit; "And whoever becomes patron of a city and does not destroy it, should expect to be destroyed by it." The word "patron" harbors multiple nuances of interpretation. As benefactor, it implies one who gives aid, perhaps even comfort, to another, in which case Machiavelli has used the word with humor and sarcasm in reference to the prince. It also suggests the beneficent liberality practiced by the Medici in the City of Florence, of the kind that redounds to the benefit of the people from which the benefactor gains influence and position to his own advantage. In the context of force and warfare, Pope Alexander VI was patron extraordinary of Cesare Borgia's campaign, nor can we forget the aid given by France, in that regard. Perhaps Machiavelli intended that "patron" be interpreted in all of these ways (and perhaps more) by those who understood his intent. At the very least, I think that he meant to imply the patronage of the Medici in Florence, as such forms of patronage ultimately lead to corruption and ruin in a republic (and republic is his reference in the concluding sentence to Chapter Five), by means of fraud. Thus, he alludes to the ruin of the city's liberty by that family in a subtle manner, in a chapter devoted to the destruction of liberty.

The title of Chapter Five, "How Cities or Principalities Which Lived Under Their Own Laws before They Were
Occupied Should Be Administered" suggests two things: that the cities were occupied, not destroyed, and second, they were given some form of new government. One cannot administer a city that has been destroyed, however, which is Machiavelli's primary recommendation, and therefore the chapter title is comically misleading.

The notion that the prince might "Let them live by their laws, taking from them and creating within them an oligarchical state which keeps them friendly to you," (Ch. 5, 20) is the most reflective of the chapter title, but it is dismissed by Machiavelli with a few historical examples demonstrating that it doesn't work. The Spartans lost Athens and Thebes by such methods, and the Romans, after establishing an oligarchy in Greece, were compelled to destroy it, as they destroyed the rebellious Capua, Carthage and Namantia. Having disposed of the subject, he does not return to it in his conclusions.

When Cosimo de' Medici returned from his exile, "and some citizens said to him... that the city was ruined and that it was an act against God to drive out of it so many important men, he answered that a city ruined was better than one lost." Machiavelli might have responded that the Medici should beware of their own ruin; "When [a] government has been brought into being by the common consent of a whole people which has made it great, there is no reason why, when the said people as a whole meets their downfall, they should
harm anyone except its head. This was the case with Rome's government and with the expulsion of the Tarquins. It was also the case with the government of the Medici in Florence, which, when it fell in 1494, harmed nobody but the Medici themselves," (III. 7, 425-6) and the people returned to a republican government.

I would conclude that in Chapter Five, Machiavelli emphasized the need to ruin and destroy free cities, for the purpose of justifying the tyrannical precepts he recommends in the Prince; for in those restless bastions of liberty, the people are "extraordinarily revengeful towards those who have destroyed their liberty." (II. 2, 276) He also makes it clear that the idea of freedom can never be erased from their memory; thus, his conclusion that "the most secure path is to eliminate them or live in them" is only partly true for in neither case will the prince extinguish their memory of freedom. Unless the prince exterminates or disperses the entire population, he must always fear the people, and thus the draconian measures Machiavelli advocates in the Prince become a necessity.

Within the realm of distorted reality created by the satirist, the poet's true voice can sometimes be heard. In A Modest Proposal, one can detect it in Swift's negation of sound solutions to the problems of Ireland: "Therefore, let no man talk to me of other Expedients; Of taxing our Absentees at five Shillings a Pound... of being a little cautious
not to Sell our Country and Conscience for nothing..." Machiavelli's voice can be heard as well, even as he urges the prince to ravage free cities, for as he reminds us, a city "always has as a refuge in rebellion the name of liberty and its own ancient orders which are never forgotten either through length of time or because of benefits received... in republics there is greater life, greater hatred, more desire for revenge; the memory of their ancient liberty does not and cannot let them rest," (Ch. 5, 21) reflecting, above all, the Republic of Rome he admired.

As Machiavelli would write long after his composition of the Prince,

I am now beginning to write again, and I relieve myself by blaming the princes, who have all done everything to bring us here. Farewell.

Niccolò Machiavelli
Historian, comic writer, and tragic writer

By his own self-description—historian, comic writer, and tragic writer (he ignored his former statesmanship from which experience his major works emerged), his literary gifts are readily apparent, nor did he lack a motive for a critical appraisal of his times. Of Florence, Ridolfi remarks, "As freedom ebbed away, there went also the old way of life in the city which we have described, surviving only in the regrets of those who had enjoyed its last moments," and if Machiavelli was concerned "that peoples of old were
more fond of liberty than they are today," (II. 2, 277) the
danger was compounded by the rising ambition of those who
were eager to take it away. As a cutting edge for his own
vengeance, satire was perfectly suited to Machiavelli, and
in Gilbert Hight's "tribute to the power of satire," one
can sense the tormented spirit of the satirist in relentless
pursuit of his prey, and we are left to discern his meaning
or not, as though it were enough for him that he gnawed the
bone for his own satisfaction.

Hail, Satire! Hail, clear-eyed, sharp-tongued, hot tempered, outwardly disil-
lusioned and secretly idealistic Muse!
Mother of Comedy, Sister of Tragedy,
defender and critic of Philosophy, hail!
You are a difficult companion, a mis-
tress sometimes elusive and tantalizing,
sometimes harsh and repellent; but in
your mercurial presence no one is ever
bored. Stupidity, Self-satisfaction,
Corruption, the Belief in Inevitable
Progress—these and other intellectual
monsters, produced spontaneously from
the waste energy of the human mind, you
have destroyed again and again. Still
they are reborn, and still you arise to
destroy them. Hail to Satire, the tenth
Muse... who is not so devoted to build-
ing immortal works as to cursing the
endemic ills of human beings; and who
nevertheless often creates one of her
own peculiar masterpieces, a portrait
which has a beating heart within and
which, when we look into its eyes, seems
to be a reflection, distorted with pain,
of our own soul.
Chapter VIII. Virtue and One’s Own Arms

In Chapter Six, Machiavelli unveils the intended target of his satire with regard to type, the private individual who has risen to power, becoming a new prince in a new principality, carved from within his own native land. Although Italy became prey to such established powers as France, Spain, and Germany, which was a grave concern of Machiavelli’s, the intrusion of foreign powers was precipitated by another problem within Italy itself, the phenomenon of Ludovico Sforza, Cesare Borgia and others of their ilk.

Prior to the invasion of King Charles VIII of France, in 1494, the balance of power in Italy was maintained by five major states: Venice, Milan, Florence, the Kingdom of Naples (ruled by a branch of the Aragonese), and the Papal States. The imperialist tendencies of these states, however, led to calling in foreigners which upset the balance of power, causing Italy to become prey to the greed and ambition of larger powers. As Machiavelli observes in Chapter Eleven of the Prince, the five states that dominated Italy "had to have two principal concerns: one, that a foreigner not enter into Italy with arms; the other, that none of them enlarge his state." (Ch. 11, 46) Ludovico Sforza violated the first principal by inviting Charles VIII into Italy. The Borgia were guilty on both counts, having joined forces with the French to facilitate their acquisitions in Italy, hoping "not only to carve out a huge Italian estate for
their family but [ironically] also to unify the entire country and thus save it from the depredations of the French king and the German (i.e. Holy Roman) emperor,¹ although it is unclear who or what would have saved the Italians from the depredations of the Borgia themselves. At the time Machiavelli wrote the Prince, the Medici were poised to continue a policy of conquest within Italy. Thus, the problems in Italy emanated both from within and without, and the first cause, the ambition of the new princes of Italy, became the target of Machiavelli's satire, the object of his contempt and loathing.

Machiavelli first satirizes the origin of the new prince, one who rises from 'private individual.' In Chapter Six, he refers to the man who becomes "prince from private individual" for the first time, which "presupposes either virtue or fortune," (Ch. 6, 22) but not legitimate authority, as when it is conferred by a process of selection, or inherited through the bloodline of the prince. In Chapter Seven, he considers "those who become princes from private individual solely by fortune... ." (Ch. 7, 25) Again, in Chapter Eight, he states, "one becomes prince from private individual" also by two modes other than "fortune or virtue," namely by "crime" or "with the support of fellow citizens," (Ch. 8, 34) and, finally, in Chapter Nine, he turns to the theme of private individual most closely related to the rise of the Medici in Florence, "when a private
citizen becomes prince of his fatherland," in what he calls a "civil principality." (Ch. 8, 38).

Thus, when Machiavelli speaks of a new prince, he is referring to a particular model, a breed of man who, because of personal ambition, is not content to live in equality with his peers, under judicial and constitutional restraint. Rather, he threatens the liberty, peace and security of all. Nor could he have found a "fresher example" than Cesare Borgia, (Ch. 7, 33) or the Medici, to whom he directed his advice in the Prince. In developing his satire, however, Machiavelli was faced with the dilemma of making such a prince appear acceptable, even desirable and worthy of imitation. By appealing to ancient examples no less incredible than Moses, Romulus, Theseus and Cyrus, he provides a transition from the destruction of freedom, in Chapter Five, to the source of that destruction, the modern princes, exemplified in Chapter Seven onward, who, in the company of the four virtuous exemplars, do not appear threatening as private individuals newly rising. His standard, as always, resides in the ancients, and from that standard one can discern what is lacking in the contemporary models of princely power and aspirations.

The example of Moses reflects the lack of virtue in the modern princes of Italy and of the Church, as well, which had descended into new depths of corruption with the advent of Pope Alexander VI. In the Discourses, Machiavelli offers
a perspective on Moses that goes to the heart of the matter, with regard to the achievement of Moses that won his praise and admiration, as a builder of a free city. "The virtue of the builder is discernable in the fortune of what was built, for the city is more or less remarkable according as he is more or less virtuous who is responsible for the start. This virtue shows itself in two ways: first in the choice of site, and secondly in the drawing up of laws," (I. 1, 102) which, in the case of Moses, were "based on a Covenant relationship with God." Although Machiavelli advises the new prince to imitate moses in Chapter Six, he recommended that he destroy free cities in the previous chapter, to preserve his state. A truly virtuous prince would not find the destruction of a free city a desirable end, and if he had the opportunity, he would turn his thoughts from tyranny and found a city or state for the greater good. He would build, rather than destroy.

In his first reference to Moses, Machiavelli writes, "And although one should not reason about Moses, as he was a mere executor of things ordered for him by God, nonetheless he should be admired if only for that grace that made him deserving of speaking with God." (Ch. 6, 22) The word "mere" severely qualifies the achievement of Moses. The exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt was an accomplishment of the highest order, wrought with extreme hardship and danger. And while Moses was deserving of admiration for his grace---
and as a faithful servant of God—the word "only" excludes the virtue of Moses as a courageous leader. In fact, Machiavelli seems to reserve his highest praise for Moses' faith rather than his achievements, a notion that is decidedly out of place in a work that recommends the new prince need only pretend to have faith.

Machiavelli then reverses himself, however, by exalting Moses almost to the exclusion of God, with regard to opportunity. In considering the "actions and orders" of Cyrus, Romulus, and Theseus, Machiavelli remarks, "they will appear no different from those of Moses, who had so great a teacher... It was necessary then for Moses to find the people of Israel in Egypt, enslaved and oppressed by the Egyptians, so that they would be disposed to follow him in order to get out of their servitude... Such opportunities, therefore, made these men successful, and their excellent virtue enabled the opportunity to be recognized; hence their fatherlands were ennobled by it and became very prosperous." (Ch. 6, 22-3) Moses did not return to Egypt of his own accord, however. God told him to return. Moses did not recognize an opportunity; God created the opportunity for him, and he reluctantly obeyed.

Thus, the points that Machiavelli makes regarding Moses are thinly veiled efforts to disguise what he really intended with his example. Unlike the tyrannical prince Machiavelli advises in Chapter Five, who had of necessity to
enslave the people to preserve his state, Moses led the oppressed Hebrews to freedom. Moses was not a prince seeking his own principality, nor did he covet personal gain and glory. "Moses was the vehicle and interpreter of [the] Covenant stipulations, including the Ten Commandments," who "exerted a lasting influence on... religious life [and] moral concerns."³ Machiavelli's inclusion of Moses as an exemplar in the Prince is absurd, particularly when considered in the company of Cesare Borgia and the Medici, but as a standard for comparison, Machiavelli could have chosen none better, for not only did Moses lead the Hebrews to freedom, but God chastised him for being too harsh on the people.⁴

Perhaps Machiavelli was also prompted to include Moses in his satire as a reminder of the occasion of Cesare Borgia's appointment as "Captain General and gonfalonier of the Church" for "the salvation of the people," in 1500. Following a blessing from the pope, a "long list of great biblical leaders in whose steps Cesare was about to follow" was given. Alexander credited Cesare with "not only nobility but power and virtue."⁵ As statesman of Florence at that time, Machiavelli might reasonably have been expected to be informed of this event as it was an important one, investing Cesare with the power and authority to pursue his ambitions in the Romagna, which threatened Tuscany, as well.

Satirists also resort to myth, a source of giantism, to
establish certain standards. Juvenal used anecdotes from myth in his *Satire*. Myth provides examples of moral behavior which, handed down over centuries, often conflict with contemporary moral values, particularly in a society that has become corrupt. In comparing the victim to mythological giants as Machiavelli does in Chapter Twenty-six, and holding them up as models worthy of imitation in Chapter Six (and who could hope to emulate the heroic actions of Theseus?), grand absurdities are created that make the victim appear ridiculous.

Of Theseus, Machiavelli remarks that he "could not have demonstrated his virtue if he had not found the Athenians dispersed," but he does not explain the praiseworthy actions of Theseus, or what he finds particularly praiseworthy, which is more to the point. In fact, Theseus personifies all of the attributes of good governance and virtue lacking in the new prince:

That age produced a sort of men, in force of hand, and swiftness of foot, and strength of body, excelling the ordinary rate and wholly incapable of fatigue; making use, however, of these gifts of nature to no good or profitable purpose for mankind, but rejoicing and priding themselves in insolence and taking the benefit of their superior strength in the exercise of inhumanity and cruelty, and in seizing, forcing, and committing all manner of outrages upon everything that fell into their hands; all respect for others, all justice, they thought, all equity and humanity, though naturally lauded by the
common people, either out of want of courage to commit injuries or fear to receive them, yet no way concerned those who were strong enough to win for themselves.8

Theseus, however, "set forward with a design to do injury to nobody, but to repel and revenge himself on all those that should offer any,"9 so that in his actions, he rose above the villains of his time, and achieved greatness. He brought the dispersed people of Attica together as "one people of one city" to promote the "common interest... He then dissolved all the distinct statehouses, council halls, and magisteries, and built one common state-house and council hall on the site of the present upper town, and gave the name of Athens to the whole state." Most importantly, however, and I would submit that Machiavelli included Theseus as an exemplar principally for this reason, "Then, as he had promised, he laid down his regal power and proceeded to order a commonwealth, entering upon this great work not without the advice from the Gods." Theseus "promised a commonwealth without monarchy, a democracy, or people's government, in which he should only be continued as their commander in war and the protector of their laws, all things else being equally distributed among them."10

How much in common, then, does Theseus have with the new prince, who would demand that all power and authority be invested in himself? The comparison is stunning, and all the more so as Machiavelli urges the new prince to imitate
the virtue of Theseus, whose actions contradict the advice he actually gives throughout the *Prince*.

The example of Theseus giving up his power is reminiscent of Machiavelli's *Remodeling* in which he offered his recommendations to the Medici for returning the government of Florence to the people after the death of the Medici elders, Pope Leo X and Cardinal Giulio, yet securing their power during their lifetime. In Mark Hulluing's summary of the *Remodeling*, he writes, "Doomed to fight perpetually against the natural order of things, a Medici prince can only be a hated tyrant, subject to a 'thousand dangers' and condemned to infamy; whereas ((an adaptation of *Discourses* I. X, 10)), a Medicean ruler who reconstitutes Savonarola's Great Council, giving everyone a stake in a republican status quo, and then becomes in fact what the Medici have traditionally claimed to be, merely the leading citizens of a republican government, will enjoy the 'everlasting fame' that has always been the reward of 'those men who have with laws and with institutions remodeled republics and kingdoms.' Machiavelli's advice in the *Remodeling* was ignored by the Medici. It seems clear, however, if one considers the sentiments expressed by him in that work, that his admiration for Theseus extended beyond his uniting of the dispersed to the means by which he organized the government of Athens, and his criticism of the Medici is implicit in the example of that Greek hero.
Unlike Moses, Theseus, and Cyrus, Romulus is not mentioned in Chapter Twenty-six of the *Prince*. As the mythical founder of Rome, Romulus should have been the most significant symbol of virtue in Machiavelli's final chapter, in which he calls on the Italians to unite under the Medici and expel the barbarians--but he is not mentioned there despite Machiavelli's closing lines from Petrarch alluding to ancient Italian virtue. (Ch. 26, 105)

The omission of Romulus from the last chapter is significant, suggesting that perhaps Machiavelli thought the ancient virtue of Italians was, indeed, dead--or so diminished as to warrant such a criticism. He also states in Chapter Twenty-six, "And in Italy matter is not lacking for introducing every form: here there is great virtue in the limbs, if it were not lacking in the heads," in which context he finds Italians superior in "duels," but poor with regard to "armies" and leadership; "Everything follows from weakness in the head... ." (Ch. 25, 104) He goes on to exalt the Medici as the long-awaited saviors of Italy, but the point remains that he demonstrates no examples of Italian virtue in the final chapter, omitting even Romulus, who was certainly as important and virtuous an example (as founder) in the minds of the Italians as a Greek hero or a Persian warrior.

Further, Machiavelli writes, "It was fitting that Romulus not be received in Alba, that he should have been
exposed at birth, if he was to become king of Rome and founder of that fatherland." (Ch. 6, 23) The issue of Romulus' obscure "birth" is not germane to the question of opportunity, however, except with regard to his origins in heroic myth. The birth of Moses was also obscure, found in a floating basket in the river and raised as a prince in Egypt by the Pharaoh's daughter. Cyrus was given to a shepherd to raise because the king, Astyages, feared him; "a Cyrus legend" evolved that "follows a pattern of folk beliefs about the almost superhuman qualities of the founder of a dynasty." Machiavelli, however, only makes an issue of the birth of Romulus, the quintessential example of Italian virtue. With the Medici in mind, perhaps he was pointing a playful finger at the obscure births in the Medici family, which qualified them (as it qualified Romulus)--together with their opportunity touted so loudly in Chapter Twenty-six--to perform the heroic salvation of Italy he claimed to expect of them. One may recall that Cardinal Giulio de' Medici was the illegitimate son of Giuliano (brother of Lorenzo the Magnificent), whose legitimacy was later arranged by Pope Leo. Further, there were the two younger Medici bastards, "Ippolito, the son of Giuliano [to whom the Prince was first dedicated], and Allesandro, who was thought to be the cardinal's own child, although at that time, he passed as the son of Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino." If Machiavelli intended that a subtle compari-
son be made between the illegitimate births in the Medici family and the "literary pattern of heroic life" in which "the hero often has a miraculous begetting and an obscure birth," it only becomes clear when considered in conjunction with Chapter Twenty-six in which the Medici are raised so high, their mission is compared to that of Moses, Theseus, and Cyrus—rendering epic stature to a family that could hope to achieve little more than the "odor of it." (Ch. 6, 22)

As for Cesare Borgia, his parentage is obscure as well. Before he became Pope Alexander VI, Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia took as his mistress Vannozza Cattanie, who gave birth to Cesare in 1475. As she was married at the time, "the child was thought to be legitimate, but Rodrigo Borgia lost no time in acknowledging himself as the father."

Machiavelli praises Romulus in the Discourses for having made "many good laws quite compatible with freedom" (I. 2, 110) and for his "intention" to "govern... for the common good," and "not in his own interests." (I. 9, 131-2) Machiavelli notes that he "instituted a senate with which he consulted, and with whose views his decisions were in accord." Further, Romulus only kept authority to "command the army in time of war and the convoking of the senate." Thus, the "original institutions" of Rome conformed more to "a political and self-governing state than with absolutism or tyranny." (I. 9, 133)
Those qualities that Machiavelli found admirable in Moses, Theseus, and Romulus are blatantly deficient in Cesare Borgia and the Medici. Any comparison would be absurd, and yet we are invited to make that comparison when he urges the new prince to imitate their excellent example. The humor that he weaves through this chapter on virtue reflects the wit and genius of Machiavelli, his literary gifts and his passion to be heard united in perfect accord which, as in all satire, "should, like a polished razor keen wound with a touch that’s scarcely felt or seen."^\textsuperscript{20}

The inclusion of Cyrus among Machiavelli’s virtuous giants reflects his notion of those attributes a good prince should have. Like the others, he was "stern, sagacious, and incorruptible,"^\textsuperscript{21} and, as Machiavelli points out in the Discourse, "Xenophon, for instance, is at considerable pains to show what great honors, what great victories, and how much good repute Cyrus gained by his humanity, and his affability, and how entirely free he was from pride, cruelty, licentiousness and other vices by which the lives of men are marred." (III. 20, 462) Machiavelli also notes that Cyrus "attained" greatness by means of fraud [rather] than force, (II. 13, 310-11) which parallels the Medici mode for acquisition of power in Florence, but unlike the Medici, Cyrus was a great warrior, capable of founding a great kingdom and in his conduct worthy of Machiavelli’s admiration. He was held in "high esteem... not only by his own people, the
Persians, but by the Greeks and others... tolerant toward the Babylonians and others [his conquests]... supporting local customs... thus it was by diplomacy as well as force of arms that he established the largest empire known until his time... a great conqueror and administrator... the epitome of the great qualities expected of a ruler in antiquity, and he assumed heroic features as a conqueror who was tolerant and magnanimous as well as brave and daring."²²

Cyrus freed the Jews held captive in Babylonia, allowing them to return to their homeland—perhaps Machiavelli chose Cyrus as an exemplar in part for that reason, to suggest a comparison with a modern prince, the Catholic King of Spain, Ferdinand. In Chapter Twenty-one of the Prince, Machiavelli says of Ferdinand, "If you consider his actions, you will find them all very great and some of them extraordinary... in order to undertake greater enterprises, always making use of religion, he turned to an act of pious cruelty, expelling the Marranos from his kingdom and despoiling them; nor could there be an example more wretched and rarer than this." (Ch. 21, 88) Thus, while seeming to praise Ferdinand for his actions, offered as an illustration of how "nothing makes a prince so much esteemed as to carry on great enterprises and to give rare examples of himself," (Ch. 21, 87) Machiavelli includes, among Ferdinand's other qualities, his "pious cruelty" in expelling both the Jews and the Muslims which, if contrasted with
the example of Cyrus, indicates the extent to which the virtue of modern princes fails the test of antiquity.

In satire, subtle inferences help to clarify the intent of the satirist, but the success of such subtlety relies on alert readers to make important connections. That is, the passage on Ferdinand and the Inquisition is remarkable not only in the context of a chapter devoted to princely esteem, but also in regard to cruelty, when it is understood against the actions of Cyrus on behalf of the Jews in Babylonia, in which esteem is demonstrated through right actions, his "humanity," and the absence of vice. (III. 13, 310-11)

Machiavelli's understanding of virtue seems clear enough from his examples in Chapter Six, if one examines the lives of the individuals he portrays as most deserving of imitation for their virtue and their practices. Certain themes emerge. The importance of establishing good laws—not mentioned in the Prince because the new prince is, after all, maintained by force rather than law—provided stability and continuity to the cities and states begun by these great builders and founders of antiquity. None of his exemplars personified tyrannical practices, for above all, the notion of public welfare is demonstrated in their actions, which is one of the most important principles of governing put forth by Machiavelli in his works, with the exception of the Prince, in which the public interest is sacrificed entirely to the arrogant and despotic rule of one individual. On
this point alone one could undertake a lengthy proof against
the validity and integrity of the Prince as an exposition of
Machiavelli's political beliefs.

As a device in satire, colossal models serve the pur-
pose of "offering violent changes in perspective so that the
reader [intended victim] can see himself for what he really
is from strange new angles of vision... Rabelais with his
giants and their tremendous comical appetites, for example,
and Swift with his Brobdingnagians and their loathsome giant
rats and lice. Here again, however, Lucian in his True
History provided a model.\textsuperscript{24} Machiavelli's giants are enor-
mous in stature, but each of them symbolized the actions and
qualities that he found praiseworthy in the dim past and
deficient or absent in the present, including Cyrus, who has
his place in the "minds of the Persian people similar to
that of Romulus and Remus in Rome, or Moses for the Israel-
ites."\textsuperscript{25} Machiavelli's giants are meant to be compared with
the modern dwarfs who occupied center stage in Italy. The
quality that separated the ancients from the moderns was
virtue, formidable in Moses, Theseus, Romulus and Cyrus, and
notably absent in the Borgias, Petrucci, Medici and Sforzas.

The standard of virtue is an important element in
Machiavelli's satire--the key to understanding his intent,
for in the remaining pages of the Prince (and in Chapters
Three and Five, as well), he undermines virtue in every
conceivable way. The ancient giants he presents, in Chapter
Six, suggest "high burlesque," which "compares by placing our standard above the victim, thus making his shortcomings stand out sharply." A comparison with the Medici (and other modern princes) is meant to be inferred, as in his remark, "a prudent man should always enter upon the paths beaten by great mean, and imitate those who have been most excellent...," and a new prince in a new principality "encounters more or less difficulty in maintaining them according to whether the one who acquires them is more or less virtuous." (Ch. 6, 22) In Chapter Twenty-six, Machiavelli will make direct comparisons to the Medici specifically, when he turns our attention once again to Moses, Theseus, and Cyrus; "This is not very difficult if you summon up the actions and lives of those named above. And although these men are rare and marvelous, nonetheless they were men, and each of them had less opportunity than the present; for their undertaking was not more just than this one, nor easier, nor was God more friendly to them than to you." (Ch. 26, 102-3) Setting aside for the moment the farcical elements contained in his statement, it is clear that Machiavelli intended a comparison between the circumstances surrounding the ancient models with those pertaining to the Medici in the present, in which virtue is required to overcome all obstacles. (Ch. 26, 105)

Throughout most of the Prince, however, particularly between Chapters Six and twenty-six, Machiavelli conforms
more to low burlesque, "the process of diminishing and degrading the object... it creates a standard below its victim and makes the reader measure him against that standard... [it] compares its subject with what is base and sordid... [and] treats an elevated subject in a trivial manner." Thus, comic tension is created between what ought to be, as offered by Machiavelli in the virtuous achievements of his grandiose models in Chapter Six, and the reality--what is--that fills the pages of the Prince with its captivating horrors. If, in our present age, scholars have deigned to recognize the comic operative of the 'is' and 'ought' in his satire, they nonetheless acknowledge the shocking quality of the Prince, which suggests that Machiavelli's precepts continue to be evaluated against a higher moral standard of what political life ought to be. As, Isaiah Berlin remarks, "What is there, then, about his words, about his tone, which has caused such tremors among his readers?," a view expressed by Bertrand Russell, who labeled the Prince "a handbook for gangsters," views shared by Leo Strauss and others as well.

While "satirists have always taken vice and corruption as their targets, Machiavelli did that and much more; he made virtue, traditionally the hanging judge of satire, his special target," first by establishing the traditional idea of virtue as the standard, in Chapter Six, followed by a slow descent throughout the Prince into its opposite, vice,
which he skillfully transforms into a new concept of virtue.

There are no modern examples of virtue in Chapter Six. Savonarola is cited, but for his failure rather than his virtue. This omission, together with the fact that no living person is mentioned at all, suggest that virtue is an attribute beyond the reach of moderns grasping for power, which Machiavelli comically refers to in his analogy of the prudent archer:

For since men almost always walk on paths beaten by others and proceed in their actions by imitation, unable either to stay on the paths of others altogether or to attain the virtue of those whom you imitate, a prudent man should always enter upon the paths beaten by great men, and imitate those who have been most excellent, so that if his own virtue does not reach that far, it is at least in the odor of it. He should do as prudent archers do when the place they plan to hit appears too distant, and knowing how far the strength of their bow carries, they set their aim much higher than the place intended, not to reach such height with their arrow, but to be able with the aid of so high an aim to achieve their design. (Ch. 6, 22)

A literal translation of the word "strength" is "virtue," which better represents Machiavelli's meaning when he states, "and knowing how far the [virtue] of their bow carries," far the arrow represents the intent of the prince, and as he is not virtuous, he can hope for no more than to be "in the odor of it." He can, nonetheless, imitate the "greatest examples" (offered by Machiavelli) by
pretending to be virtuous, and thus "achieve" his "design," in which case the "odor" is all that is required, for appearances. The prince should take "great care," as he advises in Chapter Eighteen, to "appear all mercy, all faith, all honesty, all humanity, all religion," but be prepared, at the same time, not to "observe" them at will. (Ch. 18, 70) Machiavelli thus ridicules the new prince, in Chapter Six, by intimating that he does not measure up to the high standards personified in his models, but he also makes clear that such a prince can succeed in achieving his aims through ignoble means. And by ridiculing him, Machiavelli criticizes the new prince just as he criticized Cosimo de' Medici who was always in the odor of virtue, as such methods "bring men flying [like that arrow] to the principate," and cause citizens to fear that "he would become their prince," and destroy their liberty.

The intent of Machiavelli's new prince is to acquire a principality for himself, a state in which "his citizens always and in every quality of time, have need of the state and of himself," (Ch. 9, 42) a tyrant who rules according to his own interests, and what a prince "does in his own interests usually harms the city and what is done in the interests of the city harms him. Consequently, as soon as tyranny replaces self-government, the least of the evils which this tyranny brings about are that it ceases to make progress and to grow in power and wealth... and should fate
decree the rise of an efficient tyrant, so energetic and so proficient in warfare that he enlarges his dominions, no advantage will accrue to the commonwealth, but only to himself... " (II. 2, 276) for the glory of acquisition belongs to him, and the \"citizens would gain not subjects but fellow slaves.\" 34

As Allan Gilbert remarks in his introduction to the Prince, \"His figure dominates the little work,\" but, ironically, he finds \"the figure of the prince perfect in goodness, in active energy, in prudence, ruling for the common good of all the people of Italy\" despite the fact that Gilbert includes, in his appraisal of Italy\’s \"sorrow,\" a \"desire\" to be \"liberated\" from the \"native tyrant.\" 35 Who is Machiavelli\’s new prince if not a \"native tyrant?\" Nor should we be fooled by his assignation of the innocuous term new prince to such a man. The same device of diminution was utilized by Swift in A Modest Proposal, \"the substitution of the lesser word, and the imputation of lesser motive,\" which creates an \"illusion,\" one that is quite convincing if we accept Machiavelli\’s arguments for absolute power in the interest of liberating Italy, manifest in the \’new prince.\’ In truth, however, the \’new prince\’ is a tyrant—seeking his own advantage. Italy will not be liberated, but enslaved. The art of satire is not to state your objective directly, however. \"The true satirist, no matter how violent his feelings, usually tries to get at his target indirectly.\"
Otherwise, we have only diatribe."

The great irony of the Prince, as previously stated, is that Machiavelli turned to his oppressors for salvation from oppression, and the more entrenched the Medici became in their personal power and influence, the less likelihood there was that the republic would be revived. The Discourses affirm that Machiavelli never lost sight of the value of democratic principles for the common benefit, in a republic devoted to liberty and justice, and his models of virtue reflect, in various ways, his preoccupation with governments founded on principles conducive to the evolution of freedom. The Prince contradicts those principles in every aspect, but most especially with regard to common interest; the new prince, unrestrained by laws, does what he likes, and "a prince who does what he likes is a lunatic." (I. 58, 256)
Chapter IX. Fortune and the Arms of Others: Cesare Borgia

In Chapters Seven through Nine, Machiavelli discourses on those principalities acquired by means other than virtue, by fortune and the arms of others, by crimes, or with the support of fellow citizens. These chapters reflect the means by which the modern princes acquired their positions of power, and are meant to be understood as inferior to the standard of virtue presented in Chapter Six—manifestly absent in the modern examples.

In Chapter Seven, Machiavelli gives his example of a modern prince "with a great virtue of his own," Francesco Sforza, who "acquired with a thousand pains," but "maintained with little trouble," whom he contrasts with Cesare Borgia, who "acquired his state through the fortune of his father and lost it through the same..." (Ch. 7, 25-6) Sforza, it would seem, should have been included in Chapter Six, but he was omitted because his example does not reflect the virtue of antiquity. Rather, he personifies the virtue of a modern prince. That is, virtue re-defined by Machiavelli, to suit the present era.

Francesco Sforza was a condotte, "hired to protect" the Ambrosian Republic of Milan, in 1447. He betrayed the republic and "made himself Duke of Milan" in 1450, ruling as a despot.¹ In a set speech from the History,² Machiavelli gives his assessment of Sforza’s attributes in the words of a Milanese ambassador, who accuses Sforza of "treachery,"

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"wickedness," "cruelty, ambition, and arrogance," stating further, "O unhappy those cities forced to defend their liberty against the ambition of him who wishes to oppress them!" Unlike Moses, then, who led the enslaved to freedom, Sforza led the people into servitude, through the ignoble means of betrayal and deceit. In his desire to "[carve] out a principality for himself in Italy's north and center," he exhibited the greed and ambition common to the new princes of Italy. Theseus gave the authority to govern to the people; Sforza took authority unto himself, ruling as a tyrant. Further, the good princely qualities exhibited by Cyrus are not evident in Sforza, who was corrupt, vile, and treacherous. Nor did Sforza lay proper foundations, as did Cyrus and Romulus. In the Discourses, Machiavelli blames Sforza for building a fortress (castle) in Milan:

And if Count Francesco Sforza, having become Duke of Milan, was reputed a wise man, and yet built a fortress in Milan, I maintain that in this he was not wise, and the result has proved that this fortress did harm to his heirs instead of affording them security. For with a fortress they thought they were safe and could oppress their citizens and subjects, so lost no opportunity of doing them violence; with the result that they came to be detested beyond all measure, and lost their state to the first enemy who attacked them."

Thus, Francesco Sforza was not virtuous or wise when compared to the examples of antiquity. When compared to Cesare Borgia, however, he appears virtuous indeed, for he
acquired a state to pass down to his heirs (facilitated by his marriage to Bianca Maria, daughter of Filippo Maria Visconti, former Duke of Milan), and he prevailed in overcoming obstacles to his personal ambition largely by his own devices, from private individual, without the wealth of the Church at his disposal—truly a great modern exemplar. Both Borgia and Sforza threatened Tuscany, and neither succeeded, but if one were to assess who was the greater villain, Sforza must be considered superior for having succeeded, while in all important respects, Cesare Borgia was "a notorious, spectacular failure."

Machiavelli praises Cesare lavishly in Chapter Seven, however, in a provocative discourse on a man most of Machiavelli's contemporaries "hated, feared, and despised."

The Florentines nurtured "a long standing hatred" of him, including the aristocrats who "shared the people's revulsion," which, as Garrett Mattingly observes of their number, "Giuliano de' Medici" would have been the "last man to be attracted by the notion of imitating the Borgia," for reasons of ambition and ability. Precisely because Borgia was "universally despised," "universally feared," and a dismal failure, Machiavelli could not have chosen a better representative of his type to satirize the new prince, in a supreme mockery of all he stood for.

Machiavelli mentions Cesare Borgia's "high intention" (Ch. 7, 32) which should be understood in the context of
Machiavelli's analogy of the prudent archer, in Chapter Six. Machiavelli also uses the word "empire" in reference to Cesare; "to acquire so much empire before the pope died that he could resist a first attack on his own," and that he should be "imitated by all those who have risen to empire through fortune and the arms of others." (Ch. 7, 31-2) Empire is a comical reference to his actual achievement. Machiavelli states that he "planned to become lord over Tuscany," and "he would have jumped on Pisa" had he not had to "pay regard to France (which he did not have to do any longer, since the French had already been stripped of the kingdom by the Spanish, so that each of them was forced of necessity to buy his friendship)," and, further, "Lucca and Siena would have quickly yielded." (Ch. 7, 31) In reality, Cesare had only succeeded in acquiring the "cities of Romagna and the Marches," an accomplishment rendered even more insignificant by Machiavelli's understatement, "he already possessed Perugia and Piombino." (Ch. 7, 31) And had Cesare acquired all that Machiavelli says he intended to acquire, one would not dignify it as empire but as a state. The word empire relates, again, to Julius Caesar---Machiavelli's way of ridiculing the pretentious arrogance of the other, lesser Cesare. Just as he did in Mandragola, Machiavelli "exaggerated for comic effect." Borgia's banner prophesying "all or nothing" fluttered majestically over a principality founded on the capricious
whims of fortune, and his "failure to achieve his ambition to seize total power reflected badly on the efficacy of his underhanded methods." Indeed, his foundations were exceedingly poor. In the opinion of Renzo Sereno, "Niccolo's judgment of Caesar is so grossly flattering as to be nonsensical... Caesar's attempts at kingdom-building in Romagna fell very short of the most pessimistic expectations. His realm collapsed almost at once with the death of Alexander VI. As soon as the Spaniards were ousted from the Court of Rome, Caesar's political power vanished." Garrett Mattingly makes the point that, "without papal support his principate was built on quicksand," and when he "slinked" out of Italy, utterly defeated, he was "followed by the scornful laughter of Italy. For nothing is more absurd than the great straw-stuffed giants of carnival, and when such a giant has for a season frightened all Italy, the laughter is that much the louder."

Cesare failed because he was dependent on the fortune and aid of his father, who provided him with the means to acquire. To finance his "government and his wars," Alexander "sold offices, took over the estates of dead cardinals, and exploited the jubilee of 1500 to the full. Dispensations and divorces were given as profitable parts of political bargains... Cesare Borgia used jubilee funds to finance his campaigns for recovery of the Papal States. To further celebrate the jubilee, Alexander... created twelve
new cardinals, who paid a total of 120,000 ducats for their appointment... he named nine additional cardinals at a commensurate price... he created ex nihilo eighty new offices in the Curia, and these places... were sold at 760 ducats each." Satirists and pamphleteers took notice. A "stinging pasquenade" was "attached to the statue of Pasquino (1503)," critical of Alexander: "The keys, the alters, Alexander sells, and Christ; with right, since he has paid for them." With "the abominable Borgia, Alexander VI, the Church had grown so profoundly corrupt that it was threatened with estrangement from its mission." The infamous Alexander, "addicted to all lusts of the flesh," could be said, "like many other men of the culminating Renaissance, [to have] lost both his religion and his morals by his too exclusive pursuit of purely selfish advantage," including "the aggrandizement of his children." He "plotted" to "elevate his son [Juan] to the throne of Naples," but Juan was murdered. Alexander "became almost certain that his son Cesare was his brother's murderer," although his guilt was never proven. Juan's death, however, was distinctly advantageous to Cesare, for it "would force the pope to make Cesare a layman once again. He could then obtain a princely position... [his] destiny decreed that he should physically eliminate the Duke of Gandia [Juan]: no one had more interest in this elimination than he."
Cesare was made gonfalonier of the Church and captain general, to recapture the papal lands of Romagna for the Church but, in reality, Alexander's ambition was to carve out a principality for Cesare in central Italy. To this end, the Borgia used religion to achieve their design. Under the power of papal authority, Cesare seized one city after another with "bulls excommunicating rebellious subjects and interdicting their cities." Machiavelli introduced the notion of using religion with regard to King Ferdinand who despoiled his subjects on the grounds of suspected heresy, (Ch. 21, 88) which increased his wealth, and helped provide for his eventual supremacy in Italy, by defeating the French. Pope Alexander used religion in striking his bargain with King Louis XIII, dissolving his marriage in exchange for military aid. Machiavelli makes a point of this indirectly in Chapter Seven when he states that the pope did "not oppose" the Venetian efforts to bring the French into Italy. Rather, he facilitated it "by the dissolution of the former marriage of King Louis. So the king came into Italy with the aid of the Venetians and the consent of Alexander, and he was no sooner in Milan than the pope got men from him for a campaign in Romagna, which was granted to him because of the reputation of the king." (Ch. 7, 27-8) Just as he did in Chapter Three, (Ch. 3, 15) Machiavelli diminished the importance of the agreement between Louis XII and Alexander, granting only "consent" by
Alexander, and attributing the aid of French forces to the "reputation of the king" rather than acknowledging the quid pro quo arrangement for what it was, made long in advance, reflecting the corrupt abuse of papal authority exhibited by Alexander.

Alexander thus used religion in a variety of ways to promote secular advantage for himself and his family. He was perhaps the most corrupt pope in the history of the Church, and he, together with his son, Cesare, are deserving of the satirical scorn Machiavelli heaps upon them in the Prince as models extraordinaire of corruption. Nor does Machiavelli reserve his contempt solely for explication in the Prince. He refers to Cesare's demise as "deserved by rebels against Christ" in the First Decennale,26 a remark that appropriately charges him with those abuses against God and man for which he later praises him in the Prince. Machiavelli also displays his contempt for Alexander in the Decennale; "the soul of splendid Alexander, that it might have rest, departed to the blessed spirits; his sacred footsteps were followed by his three dear and intimate handmaids; Luxury, Simony, Cruelty."27 There was "incredible rejoicing," writes Francesco Giucciardini in his History of Italy, when the "Romans viewed Alexander's body in St. Peters... the dead serpent who, with his immoderate ambition, his cruelty and avarice, had infected the whole world."28
Machiavelli's satire is evident, then, in his praise of Cesare, a new prince who was dependent on the fortune of another (particularly that of a vile and corrupt pope who symbolized ecclesiastical rule), and one who lacked the requisite virtue to overcome the demise of his benefactor, even to the extent that Machiavelli excuses Cesare for his lack of virtue; "And if his orders did not bring profit to him, it was not his fault, because this arose from an extraordinary and extreme malignity of fortune," (Ch. 7, 27) the death of his father and his own illness. But there was nothing extraordinary or extreme about the death of the pope, "who died at the age of seventy-two after a papacy of eleven years (not such a short life and not such a short reign)." In the History, Machiavelli cites the "short" life of popes generally as one reason "why a secular prince cannot wholly rely one a pontiff and cannot securely share his fortunes with him." In reference to Pope Nicholas III (1277-1280), Machiavelli remarks:

he was the first of the popes who openly revealed his personal ambition... as before this time no mention had ever been made of any pontiff's nephews or relatives, so in the future they will fill history and at last we shall come to the sons; and there is nothing left for the pontiff's to try except that, as up to our times they have planned to leave their sons as princes, in the future they may strive to leave them the popedom as hereditary. It is indeed true that up to now the princedoms they have established have had short lives,
because most of the time, the pontiffs, since they lived but a short while, either did not finish setting our the plants, or if they did set them out, left them with so few and so weak roots that, since the strength sustaining them was gone, at the first wind they withered away.

Thus, Machiavelli could not have considered the death of Pope Alexander an extraordinary event in terms of expectations. In the Prince, he describes a state similar to that begun by the Borgia with similar language, but also suggests how it might be preserved; "states that come to be suddenly, like all other things in nature that are born and grow quickly, cannot have roots and branches, so that the first adverse weather destroys them—unless, indeed, as was said, those who have suddenly become princes have so much virtue that they know immediately how to prepare to keep what fortune has placed in their laps," (Ch. 7, 26) virtue that Machiavelli could not possibly attribute to Cesare, who failed to make such preparations.

Nor should Cesare's illness be considered an "extreme malignity of fortune," for he was not too ill to give orders to "the faithful Michelotto" to seize "200,000 ducats worth of silver and jewels and two chests containing 100,000 gold coins" from the papal coffers, when he received "news of his father's death." And although he suffered a "bout with malaria," he was "not too ill to stall the election and then maneuver the choice of the old and ailing Pius III, thus
delaying an unavoidable doom.\textsuperscript{33} Machiavelli's many references to Cesare's illness are tantamount to overstatement, which suggests the real significance he attaches to it: Alexander "left the duke with only the state of Romagna consolidated... and sick to death;" (Ch. 7, 31) "so sound were the foundations that he had laid in so little time, that if he had not had these armies on his back or if he had been healthy, he would have been equal to every difficulty;" (Ch. 7, 32) "But if at the death of Alexander the duke had been healthy, everything would have been easy for him. And he told me, on the day that Julius II was created, that he had thought about what might happen when his father was dying, and he had found a remedy for everything, except that he never thought that at his death he himself would also be on the point of dying." (Ch. 7, 32) As Garrett Mattingly explains, however, "he did not even record then that Cesare ever said anything of the sort; and though it would not be unlike some of the duke's whimperings, he could not have said it on the day of Julius II's election, when he was boasting to everyone that the new pope would obey him.\textsuperscript{34}

Cesare's illness was but a feeble excuse, exaggerated by Machiavelli to ridicule Cesare's ineptness. Machiavelli could hardly have admired a prince who, although ill, was well enough to raid the wealth of the Church and influence the papal election, but whose foundations were so poor, he could not arrange to defend and maintain his acquisitions in
adversity.

And perhaps Machiavelli had something else in mind as well, when he referred to Alexander's death and Cesare's illness as "an extraordinary and extreme malignity of fortune," the suggestion of a rumor that they were poisoned at a banquet together with other guests, a "legend" related by Giucciardini and most later historians." How ironic and appropriate to his satire, if Machiavelli attributed Cesare's failure to an illness that was, in fact, the result of foul play, particularly since poisoning was a method of extermination so favored by their own family that Ivan Cloulas mentions the "notorious potion of the Borgias" when discussing this event. Even more interesting, the "legend" asserts that "in agreement with the pope, Cesare had sent Cardinal da Cornetto some poisoned wine that was to be served only to the host but which, through carelessness, was poured out to everyone present," including the Borgia—extremely bad fortune indeed. "According to another version, Adriano da Cornetto himself poisoned the pope." Although "the different phases of Alexander's illness and the hideous appearance of his corpse pointed to poisoning," their deaths are generally attributed to malaria. 

In his praise of Cesare, Machiavelli lauds his actions in eliminating the Colonna and Orsini, great noble families of Rome, as grounds for having laid "very good foundations for his power," (Ch. 7, 29) and following the death of
Alexander, "although the Baglioni, Vitelli, and Orsini came to Rome, none followed them against him." (Ch. 7, 32) In truth, the Colonna and Orsini who survived rallied forces against him almost immediately; "the news of Alexander's death [spread] havoc among the Roman populace... but it was mainly in the Romagna that violent opposition arose, incited by the Orsinis and the Colonnas. From all sides, the Orsini were rushing back to reoccupy their lands. Salvio Savelli retook his Roman palace, opened up the jails, and released the Borgia prisoners. Prospero Colonna meanwhile was making a forced march north from Naples," and when he arrived in Rome, "he took possession of the palace from which he had so long been banished. That night the Capitol was lit up by Colonna supporters while pro-Colonna areas of the city resounded with exuberant shouts. Meanwhile, the Orsini's were zeroing in on the pro-Orsini quarter... from there they roughed up Borgia supporters and set fire to 100 Spaniards' homes."37 Thus, when Machiavelli writes of Cesare, "and the first thing he did was to weaken the Orsini and Colonna parties in Rome. For he gained to himself all their adherents, who were gentlemen, by making them his gentlemen, and by giving them large allowances; and he honored them, according to their merits, with commands and with government posts, so that in a few months the partisans' affections in their minds were eliminated, and all affection turned toward the duke," (Ch. 7, 28) he falsely attributes good founda-
tions to Cesare that did not, in fact, exist. So adamant were the Orsini in their hatred of the venal Cesare, they resolved "to capture the duke in person or pursue him 'to the death,'" as participants in a "secret" pact with Spain.\textsuperscript{38}

Machiavelli makes the point that Cesare "thought especially that he had acquired the friendship of Romagna, and that he had gained all those peoples to himself since they had begun to taste well-being," (Ch. 7, 29) and notes that although Cesare was "half-alive," yet "Romagna waited for him for more than a month." (Ch. 7, 32) But not all of Romagna waited. There and elsewhere, the petty tyrants ousted by the Borgia rushed into the vacuum to reclaim their lands, together with others well loved by the people (such as Guidobaldo da Montefeltro), as well as the Venetians pressed for territory as well. During the conclave that elected the new pope, Pius III (whose reign only lasted twenty-two days), the Venetians had already come to the aid of "Guidobaldo of Urbino with troops, and allowed him to take over the fortress of San Leo... the next move was to oust Pedro Ramirez from Urbino. The Florentines... helped Giampaolo Baglioni clear Cesare's partisans out of Magione and Giacomo Appiano to return to his fief of Piombino. Baglioni was advancing on Camerino, accompanied by the last surviving member of the Varano family. The Vitellis, now once more ensconced in Città di Castello, were celebrating their homecoming by triumphantly carrying a golden calf
through the streets to erase the memory of the red Borgia bull. On the Adriatic coast, Bartolomeo Alviano had set Pandolfo Malatesta up once again in Rimini, and Giovanni Sforza in Pesaro. Luckily for Cesare, his capital of Cesena, with its solid fortifications, could hold fast, protected by Dionigi di Naldo's tough force of 1,000 veterans. It was in Cesena that Pedro Ramirez hanged Pedro de Oviedo as a traitor, which ultimately led to Cesare's arrest. Oviedo had accompanied a representative of Julius II, to "take possession of the fortresses." The murder so enraged Julius that he imprisoned Cesare in Rome, and "[confiscated] all the duke's possessions, proclaiming that he was going to use them to compensate those people who had a grievance against him... this spelled Cesare's financial ruin." One of those compensated was Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, dispossessed by the Borgia in 1502. His court inspired "the setting for Castiglione's The Courtier," and during the reigns of Guidobaldo and his father, Federico, Urbino "was admired throughout Italy for its humanist learning and cultivated ways." Guidobaldo was not a tyrant but loved by his subjects. Betrayed by Cesare, he was forced to flee from Urbino leaving behind his works of art and his extensive library, which Cesare confiscated for his personal use. Shortly before his imprisonment, Cesare visited Guidobaldo in his vatican chamber, "who had been
newly restored to his former estates by the loyalty of his subjects, and to his former rank of gonfaloniere of the church by the new pope [a position previously held by Cesare under Pope Alexander]. There, Cesare kneels on the floor, sobbing in pure terror, begging the old friend whom he had betrayed and robbed, with incredible meanness, not just of his duchy, but of his books and his antique medals, not to kill him, please not to kill him, to leave him at least his life, until Guidobaldo, beyond any feeling about this curious monster, says he does not wish to kill him; he only wishes him to go away. 

This pitiful portrayal of Cesare Borgia leaves little to be admired by Machiavelli. Above all, Machiavelli would likely have found Cesare culpable for never managing to forge together his own conquering army. Even in his desperation at the end, having had five years to acquire his own arms, Cesare struggled to "raise soldiers" for his return to the Romagna, according to Machiavelli's own official reports contained in the Legations. As Machiavelli explains in Chapter Seven, Cesare "armed to suit himself," (Ch. 7, 20) an uncomplimentary statement, and he "depended on the fortune and force of someone else." (Ch. 7, 31) Garrett Mattingly notes that while Machiavelli praises Cesare's arms in Chapter Thirteen of the Prince, in the Legations, he "never once refers to the military capacity of the Duke or praises the courage or discipline of his army," nor does he
praise him for exceptional arms in the Discourses or in The Art of War. And although Machiavelli states that Cesare "was never so much esteemed as when everyone saw that he was the total owner of his arms" in Chapter Thirteen, (Ch. 13, 55) he was never the "total owner," and those he assembled from his own territory constituted but a small part of his army, nor was he ever financially able to support any of his forces without continual support from the Church. In October, 1502, just ten months before the death of Alexander, by Machiavelli's own estimates, Cesare's arms consisted of "2,500 footsolders, plus 800 men enlisted in the Val da Lamona and 1,000 mercenaries that Michelotto was to recruit—in all, 4,300 infantry. He had 1,000 mercenaries raised, Gascons in Lombardy as well as Swiss. Supporting these offensive forces would be a reserve army of 5,000 Romagnols. As for the cavalry, it was based on Cesare's company of 100 lances and three 50-lance companies under the command of three Spanish captains... By the end of the month, Cesare's army totaled 5,350 footsolders, including 600 Gascons and Germans. It would later gain 3,000 Swiss. The men-at-arms numbered 340... With the addition of the five French companies—some 2,000 men in all—promised by Louis... that made 840 units of heavy cavalry (3,300 men) already raised," which demonstrates the vast array of mercenary, auxiliary, and Romagnal arms assembled by Cesare. He was aided by Swiss mercenaries when he eliminated the Orsini and Vitelli
in Sinigaglia, in December, 1502. Thus, when Machiavelli states, in Chapter Thirteen, that he "eliminated" the mercenary arms of "Orsini and Vitelli," and "turned to his own arms," (Ch. 13, 55) the context of "own arms" always included mercenaries. Only the Romagnal forces could be said to constitute Cesare's own arms, if he hoped to defeat the forces that would collaborate against him following the death of the pope, including the Church and the foreign invaders, France and Spain. Cesare never gathered sufficient forces to prepare for that eventuality. Far from it. And even to support his own troops, which he never "owned" because of it, he was dependent on the Church.

Cesare Borgia was so wretched an example, predictably doomed to failure by Machiavelli's own estimation of like circumstances, (Ch. 7, 26) that he could never have sincerely intended that Cesare's example be imitated. Combined with Cesare's failure to provide sufficient arms of his own and his financial dependence on the Church (from revenues furnished by simony and other ignoble means), one must also consider the treachery of the pope and his son, to fully comprehend the impact they had on the Italy of Machiavelli's time, both terrifying and repugnant to those in their wake:

The pope was playing his role to perfection. He invited Cardinal Orsini to the New Year's celebrations [1503]--lavish banquets in the company of beautiful women and fancy dress parades, at one of which a row of thirty transvestites sauntered past wearing false noses 'in
the shape of a priapus,' that is, male genitals. Thus entertained, Giambattista [Orsini cardinal] felt reassured about his fate and thought it would be a good move to congratulate the pope on the capture of Sinigaglia. As he was on his way to the Vatican to wait for Alexander... he was promptly arrested and taken prisoner to the Castle Sant' Angelo. Incarcerated with him were Rinoldo Orsini, the archbishop of Florence, Bernardino Alviano... and Giacomo Santa Croce, a friend of the Orsinis, who was soon let out on bail. The cardinals' estates were seized and his eighty-year-old mother hounded out of her house and thrown into the street... no one would risk taking her in... all these moves threw Rome into a panic; the bishop of Chiusi actually died of fright.

On hearing of the cardinals' arrest, Cesare had his relatives, Paolo Orsini and the duke of Gravina, strangled on the spot... That done, Cesare pushed deep into Sienese territory, laying waste the little towns of Pienza, Chiusi, and San Quirico... [he] then set down the long road to Rome, passing Acquapendente, Montefiascone, and Viterbo, which he pillaged. He had no respect for Church property and preferred to give his old troopers pleasure rather than provoke mutiny in their ranks.51

After the death of Alexander, Cesare laid part of the blame for his actions on the "perverted character" of his father,52 so perverted was he, himself, in estimating his own responsibility for events. As Machiavelli writes in his dispatch of November 20, 1503, "All the favors that the Pope [Julius], Rouen, and those here have done Valentino have been in order that he may go away, the sooner the better... everybody here laughs about his affairs... We shall see
where the wind will carry him... ."53 Machiavelli could not have imagined that his own satire would, ironically, carry Cesare Borgia to heights undreamed of at the moment he wrote these critical and disparaging words of contempt.
Chapter X. Acquiring through Crimes: Ancient and Modern

Of those who follow a "criminal and nefarious path," (Ch. 8, 34) in their assent to principality, the subject of Chapter Eight, no example would have been more appropriate than Cesare Borgia, but he is never blamed for his crimes, as Machiavelli blames Agathocles and Liverotto da Fermo. In Chapter Seven, he treated Cesare's actions as praiseworthy, but before the ink was dry, he reiterated his crimes in the name of others, in the following chapter. The extent to which he actually blames Cesare thus becomes clear. As Leo Strauss observes, "Machiavelli does not even suggest that Cesare Borgia, the model, was animated by patriotism or concerned with the common good. It is true that he contrasts Cesare with the criminal Agathocles by not calling Cesare a criminal. But if one looks at the actions of the two men, the contrast vanishes: in describing Agathocles as a criminal, he provisionally adopts the traditional judgment on that man, whereas there does not yet exist a traditional judgment on Cesare," thus permitting Machiavelli his deception.

Machiavelli begins Chapter Eight by making the point that there is no distinction between ancient and modern examples with regard to criminal paths, thereby leaving aside his usual preference for the practices of antiquity; "And to speak of the first mode [not altogether fortune or virtue, but crimes], it will be demonstrated with two exam-
pies, one ancient, the other modern, without entering otherwise into the merits of this issue, because I judge it sufficient, for whoever would find it necessary, to imitate them." (Ch. 8, 34) He does, however, devote this chapter to the merits of this issue, and is by no means value neutral in his conclusions.

One of the devices employed by Machiavelli that invites closer scrutiny of his remarks concerning Agathocles and also of Cesare is the fact that in both cases, Machiavelli attributes virtue to their actions, but then subtracts it in his final assessment of the modes by which they succeeded in acquiring power. Of Cesare's virtue, he states that, "he made use of every deed and did all those things that should be done by a prudent and virtuous man to put his roots in the states that the arms and fortune of others had given him," (Ch. 7, 27) and "there was such ferocity and such virtue in the duke, "that he would have been "equal to every difficulty had he not been threatened by foreign armies," or "if he had been healthy." (Ch. 7, 31-2) "Nevertheless," Cesare "acquired his state through the fortune of his father and lost it through the same," (Ch. 7, 26-7) because he lacked the virtue to keep, in adversity, what fortune had given to him.

And of Agathocles, Machiavelli notes that his "crimes were accompanied with such virtue of spirit and body that when he turned to the military, he rose through its ranks to
become praetor of Syracuse," (Ch. 8, 34) and "whoever might consider the actions and virtue of this man will see nothing or little that can be attributed to fortune," (Ch. 8, 35) which implies (since this chapter follows the chapter on Cesare, fortune, and the arms of others) that Cesare is inferior to Agathocles. At least of Agathocles, Machiavelli is willing to grant ability. Because of his crimes, however, Agathocles is robbed of his virtue, but in listing his crimes, Machiavelli directs our attention back to Cesare, whose crimes are similar to those of Agathocles, as well as those of Liverotto da Fermo.

Machiavelli notes, for example, that "one cannot call it virtue" to "kill one's citizens," (Ch. 8, 35) "citizens" being those one kills in order to seize absolute authority. Agathocles killed thousands, including the senate and those of the ruling party, the "richest of the people." (Ch. 8, 34). Cesare "killed as many [of the lords he had despoiled] as he could reach." (Ch. 7, 31) Agathocles betrayed his "friends," (Ch. 8, 35) as did Cesare when he betrayed Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, taking "the duchy of Urbino." (Ch. 7, 28) Agathocles is accused of being without "faith," (Ch. 8, 35) and of Cesare, Machiavelli refers to his deceit in Sinigaglia. Further, of Agathocles, Machiavelli charges that "one cannot call it virtue" to be "without religion" (Ch. 8, 35) and of Cesare and his father, Alexander VI, Machiavelli states that the pope "did not see the path to
being able to make [Cesare] lord of any state that was not a state of the Church," and so he "decided to take that of the Church," (Ch. 7, 27) which reflects the abuse of his faith in making use of religion on behalf of his son.

Machiavelli also refers to the "savage cruelty and inhumanity" of Agathocles, (Ch. 8, 35) while, in Chapter Seven, as I stated above, he makes the point that Cesare had killed Remirro to appease the people, revealing his own cruel and inhumane nature (if we accept the version of affairs offered by Machiavelli in the Prince). (Ch. 7, 30) Many other examples could be given of the crimes, violence, and ambition of Cesare Borgia and his father, but I have cited those from Chapter Seven that parallel the references Machiavelli makes to Agathocles in the following chapter to illustrate that for those actions and qualities that Agathocles is blamed, Cesare is praised. Further, having indicated that he found Agathocles admirable, for having raised himself up without the aid of fortune or the arms of others (which imputes blame to Cesare for having depended on both), Machiavelli "nonetheless" attributes neither "fortune" or "virtue" to Agathocles, relegating him to a position inferior even to that of Cesare in his esteem, who at least had fortune on his side. And although Agathocles is not "celebrated among the most excellent men," (Ch. 8, 35) because of his actions, Cesare, whom he defined by similar actions, is lauded as a model of such excellence that
Machiavelli "[does] not know what better teaching I could give to a new prince" than his example. (Ch. 7, 27)

The example of Liverotto da Fermo offers the modern counterpart to Agathocles, in kind if not in scope. Cesare would have provided a much grander example, having threatened a large portion of Italy with his treachery. Through the actions of Liverotto, however, Machiavelli offers an illustration of Cesare's own villainy, for whether the fox is large or small, deceit for personal gain stems from the same qualities of greed, ambition, and immoral (or amoral) behavior, all the more intriguing when one fox outwits another, as Cesare outwitted Liverotto.

As the adopted son of his maternal uncle, Giovanni Fogliani, Liverotto, who became proficient as a mercenary, returned to Fermo for a visit, "to acknowledge his patrimony." (Ch. 8, 36) He arranged for a "banquet," after which he had his uncle and "other citizens" murdered, "besieged" the "magistery," and made himself "prince." (Ch. 8, 37) Liverotto's perfidy was outmatched by Cesare, however, who had him "strangled" at Sinigaglia, together with other mercenary captains who had plotted against the Borgia. (Ch. 8, 37) Cesare's part in villainy, however, is left uncriticized by Machiavelli, and one has the sense that Cesare simply meted out punishment that Liverotto deserved.

Both Cesare and Liverotto, however, enticed their victims by devious and cunning means, and with savage cruelty extermi-
nated them to further their own selfish interests. Thus, they are alike in kind as well.

One of the points made by Machiavelli in calling up the example of Agathocles from antiquity, is that ability unaccompanied by virtue is insufficient to judge excellence in a prince, and in the examples of Cesare Borgia (in Chapter Seven) and Liverotto da Fermo, he shows how far from excellence the modern princes had deviated, particularly when contrasted with Moses, Theseus, Romulus, and Cyrus who, as "excellent" (Ch. 6, 22) exemplars, exhibited ability and virtue combined in their enterprises. Despite his profuse praise for Cesare Borgia, Machiavelli does not refer to him as excellent in the Prince. In fact, in blaming Agathocles, Machiavelli shows that he has not deported from his preference for and admiration of the virtue displayed in antiquity by Moses and the others, for whom his praise is sincere. In the illustration of Liverotto, Machiavelli transfers blame to the modern princes. Nor does he attribute virtue to the Borgia or the Medici, who represent force and fraud respectively, the lion and the fox. Machiavelli thus uses the examples of Agathocles and Liverotto as a mirror, in which is reflected the modern princes generally—and the Borgia in particular.

With the appearance of his reasoning on cruelty in Chapter Eight, there should be little doubt that we are being manipulated by a clever Machiavelli who indeed "has
his sleeves full,"² not only of things "he knows [that] other men do not," but of grand illusions created with trickery and deceit—equal to that displayed by the worst villains he portrays in the Prince.

From the example of Agathocles who, "after infinite betrayals and cruelties, could live for a long time secure in his fatherland," Machiavelli argues that Agathocles' success resulted from "cruelties badly used or well used. Those can be called well used (if it is permissible to speak well of evil) that are done at a stroke, out of necessity to secure oneself and then are not persisted in but are turned to as much utility for the subjects as one can. Those cruelties are badly used which, though few in the beginning, rather grow with time than are eliminated," for "injuries must be done all together so that, being tasted less, they offend less." (Ch. 8, 37-8)

As part of his satire, Machiavelli's comment, "if it is permissible to speak well of evil" suggests his humaneness in partially rejecting the use of cruelty, a device used by Jonathan Swift as well.³ And, like Swift, Machiavelli's comment has the tone of an aside. Swift used parenthesis to "slip in cutting asides reflecting the judgment of the projector,"⁴ and it seems clear from this remark that Machiavelli does find cruelty as evil (having so labeled it), despite his recommendations to use it.

Quentin Skinner makes the point that "Aristotle had
laid it down in his *Politics* that rulers generally come to be hated as a result of confiscating the property of their subjects or violating the honour of their womenfolk. (1311 a-b) To this the Roman moralists had added that cruelty is another leading cause of hatred. As Seneca had put it in *De dementia*, cruelty always increases the number of a king's enemies and eventually makes him hated and loathed (I,8,7; I,25,3) It is striking that Machiavelli completely ignores this latter argument. But it is even more striking that, in offering his own opinion about how to avoid hatred, he simply reiterates what Aristotle had already said, "in Chapter Nineteen, that the prince should "abstain" from the "women of his subjects," and their property." (Ch. 19, 72) Machiavelli thus ignores the "Roman Moralists" who "added that cruelty is another leading cause of hatred." Rather, he encourages the new prince to practice cruelty in the context of "well" or "badly" used, and the effect is to suggest the true nature of the prince.

Machiavelli may also have intended that the phrase, "if it is permissible to speak well of evil" be understood as a criticism of the Church, which failed to halt the corruption of its own prelates. Of the Franciscan and Dominican friars, Machiavelli notes, in the *Discourses*, "they also lived so frugally and had such prestige with the populace as confessors and preachers that they convinced them it is an evil thing to speak evilly of evil doing, and a good thing
to live under obedience to such prelates, and that, if they did wrong, it must be left to God to chastise them. And, this being so, the latter behave as badly as they can, because they are not afraid of punishments which they do not see and in which they do not believe. It is, then, this revival which has maintained and continues to maintain this religion," (III. 1, 389) a strong commentary on the Church offered by Machiavelli, and one that I think has relevance to the Prince, as well, for if "it is an evil thing to talk evilly of evil doing," as he says above, then might it not be a good thing, and thus "permissible," to speak "well of evil"? Machiavelli hints at this absurd notion when he asks "if it is permissible to speak well of evil," in the Prince. And he dutifully follows the advice of the friars by omitting moral considerations from his recommendations (with the exception of the phrase in question), nor does he speak evilly of cruelty (which he implicitly labeled as evil). Rather, he speaks "well" of it in the sense that it can be "well used." Machiavelli thus mocks the friars for that teaching which left (and continued to leave) the Church mired in corruption.

In Machiavelli's time, the Dominicans "were entrusted with [the] execution of the Spanish Inquisition," authorized by Sixtus IV in 1478. In 1492, the Spanish Jews and Muslims were given four months to convert to the Roman Catholic faith or leave Spain, forfeiting wealth and proper-
ty, as described above. The savage cruelty that accompanied the Inquisition was done in the name of God, the same God that would (the friars taught) chastise those who were guilty of evil doing among the Church prelates, which suggests an irony that is compounded by Machiavelli’s observation that the prelates neither feared or believed in such punishments.

If the priests had so little fear of God’s punishment, what had the princes of Italy to fear? Pasquale Villari attests to this moral vacuum when he remarks that, in Machiavelli’s time, "individual members of the community [were] deprived of all guidance save that of their own instincts," and the instinct for self-preservation in the new princes of Italy permitted no conscionable objection to cruelty or crimes, to achieve their ends.

A general principle of Machiavelli’s that finds expression in all of his major works is that new benefits do not make men forget old injuries. In Chapter Eight, however, he suggests the opposite; "in taking hold of a state, he who seizes it should examine all the offenses necessary for him to commit, and do them all in a stroke, so as not to have to renew them everyday and by not renewing them, to secure men and gain them to himself with benefits... for injuries must be done all together, so that, being tasted less, they offend less; and benefits should be done little by little so that they may be tasted better." (Ch. 8, 38)
To illustrate the extent to which Machiavelli has distorted his principles in the above passage, I refer to the *Discourses*, in which he cautions, "when a man is deprived of something which possesses intrinsic value, he never forgets it, and you are reminded of it every time you in any way need it; and since such need is of daily occurrence, you are reminded of it every day," (III. 23, 472) and he warns "all potentates" that "old injuries are never canceled by new benefits, least of all when the benefits are of less importance than the injuries previously inflicted," (III.4, 394-5) which must be the case when injuries are done all at once, and the benefits a little at a time.

Further, he states in the *History* that "an old love or hate cannot by new benefits or new injuries easily be canceled," and "men are naturally quicker in their revenge for an injury than in their gratitude for a benefit; they feel that gratitude causes them loss, but revenge brings them profit and pleasure."  

Even in the *Prince*, Machiavelli observes that men don't forget their "ancient orders" and "liberty," "either through length of time or benefits received," (Ch. 5, 20-1) and in Chapter Seven, he warns, "And whoever believes that among great personages new benefits will make old injuries be forgotten deceives himself." (Ch. 7, 33) Yet, he urges the new prince to ignore his advice, in the following chapter, not only urging that benefits be granted following injuries,
"to secure men and gain them to himself," (Ch. 8, 38) but advising the manner in which they should be bestowed as well.

Therefore, having admitted that cruelty is both injurious and evil, Machiavelli yet encourages the new prince to be cruel by offering the artful caveat that it be "well used," that is, done all at once, which in a civil society accustomed to liberty, would likely provoke great hatred and desire for revenge. Machiavelli's counsel in Chapter Eight is deceptive, then, for should the cruelty of the prince give rise to a rebellion, even if he has sufficient force to defeat it, he must still hold "a knife in his hand" (Ch. 8, 38) as a precaution against conspiracy, an option that remains to the populace; "In the midst of universal hatred no security is ever to be found, because you do not know from where the evil is going to come; and he who fears all men cannot secure himself against anybody, and if you do try to do so, you augment your dangers, because those who are left are more fiery in their hate and more prepared for vengeance." Machiavelli's failure to warn the new prince that cruelty is a cause for hatred coupled with his advice to grant benefits to secure himself, following injury and offense, is not advice for the wise, but counsel for fools. As logical as it may appear, it does not represent the wisdom of the ancients, nor is it consistent with Machiavelli's thought as represented in his other works.
In the *Discourses*, Machiavelli offers a sentiment similar to that given in Chapter Eight, but one can readily see that the similarity is only superficial one:

It does considerable harm to a state to arouse every day fresh discontent in the minds of your citizens by inflicting fresh injuries on this or that person, as happened in Rome after the fall of the Decemviri. For all ten of them, and other citizens besides, were at various times accused and condemned, so that the whole nobility was in a state of extreme terror, since they thought there would be no end to such condemnations until the whole of the nobility was destroyed. This would have caused great inconveniences in the city if Marcus Duilius, a tribune, had not made provision against it by issuing an edict which made it unlawful for anyone to cite or accuse any Roman citizen for the space of a year; whereby the whole nobility was reassured. This shows how harmful it is to a republic or to a prince to keep the minds of their subjects in suspense and fear by continually inflicting punishment and giving offense. Than this there is unquestionably no practice more pernicious. For when men begin to suspect that evil may befall them, they take any means to protect themselves and grow more bold and less restrained in attempting a revolution. It is necessary, therefore, either never to injure anyone, or to inflict the injuries at one go, and then to reassure men and give them ground to expect peace and security. (I. 45, 221-2)

A distinction should be made between the above passage and Machiavelli's remarks in Chapter Eight, in regard to context. In the *Discourses*, his discussion centers on the appointment of the Decemviri for the purpose of establishing new laws in the Roman republic "whereby the freedom of that
state might be stabilized." (I. 40, 210-11) What actually occurred, however, was the rise of one Appius Claudius, and the threat of tyranny. The Ten were eventually brought down by the plebs, who desired vengeance. The plebs wanted all of them handed over, whom they "proposed to burn alive." (I. 44, 219) While the plebs did not succeed in administering that cruelty, they did succeed in continuing with fresh accusations and condemnations which, as Machiavelli points out, does harm to a republic or a prince when renewed every day.

In the Prince, Machiavelli's remarks are offered in support of seizing power and securing the safety of a tyrant who is, after all, above the law once he is established, and outside the law at the moment he seizes power, those actions that caused Machiavelli to accuse Agathocles of crimes. Further, the injuries inflicted by the new prince are labeled simply as cruelty rather than a continuum of accusations and condemnations finding redress within established laws, observed by all. Therefore, he urges in the Prince that injuries be done all at once followed by benefits, while in the Discourses, he recommends "[giving the people] ground to expect peace and security" by lawful means, in the example of the edict issued by Marcus Duilius. The edict should not be confused with a benefit which is offered a little at a time such as wealth, honors, and position. Rather, it constituted a mode of lawful restraint issued for
one year, in which no accused could be brought before the people; a remittal of injury and offense altogether. While security for the tyrant is paramount in the *Prince*, security for the people forms the thrust of his opinion in the *Discourses*, whether in a republic or in a state governed by a good prince.

In the *Prince*, Machiavelli seems to parody his discussion of the Decemviri in the *Discourses* which, because the *Discourses* were begun before the *Prince* and the quote is from Book One, may already have been written, or formulated in his notes. He shows only contempt for the means used by Agathocles and Liverotto da Fermo, and the whole point of Chapter Eight is an attempt on his part to demonstrate that there is no virtue in such a path, nor is there any glory, and his contempt extends to Cesare Borgia for the reasons I have given above. Cruelty well or badly used is not qualified as virtuous, but simply as a means to safeguard the prince, and Machiavelli does not explain how cruelty "well used" (having been committed in some grand fashion, all at once) will protect the prince from hatred, which scholars might have expected him to address. Further, his mention of the fact that the plebs wanted the Ten burned alive, in the *Discourses*, suggests the punishments of the Spanish Inquisition and the cruelty of that spectacle, if only because he drew the Dominican friars into his discourse, in the *Prince*, by alluding to their remonstrance that "it is evil to speak
evilly of evil doing," casting a pall over the Church as well. As Pasquale Villari observed, the "statecraft" of Machiavelli's time was "full of cruelty and devoid of scruples," and the Church was not exempt from those practices.

Machiavelli's sardonic humor is apparent throughout Chapter Eight, devoted to (of all things) cruelty and inhumanity, demonstrating his ability to illuminate the comic stage with the dark obsessions of his fellow man, no simple feat, even for Machiavelli. One has only to read the Prince as Machiavelli intended that it be read to discover the wit and humor that lies just below the surface--those less than conspicuous gems that qualify him as a most entertaining satirist, and I offer the following example: Of Liverotto da Fermo (who embodies all that was vile and contemptible in the modern dwarfs), Machiavelli remarks, "And to overthrow him would have been as difficult as to overthrow Agathocles if he had not permitted himself to be deceived by Cesare Borgia when at Sinigaglia, as was said above, he took the Orsini and the Vitelli." (Ch. 8, 37)
Chapter XI. Civil Principality: The Medici

Machiavelli introduces Chapter Nine on civil principalities (an apt description of Florence under the Medici) under the heading of Chapter Eight, devoted to crimes; "But, because one becomes prince from private individual also by two modes which cannot be altogether attributed either to fortune or virtue, I do not think they should be left out, although one of them can be reasoned about more amply where republics are treated. These are when one ascends to a principality by some criminal and nefarious path or when a private citizen becomes prince of his fatherland by the support of his fellow citizens." (Ch. 8, 34) Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. notes that Machiavelli "does not say which of the two modes is reasoned about more amply 'where republics are treated,'" a point well taken, because the statement is thus confusing, blurring the distinction between the two modes of acquisition, and intended to be so. Although Machiavelli never mentions the Medici in Chapter Nine, it is a chapter devoted to the means by which a new prince rises "with the support of his fellow citizens," precisely as the Medici did, and if doing so does not quite meet the definition of crime (having always preferred to subvert the constitution to their benefit rather than seize power with violence and force), their actions were no less malfeasant—as fraudulent, corrupting, and dangerous to the liberty of Florence. Thus, the Medici were criminal in their intent,
in the broader context of crimes against the republic, particularly to one who valued the principles of republican government, as did Machiavelli. In Chapter Nine, Machiavelli restates the introduction he gave in the previous chapter; "But, coming to the other policy, when a private citizen becomes prince of his fatherland, not through crime or other intolerable violence but with the support of his fellow citizens (which one could call a civil principality; neither all virtue nor all fortune is necessary to attain it, but rather a fortunate astuteness)—I say that one ascends to this principality either with the support of the people or with the support of the great," (Ch. 9, 38-9) a passage that appears to clarify the distinction between rising by means of a criminal path or with the support of fellow citizens but which, through repetition and by association, again suggests a link between the two modes, contaminating the latter with the former in negative connotation.

Further evidence that Machiavelli is less than candid in his remarks is his reference to "fortunate astuteness," a derogatory tribute to those who lack virtue, but have on their side that part of fortune which provides the opportunity to pursue a nefarious path of fraud in the willful destruction of liberty. In Chapter Eighteen, Machiavelli remarks, "How laudable it is for a prince to keep his faith, and to live with honesty and not by astuteness, everyone understands. Nonetheless one sees by experience in our time
that the princes who have done great things are those who have taken little account of faith and have known how to get around men’s brains with their astuteness; and in the end they have overcome those who have founded themselves on loyalty." (Ch. 18, 68-9) "Fortunate astuteness" is the ability to acquire with shrewdness and trickery, having the appearance of honorable practice but, in fact, resorting to dishonorable means, as when he urges the new prince to "astutely" foster enmities to achieve personal recognition, without also acknowledging that all such enterprises, while useful in elevating the reputation of the prince that he desires for himself, are ultimately won with hardship for the people. This example offers but one instance of many in which Machiavelli sets aside his interest in the common good of the people in favor of the self-interest of the prince, in the *Prince*.

In referring to Severus as a "very astute fox," (Ch. 19, 79) Machiavelli again uses astute in a generally derogatory manner, for he alludes to the "criminal" nature of his actions, describing him as a "wicked man" (I. 10, 137) in the *Discourses*, and "cruel and rapacious" in the *Prince*. (Ch. 19, 77-8) Having founded the Severan Dynasty (193-235 A.D.) during the Roman Empire, his example provides an excellent model for a new prince who also lusts for empire. His qualities and actions which find expression throughout the *Prince* are demonstrated in Machiavelli’s assessment of
the Roman Empire before and after the period of the five good emperors (96-180 A.D.);

Let a prince put before himself the period from Nerva to Marcus, and let him compare it with the preceding period and with that which came after, and then let him decide in which he would rather have been born, and during which he would have chosen to be emperor. What he will find when good princes were ruling, is a prince securely reigning among subjects no less secure, a world replete with peace and justice. He will see the Senate’s authority respected, the magistrates honored, rich citizens enjoying their wealth, nobility and virtue held in highest esteem, and everything working smoothly and going well. He will notice, on the other hand, the absence of any rancor, any licentiousness, corruption or ambition, and that in this golden age everyone is free to hold and to defend his own opinion. He will behold, in short, the world triumphant, its prince glorious and respected by all, the people fond of him and secure under his rule.

If he then looks attentively at the times of the other emperors, he will find them distraught with wars, torn by seditions, brutal alike in peace and in war, princes frequently killed by assassins, civil wars and foreign wars constantly occurring, Italy in travail and ever prey to fresh misfortunes, its cities demolished and pillaged. He will see Rome burnt, its capitol demolished by its own citizens, ancient temples lying desolate, religious rites grown corrupt, adultery rampant throughout the city. He will find the sea covered with exiles and the rocks stained with blood. In Rome he will see countless atrocities perpetrated; rank, riches, the honors men have won, and, above all, virtue, evoked upon as a capital crime. He will find calumniators rewarded, servants suborned to turn against their masters,
freed men to turn against their patrons, and those who lack enemies attacked by their friends. He will thus happily learn how much Rome, Italy, and the world owed to Caesar. (I. 10, 137-8)

An "astute fox" such as Severus does not represent the good government described by Machiavelli in his reference to the government of "good princes," who clearly had the common good in mind. His contempt for princes who disregard the common good could not be more plainly stated than in the above passage, and yet the *Prince* represents nothing if not the sacrifice of common good for the personal benefit of the ruler, for his own security. Security from what? Revolt, conspiracy, and rebellion from within, attack from foreigners, often invited by exiles and other malcontents, from without. Therefore, although Machiavelli attributes "good luck" (fortune) and "virtue" to Severus in the *Discourses* (I. 10, 137) he does not consider Severus a good prince.

"Fortunate astuteness" is intended to mock those who possess those qualities that will enable them to succeed by nefarious means, ability that, as Machiavelli explained in the context of Agathocles, cannot be called virtue. And while the Medici did not seize Florence with force and violence (for the most part), as did Agathocles in Syracuse, and Cesare Borgia in Romagna, their means were no less wicked because they resorted to fraud and deceit, over a period of several decades.

Machiavelli's statement, "the people desire neither to
be commanded nor oppressed by the great, and the great desire to command and oppress the people," (Ch. 9, 39) is a principle of such importance that he repeats it three times in this rather short chapter. He notes that "the end of the people is more decent than that of the great, since the great want to oppress and the people want not to be oppressed," (Ch. 9, 39) and two paragraphs later, he again remarks, "one who becomes prince through the support of the people should keep them friendly to him, which should be easy for him because they ask of him only that they not be oppressed." (Ch. 9, 40)

The new prince is, of course, one of the great, who has elevated himself to a position of power either with the support of the great, who "see they cannot resist the people, [and] begin to give reputation to one of themselves," or with the support of the people, who, "when they see they cannot resist the great, give reputation to one, and make him prince so as to be defended with his authority." (Ch. 9, 39) If the prince is a "good prince," as Machiavelli describes a ruler who respects the laws, the "authority of the Senate," and "justice," the prince and the people will find security in the common good. (I. 10, 137-38) If the prince desires to impose tyranny, however, to "ascend from a civil order to an absolute one," (Ch. 9, 42) his need to oppress will be of the greatest magnitude because of the necessity to protect himself against both the great (the few) and the
people (the many). Because the people desire not to be oppressed, they would not willfully give power to a tyrant. Therefore, a private individual who desires to establish himself as prince in a civil state must either use force of arms (as did Agathocles and Julius Caesar who rose to power through the ranks of the military, or follow the example of Cesare Borgia, who used the wealth and arms of others), or resort to fraud and deception. Machiavelli notes, in the Discourses, that a tyrant "will wait until, with the support of the populace, he has got rid of the nobility, and will not begin to oppress the people until he has got rid of it, by which time the populace will have come to realize that it is a slave and will have no way of escape." The mistake made by Appius in establishing his tyranny was that he "deserted the populace and courted the nobles," for "though nobles desire to tyrannize, that part of the nobility which finds itself left out in a tyrannical regime, is always the tyrant's enemy. Nor can he win them all over, for so great is the ambition and the avarice with which they are imbued, that no tyrant can have enough riches and enough honors to satisfy all." (I.40, 214-15)

Therefore, although Machiavelli emphasizes the point that the people do not want to be oppressed, he devotes Chapter Nine to instructing the new prince that he should found on the people (as opposed to the great) which will give him the best chance for success. And because the
Prince teaches the art of tyranny, the end result for the people will indeed by "slavery." In this sense, Machiavelli issues a warning in the *Prince*, for in satire, "warning examples" are given "in order to help others," and "If we [the satirists] show our fellow-men the painful and absurd consequences of certain types of conduct... others will be cured," a view that is traced to Socrates and the "Greek philosophical schools" that followed, "emphasizing the power of reason. If you understand, they said, you will do right. Indeed you must do right, if you understand. Only strive to see the truth," a view shared by Horace and other satirists.²

If in a free city the people want to avoid tyranny, then, they should understand the danger in giving reputation to one of the great, who will use every covert means available to gain them to himself. He warns against the ambition of those striving for power when he remarks, "these principalities customarily run into peril when they are about to ascend from a civil order to an absolute one," (Ch. 9, 41-2) yet, he does not specify the means by which the people are won over to the new prince. In fact, he only remarks that "the prince can gain the people to himself in many modes, for which one cannot give certain rules because the modes vary according to circumstances, and so they will be left out." (Ch. 9, 40-1) By leaving out any discussion of "certain rules" that govern the modes, he employs the rhetorical
device of omission, dismissing the subject on the authority of his own statement. He need not defend it or offer proof for his claim that there are such "rules," nor does he define the different "modes" that give rise to different "rules." Had he elaborated on this topic, however, he could not have avoided throwing the spotlight on the Medici who exemplified various modes of gaining popular support, and I do not think it unreasonable to question why he did not seize the opportunity to praise the Medici in that regard, if the Prince is a work of sincerity and integrity as many scholars think it to be. The answer, of course, is that he objected to the fraudulent methods of the Medici, and did not support the notion of a private citizen rising with the support of his fellow citizens.

In the History, Machiavelli emphasizes the example of Cosimo, who "gave his attention to doing good to everybody and, with his liberality, to making many citizens his partisans. Hence his example brought about further censure of those who ruled; yet he thought in this way either to live in Florence as powerful and secure as anybody or, if through the ambition of his adversaries he came up against something beyond the laws, to be in both arms and support their superior," which contributed to factionalism and strife within the city. "Civil strife always increased his influence in Florence, and external wars his power and reputation." The greater the reputation of a private individual, the greater
the danger to the liberty of the city, particularly if the populace is corrupt and thus more susceptible to the influence of benefits, honors, privilege, rank—all the modes utilized in acquiring favor and preference.

In the Discourses, Machiavelli makes the point that Cosimo "began to arouse alarm for the security of its government; with the result that his fellow citizens thought it dangerous to touch him, and still more dangerous to let him alone," due to "favours gained by his own prudence and through the ignorance of the citizens." (I. 33, 191-2) By his methods, men achieve their designs, as he notes in the History, and the dilemma is that "it will be necessary to urge as the reasons for driving him out that he is compassionate, helpful, liberal, and loved by everybody. Tell me now, what law is it that forbids or that blames and condemns in men, pity, liberality, love?"7

The weight of Machiavelli's views in the History and the Discourses profoundly discredits the advice Machiavelli gives to the new prince, and this is especially obvious with regard to Chapter Nine, devoted to the subject of free cities and how one might transform them into a principality by becoming "prince" of their "fatherland," (Ch. 9, 38) an absurd advocacy on Machiavelli's part, for not only did he have contempt for such men, but also for principality itself, one of the "six types of government," that he classed as "pernicious." (I. 2, 106)
Referring to those cities which from the beginning have "been governed in accordance with their wishes" as opposed to those "subject to another power," (I. 2, 104-5) Machiavelli summarizes, in the Discourses, the "variations" of government that arise in such cities. He first notes that "those who have written about states say that there are to be found in them one of three forms of government, called by them Principality, Aristocracy and Democracy," while "others--and with better judgment many think--say that there are six types of government," of which principality, aristocracy, and democracy are "good," but because they "easily become corrupt," cannot be classed as good: (I. 2, 106)

For Principality easily becomes Tyranny. From Aristocracy the transition to Oligarchy is an easy one. Democracy is without difficulty converted into Anarchy. So that if anyone who is organizing a commonwealth sets up one of the three first forms of government, he sets up what will last for awhile, since there are no means whereby to prevent its passing into its contrary, on account of the likeness which in such a case virtue has to vice. (I. 2, 106)

When men first chose a prince, having already established justice, they chose "one who excelled in prudence and justice," but when the prince passed his title to his heirs and was no longer elected, "his heirs soon began to degenerate as compared with their ancestors, and, forsaking virtuous deeds, considered that princes have naught else to do but to surpass other men in extravagance, lasciviousness, and every other form of licentiousness. With the result
that the prince came to be hated, and since he was hated, came to be afraid, and from fear soon passed to offensive action, which quickly brought about a tyranny." (I. 2, 107)

Machiavelli emphasizes that the new prince has need to "secure himself," (Ch. 9, 39) and the sum of his advice throughout the Prince is designed to preserve and protect his power. Unlike the "first prince" he defined in the Discourses, who "excelled in prudence and justice," the new prince more resembles his "heirs" who corrupted the original notion of "Principality," and brought it to "tyranny."

Virtue not only bears a "likeness" to vice, but has the appearance of becoming vice—and vice, virtue. As he remarks in Chapter Fifteen, "if one considers everything well, one will find something appears to be virtue, which if pursued would be one's ruin, and something else appears to be vice, which if pursued results in one's security and well being," (Ch. 15, 62) which reflects in part his argument for tyranny and the transvaluation of virtue and vice into their opposites, from necessity. Everyone is bad; therefore the new prince must learn to be bad as well, as though the ambitious and greedy required lessons in that art.

One need only consider how far such a corrupt world would lead the people from liberty and justice to question Machiavelli's sincerity in offering the advice he gives in the Prince, unless, as he notes in the Discourses, "it is present evils that are terrifying, but for the future there
is hope, since men are convinced that the evil ways of a bad prince may make for freedom in the end," (I. 58, 257) In this statement, he suggests the passing of tyranny to aristocracy, the form of government that follows principality and its contrary. Tyranny is overthrown when the "dishonourable life" of the prince becomes intolerable. The people rise up against the prince with "arms," led by "powerful leaders" from the ranks of the great," men conspicuous for their liberality, magnamity, wealth, and ability." When the prince has been "liquidated," the great form "themselves into a government" without a "sole head," the "very term" having become "odious" to them. The new government "ruled in accordance with the laws which they had made, subordinat-ed their own convenience to the common advantage, and, both in private matters and public affairs, governed and pres-erved order with the utmost diligence." (I. 2, 107-8)

Aristocracy passes into oligarchy when, once again, the government passes to the "descendants," a government "in which civic rights are entirely disregarded." The people, not wanting to return to princely rule and to rid themselves of government by the few, turn against the oligarchs, "liq-uidate" them, and organize a "democratic form of govern-ment." In time, however, the first generation having "passed away," democracy passes into anarchy, "in which no respect was shown either for the individual or for the official, and which was such that, as everyone did what he
liked, all parts of outrages were constantly committed," so that, to rid themselves of anarchy, "principality was once again restored." (I. 2, 108-9)

The cycle would likely continue "for ever," were it not for the fact that in periods of transition, in which the "commonwealth" lacks "both counsel and strength," it becomes prey to "neighboring and better organized" states. (I. 2, 109) Thus, Machiavelli maintains "that all the forms of government mentioned above are far from satisfactory, the three good ones because their life is so short, the three bad ones because of their inherent malignity. Hence, prudent legislators, aware of their defects, refrained from adopting as such any one of these forms, and chose instead one that shared in them all, since they thought such a government would be stronger and more stable, for if in one and the same state there was principality, aristocracy and democracy each would keep watch over the other." (I. 2, 109) Machiavelli would likely have agreed with Aristotle that in such variations of government, "none of them" served "the common good of all." 8

Of course Machiavelli does not include his discourse on the cycles of government in the Prince, although it would have been appropriate to his work, if only to warn the new prince of the dangers inherent in tyranny. But he alludes to it, for the benefit of those familiar with his views; "From these two diverse appetites [the great want to op-
press, and the people want not to be oppressed], one of three effects occurs in cities; principality or liberty or license." (Ch. 9, 39) He does not label the "effects" in logical order, however, for principality (brought about by anarchy) is not followed by liberty (manifest, although short-lived, in aristocracy and democracy). Rather, principality is followed by license, the effect of corruption, which causes the principality to pass into tyranny. Had he ordered them principality or license or liberty he would have gone more directly to the point—that a new principality founded by the new prince was doomed from the start.

In recommending that the new prince acquire and found a principality, then, Machiavelli casts himself in the role of an "[im]prudent legislator," (I. 2, 109) by his own definition, a wonderful irony that those familiar with his view would surely have discovered in the Prince.

Machiavelli began his discourse in Chapter Nine by addressing his advice to a private citizen; "But, coming to the other policy, when a private citizen becomes prince of his fatherland," followed by his observation that "one ascends to this principality either with the support of the people or with the support of the great." (Ch. 9, 38-9) Before closing the chapter, however, having advised the prince to found on the people as the best course (or at least keep them "friendly"), he remarks, "And let no one resist my opinion on this [we must take it on his authority
alone] with that trite proverb, that whoever founds on the people founds on mud. For that is true when a private citizen lays his foundation on them and allows himself to think the people will liberate him if he is opposed (in this case one can often be deceived, like the Gracchi in Rome and Messer Giorgio Scali in Florence)," although, a "prince," who has also founded on the people, "will never find himself deceived by them," provided he has the qualities enumerated by Machiavelli.⁹ If it is true that a private citizen who lays his foundations on the people founds on mud, what is the distinction between that private citizen and the private citizen who becomes the so called "prince of his fatherland," who also founded on the people? In what he calls a "civil principality," they are one and the same. A principality is a sovereign state ruled by a reigning prince. There is no reigning prince in a "civil" principality, in which the "magistries, who, especially in adverse times, can take away his state [it is not his state if supreme power is not vested in the prince] with great ease either by turning against him or by not obeying him," in a state in which the people take "commands from the magistrates," rather than the prince. (Ch. 9, 42) What Machiavelli is describing under the heading of civil principality is a free city or state in which a private individual rises to power with the support of the people, and maintains his position with prudent actions, "and with his spirits and orders keeps the general-
ity of the people inspired," (Ch. 9, 41) until he turns his thoughts to tyranny. If he is to "ascend from civil order to an absolute one," (Ch. 9, 42) he must eliminate opposition to his power in civil government, and seize power for himself alone, in which case liberty is lost, and "civil principality" easily becomes principality.

In the context of "civil principality," then, Machiavelli warns against the phenomenon of a private citizen who is prince in everything but name, as were the Medici. Cosimo lacked "nothing of being prince but the title," one who "had been brought so high that, unless something were done about it, he would become their prince [of Florence]." Over the decades from Cosimo’s rise to power in 1434, the Medici gained great reputation in Florence, and their influence in government rose proportionately. In this sense, the city was not a principality, nor was the government completely controlled by the people, for the Medici influence determined who was chosen to serve in government, based on fidelity to the Medici faction and interests. The Medici rose with the support of the people, as Machiavelli advises the new prince to do as well. At the same time, however, he reminds both the Medici and the people that such attempts to acquire excessive authority have failed in the past, with his example of Giorgio Scali, whom he associates (in context) with the "trite" proverb that "whoever founds on the people founds on mud," a proverb
that is anything but trite with regard to cities accustomed to freedom, should anyone desire to found a tyranny there.

Giorgio Scali began his rise in reputation as a defender of the people, and was beheaded when he betrayed them, for, having gained a position of power, he turned to tyranny.¹² The message seems clear enough. As Machiavelli remarks in the History, relative to the attempt made by the Duke of Athens to become prince of Florence, the Florentines "cannot keep their liberty and yet cannot endure servitude,"¹³ the very dilemma reflected in the notion of a "civil principality."

To avoid the fate of Messer Scali, then, a private citizen who would become sole authority in a free city such as Florence, must rid himself of the obstacle of government intervention and its authority, as the magistries have the power to ruin him, and if this difficulty is partially rectified in the control and influence exerted in civil government by the private citizen himself (as it was in the case of the Medici), it is by no means solved. Thus, Machiavelli introduces his argument for the need to establish absolute authority in the last paragraph, in preparation for that time in which "the state has need of the citizens," ensuring that "always and in every quality of time [they] have need of the state and of himself; and then they will always be faithful to him." (Ch. 9, 42) There is no assurance, of course, that they will "always be faithful to him." In
fact, the more odious he becomes in his tyranny—as he must, if the people are to have need of him "always and in every quality of time"—the more hatred he will encumber, which ultimately will lead to his ruin.

Machiavelli only states that the prince "must think of a way" (Ch. 9, 42) to make the people have need of him. He does not say how this is to be accomplished. Nor does he explain how the prince rids himself of "civil order" to make way for his "absolute" rule. He could, of course, liquidate his opposition with the expedience and means demonstrated by Cesare Borgia. Were it not for the advice offered by Machiavelli in Chapter Seventeen, the new prince might have cause to hesitate in following the example of Cesare for, in doing so, he risks the blame heaped upon Agathocles for "his savage cruelty and inhumanity," which prevents his "[celebration] among the most excellent men." (Ch. 8, 35) In Chapter Seventeen, however, Machiavelli counsels that a prince "should not care about the infamy of cruelty," (Ch. 17, 65) because modern princes are not celebrated by the standard of virtue and excellence represented in antiquity. Rather, if a new prince were inclined to seek lessons from the past, he would find the best instruction in the examples of men like Julius Caesar and Agathocles, who demonstrated how far personal ambition and great enterprises can raise a private individual from a low station to one of supreme power.
As the world is a corrupt world, of necessity the new prince must act accordingly, if he is to succeed, particularly when others, like himself, crave power, principality, and empire. Such a man will stop at nothing to satiate his ambition, and if Machiavelli seems to nourish his vile nature with every persuasion to the contrary of his own beliefs, in the Prince, it is to render his nature transparent and thus subject to the scrutiny of all. With the exception of Chapter Six, Machiavelli does not plead with his readers to consider the good examples of the past. Rather, he holds up for our scorn the degradations of the present, which is but another path to the same end; by "inspiring a horror of evil," one can "convey love of virtue." In the Discourses, he does not hesitate to criticize the present. Of the "highly virtuous actions performed" in the past, "so shunned by everybody in each little thing they do," he notes "that of bygone days there remains no trace, it cannot but fill me at once with astonishment and grief."

In Chapter Nine, then, Machiavelli exposes the danger of the rise of a private citizen in a civil state, in which the people should beware of jeopardizing their liberty and freedom by supporting such a man, for in time, to ensure his authority and power, he will give up the good qualities that earned their confidence, and think only of his own interest and personal benefit. Surely the Medici would have recognized themselves in this portrait of a rising tyrant.
Chapter XII. Weak Princes and Ecclesiastical Principality

Because Chapter Ten addresses the subject of the military forces of the new prince, it would seem more appropriate to join it to Chapters Twelve through Fourteen, which also treat military affairs. Further, Machiavelli might reasonably have followed Chapter Nine on civil principalities, with the subject of Chapter Eleven, ecclesiastical principalities, thus concluding his commentary on the kinds of principalities that are acquired by a new prince, before turning to a new topic. He seems to have turned the two chapters around, so to speak, and the net effect is to give the appearance of digression in Chapter Ten, separating the rule of priests from that of secular princes (one could almost charge Machiavelli with a pause of reverence), but of course they were inextricably joined, the popes and their relatives, in common pursuit of worldly gain.

Machiavelli offers his thoughts as to "whether a prince has enough of a state that he can rule by himself when he needs to, or whether he is always under the necessity of being defended by others." (Ch. 10, 42) He "[judges] those capable of ruling by themselves who can, by abundance of either men or money, put together an adequate army and fight a battle against whoever comes to attack them." (Ch. 10, 43) This is not prudent counsel, however, and if the new prince follows his advice, "either men or money," and relies on wealth rather than arms of his own, he risks inherent weak-
ness. As in the case of Cesare Borgia, when the source of wealth dries up, you are finished. Machiavelli makes this point in the Discourses: the importance of money is relative to whether or not the prince or "country" is "well equipped with arms." The "King of France and the Italians today" should keep the enemy at a distance, "for since [their] virtue lies in money, not in men, as soon as anything gets in the way of your obtaining it, you may be undone." (II. 12, 308) The notion that wealth alone will enable a prince to rule by himself leads the new prince down the path followed by Cesare Borgia, for a prince who is dependent on someone else for either arms or wealth cannot quite be said to rule by himself because he lacks the requisite independence. Machiavelli made that point in Chapter Nine with regard to authority. (Ch. 9, 42)

Further, if a prince has money but not men, he must hire mercenaries or auxiliary forces. In Chapter Thirteen, Machiavelli refers to them both as "useless," (Ch. 13, 54) advising that a "wise prince, therefore, has always avoided these arms and turned to his own," (Ch. 13, 55) for there is danger of ruin in the use of such arms, and "without its own arms no principality is secure." As he observes in the Discourses, "money is not the sinews of war, as it is commonly thought to be," for although money "adds to your strength," it does "not provide you with it," because without "faithful troops... no amount of money will suffice
you... nor can any opinion be more false than that which asserts that money is the sinews of war." (II. 10, 300)

Therefore, the prince who must rely on his "abundance of money" rather than "arms" is "always under the necessity of being defended by others," and thus could be said not to have "enough of a state that he can rule by himself" despite the fact that Machiavelli suggests the contrary. Without going directly to the point, Machiavelli suggests that not only do weak princes not have arms of their own, but they fail to understand the need for such arms, thinking their wealth alone will sustain them. He encourages them in this fallacy, when he stresses "either men or money," despite the fact that he completely contradicts this notion in Chapter Thirteen. Because Chapter Ten follows his commentary on civil principalities, in which the Medici were his intended target, perhaps his purpose was to expose their ignorance in the matter of arms. As I have stated, at the time he wrote the Prince, the Medici had already disbanded his militia. In their self-interest, the Medici sacrificed the security of the Florentines for their own political principles.

The remainder of Chapter Ten is devoted to the subject of siege, in which the prince must take refuge "behind walls and to guard them" (Ch. 10, 43) which is a somewhat humorous way of stating it, for obviously the prince will have to guard the walls if he is hiding behind them. This prince "always has necessity of others," (Ch. 10, 43) specifically
the people, but also the possibility of aid from the outside, which Machiavelli does not address.

In his recommendations for preparation, Machiavelli advises that the prince "fortify and supply their own towns," and he specifically urges the prince "to take no account of the countryside." (Ch. 10, 43) Again, Machiavelli's counsel is suspect. In Chapter Fourteen he makes the point that a prince learn "to know one's own country," to "better understand its defense," (Ch. 14, 59) and in The Art of War, he states, "cities and castles can be strong either by nature or by artificial fortification," in which case the countryside would itself determine the particular requirements needed to provide maximum security for defense.

Secondly, Machiavelli recommends that "for at least a mile around the walls, no one [be] allowed to carry on farming or to put up walls, but the land must be all plain, without a bush or a bank or trees or houses to obstruct the view and give shelter to an enemy who pitches his camp." Having so ordered the countryside, the prince would have less need to deal with the circumstances portrayed in the Prince, in which the "enemy" finds it expedient to "burn and ruin the countryside on his arrival," causing the people who "have their possessions outside and see them burning," to lose their "patience" and "forget the prince" through concerns for their own loss. (Ch. 10, 44)
Third, the countryside can provide "extraordinary means" by which "friends" can "aid you." Machiavelli cites the example of the town of Casalino, besieged by Hannibal. As there was a river running through it, the Romans "threw into it a great quantity of nuts, which, carried by the stream without any possibility of being stopped, fed the Casalinensians for some time."*

Finally, the besieged should guard against deception on the part of the enemy positioned outside the walls. In The Art of War, he cautions that the besieged "should not rely on anything they see the enemy do continually, but should invariably believe that such habitual actions hide some deception and that the habit to their injury can change," for "one must guard against the" deception and tricks of the enemy."* Failure to pay close attention to the movements of the enemy beyond the walls could have dire consequences for the prince, and Machiavelli's failure to warn him of it betrays the insincerity of this discourse in the Prince.

There is the dilemma, of course, of how a tyrannical prince inspires the people to defend him in a siege, as opposed to defending their own interests. As he explains in the History, when defending "themselves," the "glory" goes to the people, but when defending a "tyrant," the "glory of defense" goes to "another." And in the matter of defending their liberty, the people can be inspired to noble and courageous actions. In a set speech given by one of the
"old and wise" of Lucca to the lower classes, for the purpose of inspiring resistance to the Florentines in order to preserve their liberty, Machiavelli makes the following points; "You should not be disturbed on seeing your fields laid waste, your farmhouses burned, your town captured," because if the city is saved, "they will of necessity be saved; if we lose her, they will be saved without any profit to us; because if we continue free, our enemy only with difficulty can hold them; if we lose our freedom, in vain we hold them." Thus, as "one man," the people "promised to die rather than surrender or rather than consider any agreement that in any way would taint their liberty."6

If a prince is "respected" by the people because he has protected their interests and "acted in accordance with the laws," (I. 10, 136-7) such a prince should find the people inspired to defend him. Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, was so revered by the people that when Urbino was threatened by Cesare Borgia and other condottierie, he called the people together to inform them of the danger, and they replied "that they intended to die with him."7 As Machiavelli remarks in the Discourses, "a prince should seek to gain the obedience and affection of his soldiers and his subjects; their obedience by his fidelity to the constitution and by the reputation he has for virtue; their affection by his affability, kindliness, compassion, and other qualities for which Valerius was conspicuous,"
(III. 22, 470) but a tyrant has the conspicuous problem of fidelity.

In the Prince, Machiavelli only suggests that, in addition to a "strong city," the prince not "make himself hated." (Ch. 10, 44) Unlike the example of Lucca above, when the people see their possessions ruined, there is no noble cause to inspire them, nor can the new prince appeal to the respect the people have for him, as in the case of the Duke of Urbino. Machiavelli thus urges the prince to inspire "fear of the enemy's cruelty," (Ch. 10, 44) thereby advising the prince to encourage fear in the people, at a time when there is need to calm their fears lest they abandon him. Had the prince made adequate preparations for this adversity in advance, he would not be left with such petty devices as reliance on fear, which offer little or no security for the prince. As Machiavelli remarks in the Discourses, the prince should not "put off conferring benefits on people until danger is at hand," for "the people as a whole will not consider that they owe this benefit to you [siege, hunger, war], but rather to your enemies." (I. 32, 188) Machiavelli does not offer this advice in Chapter Ten, however. He only remarks that the people will "unite with their prince all the more," having lost their homes and belongings, for which the prince "appears" to have "an obligation toward them," followed by "And the nature of men is to be obligated as much by benefits they give as by

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benefits they receive." (Ch. 10, 44) When Machiavelli says the prince "appears" to have an "obligation," it does not mean the prince will, in fact, entertain an "obligation." As Machiavelli advised in Chapter Nine, the new prince "must think of a way by which his citizens always and in every quality of time, have need of the state and of himself," (not the other way around), "and then they will always be faithful to him," (Ch. 9, 42) a notion that would be seriously compromised if the new prince allowed himself to acknowledge and act on obligations to his subjects for any reason.

The people, however, are obligated to continue fighting if they are to defend themselves (as well as the prince), because they constitute his defense. Therefore, the prince is, in fact, dependent on his subjects, who might readily abandon him, particularly if they do not feel obligated from affection, and their only inspiration is fear. As the prince has more need of the people than they of him, he has no assurances, then, that they will remain faithful to him.

Machiavelli also advises the prince to "secure himself skillfully against those who appear to him too bold." (Ch. 10, 44) If he intends "bold" to indicate opposition to himself, Machiavelli is, in fact, suggesting that the prince must defend against the enemy from within as well, his own subjects.

Further, he urges the prince "to give hope to the
subjects the evil won't last long." (Ch. 10, 44) This should not be difficult for a new prince if he believes Machiavelli's counsel that "worldly things are so variable that it is next to impossible for one to stand with one's armies idle in a siege for a year." (Ch. 10, 44) In the Discourses, however, Machiavelli observes that the Romans "realized that if the army was routed, they acquire a kingdom in a day; whereas, if they besieged an obstinate city, it might take years to get it," (II. 32, 381) and in a letter to Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, he expresses the same opinion, acknowledging the modern examples of "Rhodes and Hungary" as well.®

Perhaps Machiavelli meant to imply that the prince need not expect the siege to last long, owing to his weak preparations for defense, for one could not describe the circumstances of siege in Chapter Ten as a reflection of an "obstinate city." He makes no mention of military forces, leaving the city's protection in the hands of his subjects--or so it would appear. Machiavelli makes the point in the Discourses that the people "cannot remain faithful to you unless you are able to protect them." (II. 10, 300) The prince, then, has little hope to "keep the spirits of his citizens firm in the siege," (Ch. 10, 44) who, by the way, are not his "citizens," but his subjects. Machiavelli's wry humor closes a chapter that is, in fact, a discourse on weak princes who do not have "enough of a state" to rule by.
themselves, although he encourages them in the belief that they do. His counsel that "men or money" suffice as the sinews of war is antithetical to his beliefs, and reflects the means by which he satirizes Cesare Borgia and other Italian princes who were dependent on others, because they lacked virtue of their own.

In Chapter Eleven, Machiavelli introduces the notion of ecclesiastical principalities, distinguishing the pope as yet another manifestation of the rise to princely status from private individual. As princes of the Church, most of the popes in Machiavelli’s time were prime movers in the secular affairs of Italy.

Machiavelli notes, in the History, that Sixtus IV (1471-84) "was the first to show what a pope could do, and how many things earlier called sins could be hidden under papal authority." He "gave the city of Forli" to his son, Girolamo, and "this ambitious way of acting made the pope more esteemed by the princes of Italy." Girolamo married the daughter of the Duke of Milan and he received, as her dowry, the "City of Imola." "

Innocent VIII (1484-92) fathered "sixteen children" and "lived surrounded by [them]," as did his successor, Alexander VI. Innocent wanted to "provide" his son, Francesco, "with states and with friends through which he could maintain himself." A marriage was arranged between his son and the daughter of Lorenzo the Magnificent, fol-
lowing lavish solicitation on the part of Lorenzo for the pope's affection, which resulted in the "[acceptance] throughout Europe that the policies of the Curia were in future to be directed by Florence, that, as in the time of Cosimo, a Medici was once again to be virtual arbiter of Italian policy," despite the fact that "Lorenzo's reputation as a master of diplomacy was largely undeserved."

A great deal has already been said about the Borgia pope, Alexander VI (1492-1503), singled out by Machiavelli as the pope "of all the pontiffs there have ever been," who "showed how far a pope could prevail with money and forces." (Ch. 11, 46) The corruption of Alexander reflected the corruption of Rome itself, a "sink of inequity" in which a legion of prostitutes "[worked] in brothels licensed by the papal authorities and many of them suffering from syphilis, 'a kind of illness very common among priests.'" Often "professional criminals" escaped punishment with "bribes. There were alleged to be an average of fourteen murders a day [in a population of roughly 50,000]," and the "stench from the rows of rotting corpses of executed men" made it unpleasant to "cross the bridge" beneath the Castle Sant'Angelo; Rodrigo Borgia "secured his own succession as Alexander VI by disbursing the most lavish gifts to all his rivals and potential supporters. Five asses laden with gold were believed to have entered the courtyard of one Cardinal, Ascanio Sforza, whose own riches and influences might have

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defeated him." But the corrupt means that purchased the papacy for Alexander paled in comparison with the venality that sustained him during his tenure as prince of the Church of Rome. "Obsessed" with his children, he gave away "the riches of the Church" to them, for, "like many other men of the culminating Renaissance, he had lost both his religion and his morals by the too exclusive pursuit of purely selfish advantage." Machiavelli describes him as a "wicked pope, his head full of his own designs, [who] preyed on Milan and Florence; the times served him well." Nor was Julius II (1503-1513) "devoid of the family spirit of his uncle, Sixtus IV. He persuaded the childless Guidobaldo da Montefeltro to adopt his nephew, Francesco della Rovere. His chief concern, however, was the defense of the Papal State," and to that end, he strove "to prevent the French from dominating Italy." To rid Italy of the French, however, he formed an "inconsistent alliance with Spain, and thus helped to rivet upon Italy the chains of its first permanent subjection to foreign domination," prompting Francesco Guicciardini to accuse him as "the fatal instrument of the ills of Italy." With Spanish arms, Julius aided the return of the Medici to Florence, in 1512, which terminated the republican government in which Machiavelli had served, an enterprise that must have caused feelings of deep resentment in Machiavelli. All the more so, perhaps, because Julius soon realized the implications
of his actions, but too late; he became "[angry] with Cardinal de' Medici whom he had sent to get rid of Soderini, not to make himself tyrant," and "declared [his] intention of changing the government of Florence again," which, of course, never transpired. Even if Julius had lived longer, it is doubtful that he could have unseated the Medici, reunited with their supporters and reclaiming the position of power they took such pains to increase over so many decades.

The death of Julius and the election of Cardinal Giovanni as the new pope, in 1513, the same year that Machiavelli wrote the Prince, extended the power of the Medici in new and disconcerting ways for if, before, the Medici endeavored to become princes of Florence, the wealth and forces of the Church opened new vistas to their ambition, which Machiavelli knew Leo X intended to pursue. Superficially at least, the parallels between the Borgia and the Medici are quite striking, and once again, a Medici was in position to influence the affairs of Italy.

Therefore, one should not be surprised to find that Machiavelli introduces the subject of ecclesiastical principalities with the same detached objectivity as that reflected in his introduction to secular principalities, relative to their acquisition "by virtue or by fortune," and how they are maintained, in this case "without the one or the other." (Ch. 11, 45) Quentin Skinner refers to the "self-conscious-
ly cool and abstract style” with which he "presents this classification," and he remarks, "when he ends by discussing the papacy [in Chapter Eleven], he insists on treating that august institution—in a manner that must certainly have startled his original readers—as nothing more than one of the various principalities contending for power in Italy," which is precisely the point that Machiavelli intended to make with the style of his presentation. By referring to the acquisitions of popes made on behalf of their sons and relatives as "ecclesiastical principalities," Machiavelli goes directly to the problem—that such acquisitions amounted to nothing more than the carving out of princedoms from nepotic ambitions, and such enterprises both disrupted the peace in Italy and threatened to upset the balance of power. Further, the Church had become so corrupt it failed to admonish those who made extravagant use of religion, from reaching for empire to the sale of indulgences and profiteering from the sale of "Church benefices," as did Alexander VI. To fund the mercenary condottieri of Cesare’s "Romagna army," Alexander "used the donations left by the Jubilee Year pilgrims, dipped into the levies raised for the Crusade on the incomes of clerics and Jews... [and] created new cardinals" who paid handsomely "for the privilege."  

Machiavelli’s contempt for the princes of the Church is revealed in the manner in which he feigns innocence with the false appearance of reverence with regard to ecclesiastical
principalities; "But as they subsist by superior causes to which the human mind does not reach, I will omit speaking of them; for since they are exalted and maintained by God, it would be the office of a presumptuous and foolhardy man to discourse on them." (Ch. 11, 45) Foolhardy indeed. The satirical malice he displays in this statement "bathes [their] crimes in acid,"27 as satire is meant to do, for the pontiffs made a mockery of God and the church, and Machiavelli mocks them in turn for their lack of faith. While Machiavelli says he "will omit speaking" of ecclesiastical principalities, he devotes the remainder of his discourse in Chapter Eleven to that subject. In fact, whenever he mentions Cesare Borgia in the Prince, he is discussing ecclesiastical principalities, and implicit in his dedication of the Prince to the Medici is the notion that the Medici seize power in Italy, in imitation of the Borgia nepotism. Machiavelli's Prince not only beckons the Medici to greatness, then, but the Church as well.

With the phrase "nonetheless," Machiavelli launches into his discourse on ecclesiastical principalities, despite the fact that he judges a man "presumptuous and foolhardy" to do so; "Nonetheless, if someone were to inquire of me how it came about that the Church has come to such greatness in temporal affairs despite the fact that, before Alexander, the Italian powers, and not only those that are called powers but every baron and lord, even the least, held her in
low esteem in temporal affairs—and now a king of France trembles at her and she has been able to remove him from Italy and to ruin the Venetians—though this is known, it does not seem to me superfluous to recall a good part of it to memory.  

Although he speaks matter-of-factly regarding the power and increasing reputation of the Church, we should be on guard, for in the Discourses, Machiavelli faults the "Church of Rome" for "approaching either ruin or scourge." The bad example set by the "Court of Rome" has caused Italy to lose "all devotion and all religion," and "has kept and keeps Italy divided," preventing her from uniting under "one prince" or "one republic." He observes that "in our own day, it stripped Venice of its power with the help of France, and, later on, drove out the French with the help of the Swiss." (I. 12, 144-5) In Machiavelli's view, then, the Church was not an agent for unity, but disunion, and his call to the Medici to unite Italy a fraudulent and cynical barb.

Ivan Cloulas makes the point that from the time of Sixtus IV, the papal states increasingly "came to resemble a principality like all the others that squabbled for their material interests alone. The only difference between it and the petty Italian tyrannies was in the way power was passed on--by election, not inheritance," and, as Machiavelli observes, "if up to our times they have planned to leave their sons as princes, in the future they may
Machiavelli thus had little praise for the pontiffs of a Church that had grown so corrupt, he viewed it as disruptive and dangerous to the peace of Italy, and the first point he makes regarding the increasing "greatness in temporal affairs" of the Church, in Chapter Eleven, (Ch. 11, 45) concerns the balance of power maintained in Italy prior to the arrival of King Charles VIII of France in 1494. (Ch. 11, 45-6) Historically, from the time of the "Roman ruins, nothing has afterwards been built to redeem her from those ruins so that under the government of a strong ruler she could proceed gloriously; nonetheless some of the new cities and new states born among the Roman ruins showed such great ability that, though one of them did not master the others, they nevertheless were so united and so well organized that they freed Italy and defended her from the barbarians," including Florence. The decline in "vigor," however, that followed Cosimo's rise to power, in 1434, "opened" a new road to the "barbarians" in what Machiavelli describes as a "corrupt world," in the History, 31 leading ultimately to a severe disruption of the balance of power previously maintained by "the pope, the Venetians, the king of Naples, the duke of Milan, and the Florentines," (Ch. 11, 45-6) as described by Machiavelli in the Prince. The ambition of the popes played a significant role in disrupting that balance, which he emphasizes in the remaining discourse.
of Chapter Eleven. The problem, as Machiavelli pointed out in the History, is that no ruler emerged from the "Roman ruins" who could govern in such a manner as to inspire Italy to "proceed gloriously." No Romulus reappeared to found a new civic state—one that Machiavelli would have approved of—governed to promote the public interest with good laws and justice, defended with well-organized military forces, "enlisted," from the ranks of the people who "were of age to bear arms;" the virtue of one's own arms.  

The tenuous balance of power maintained by the five major powers in Italy, imperfect as it was, at least prevented any one member from rising up to tyrannize the others. As Machiavelli remarks in the Prince, "these powers had to have two principle concerns: one, that a foreigner not enter into Italy with arms; the other, that none of them enlarge his state," (Ch. 11, 46) both of which were violated by the popes, although it was the duke of Milan who initiated the process of decline by inviting King Charles into Italy, which "completely shattered the delicately balanced peninsular relations" of the past, from which Italy never recovered.

Of the major powers in Italy, Machiavelli states that "the pope and the Venetians" were the greatest, "and to hold back the Venetians the union of all the others was needed, as in the defense of Ferrara; and to hold down the pope they made use of the barons in Rome," the "Orsini and Colonna"
factions. (Ch. 11, 45-46) Having already made the point in Chapter Eleven that the Church "[ruined] the Venetians," (Ch. 11, 45) Machiavelli then turns to the greatness of Alexander VI who, "with Duke Valentino as his instrument [a generally degrading reference to Cesare], did all the things I discussed above in the actions of the duke." (Ch. 11, 46) That is, Cesare murdered or otherwise destroyed both the Colonna and the Orsini, as discussed in Chapter Seven, thus freeing the pope from the former restraints to his power provided by their factions. Therefore, the opportunity for the Church to seize power in Italy had never been greater than in the present, or, to be more accurate, the opportunity for a pope to establish his family in power had never been greater, were it not for the inconvenience of the "brevity of their lives," (Ch. 11, 46) which was the cause of Cesare's ruin, for the "princedoms" established by pontiffs "lived but a short while." Thus, when Machiavelli urges the Medici to seize Italy in Chapter Twenty-six, as "he does not know what time has been more apt for it," (Ch. 26, 102) he is, in fact, issuing a call to arms that he knew had little hope of lasting success, but which would ultimately "[redound] to the greatness of the Church," with the death of the pope. And, as I mentioned above, Machiavelli had little regard for priestly rule that had ruined both the Church and state.  

Therefore, when Machiavelli concludes Chapter Eleven by
stating, "His Holiness Pope Leo, then, has found this pontificate most powerful; one may hope that if others made it great with arms, he, with his goodness and infinite other virtues ['infinite' greatly exaggerates his point], can make it very great and venerable," (Ch. 11, 47) he expresses a desire that the Church continue increasing in greatness, an end that Machiavelli opposed not only as an Italian, but as a Florentine republican devoted to democratic principles. There was no reason to think that the Medici would govern Italy in a manner other than that which they had demonstrated in Florence. And of Leo's nepotic ambition, although doomed to failure for the reasons given above, his enterprises would, nonetheless, hasten the demise of Italy, already in travail.

Machiavelli began to establish the ground in this Chapter for his farcical treatment, in Chapter Twenty-six, of the greatness of the Church inextricably joined with the greatness of the Medici, in a biblical calling comparable to the Exodus in the Old Testament—a provocative lampoon on the first family of Florence.

And in the proud rascal's fall, he nevertheless did not forget Mohamet.36
Chapter XIII. No Art But the Art of War

In Chapters Twelve through Fourteen, Machiavelli advises the new prince on military affairs. He faults reliance on Italian mercenaries and foreign auxiliary forces, which is in accord with his principles or theory of the art of war. He first dedicated the *Prince* to Giuliano de' Medici, however, who had no interest or ability in military matters and thus, although his recommendations are sincere for the most part, they are also humorous and ironic in their effect. Giuliano was "the last man to be attracted by the notion of imitating the Borgia," and "wanted no more than to occupy the same social position in Florence that his magnificent father had held, and not even that if it was too much trouble." The notion that Giuliano should practice no art "but the art of war," (Ch. 14, 58) then, as Machiavelli advises the new prince, smacks of ridicule and contempt, not only for Giuliano but for Pope Leo, as well, who made Giuliano "Gonfaloniere" of the Church, the same position as that held by Cesare under Pope Alexander.

Before Machiavelli offers his argument against the use of mercenary arms, in Chapter Twelve, he satirizes the absence of good laws and justice in tyrannical regimes; "the principle foundation that all states have, new ones as well as old or mixed, are good laws and good arms. And because there cannot be good laws where there are not good arms, and where there are good arms there must be good laws, I shall
leave out reasoning on laws and shall speak of arms." (Ch. 12, 48) This omission is a critical one, used by Machiavelli to minimize the importance of law despite the fact that "justice is the foundation of Machiavellian theory." Commentators such as Ernest Cassirer have observed that Machiavelli "discarded" the "idea" of "Plato and his followers [who] saw the state as founded on law," but that is not the case, although Machiavelli would have us believe that it is in the Prince. Rather, he thought that laws were the critical element of good foundations, such as those "laws" given by "Romulus, Numa, and others," that kept Rome "so rich in virtue," (I. 1, 104) providing for good order from which proceeded well ordered arms. The notion, then, that there "cannot be good laws where there are not good arms" is simply not true. In his Preamble to A Provision For Infantry, Machiavelli states:

Whereas it has been observed by the Magnificent and Exalted Signors that all republics which in times past have preserved and increased themselves have always had as their chief basis two things, to wit, justice and arms, in order to restrain and to govern their subjects, and in order to defend themselves from their enemies; and whereas they have observed that your republic is well founded on good and holy laws, and organized for the administration of justice, and that she lacks only to be well provided with arms; and since through long experience, indeed with great expense and danger, she has learned how little hope it is possible to place in foreign and hired arms, be
cause when they are numerous and of high repute they are either unendurable or suspected, and if they are few and without reputation, they are of no use, these signors judge it well that she should be armed with her own weapons and with her own men. 4

Therefore, good laws do not mean that a city or state will have good arms. In fact, Florence relied on arms that were not good (mercenary and auxiliary) for "nearly two centuries," during which time the preservation of the republic was always at risk.

Nor is it accurate to suppose that "where there are good arms there must be good laws." It is true that in the Discourses, Machiavelli remarks, "Although I have said elsewhere that the security of all states is based on good military discipline, and that where it does not exist, there can neither be good laws nor anything else that is good, to repeat this does not seem superfluous... one sees that the soldiery cannot be good unless they are in training, and that it is impossible to train them unless they are your own subjects." (III. 31, 491) The point he is making in this passage, aside from the importance of organizing and training one's own forces, is that nothing is good in the sense that it will endure and remain secure without good military discipline, because "where military organization is good there must needs be good order," and "no government is stable without providing itself with a protector," comprised of citizens of the state or one's own subjects.
To suppose, however, that "where there are good arms there must be good laws [Italics mine]" is untrue, particularly if we consider Machiavelli's understanding of good laws, which centered upon the issue of the common good, laws favorable to the preservation of liberty rather than those formulated to secure and increase the power of a tyrant. It is doubtful that Machiavelli would have described the law of Agathocles as good, despite the fact that his arms were very good. Julius Caesar made himself dictator after raising himself up through the ranks of the military as well. Of Caesar, Machiavelli observes, "it was neither the name nor the rank of the dictator that made Rome servile, but the loss of authority of which the citizens were deprived by the length of his rule. If in Rome there had been no such rank, the dictator would have found some other; for it is easy for force to acquire a title, but not for a title to acquire force," (I. 34, 194) Agathocles and Julius Caesar, then, did not generate laws for the public good as a consequence of good arms but, rather, increased their own authority and security, which was prejudicial to the security of the larger community.

Further, Machiavelli does not merely dismiss the subject of law in this chapter, but states that he will "leave out reasoning on laws." (Ch. 12, 48) As he says in Chapter Eighteen, "Laws" are proper to "man," and "force" is proper to "beasts." (Ch. 18, 69) As a product of reason, laws
should serve "the common good," in Machiavelli's view, as exemplified in the actions of "Moses, Lycurgus, Solon, and other founders of kingdoms and republics" who used their authority for that purpose. (I. i, 133) Force, on the other hand, is proper to beasts and, in Chapter Eighteen, Machiavelli advises the new prince to cultivate that side of his nature. (Ch. 18, 69) The force of arms becomes the law in tyrannical regimes. The notion that "I shall leave out reasoning on laws and shall speak of arms" (Ch. 12, 48) is, then, perhaps one of the most distinctive markers of his satire in the Prince.

In the Discourses, Machiavelli makes the point that after Rome "became an Empire," the emperor deserved "praise" if he "acted like good princes, in accordance with the laws," in which case he would have "no need of soldiers to form a praetorian guard, nor a multitude of legions to protect" him, for his "defense" resides in his "habits, the goodwill of the people, and the affection of the senate." (I. 10, 136) This would seem good advice for a new prince were it not for the fact that Machiavelli is not educating a good prince, in the Prince, but a tyrant.

Because of his vile crimes, Cesare Borgia is described by Garrett Mattingly as having been seen "sometimes swaggering through the streets with the powerful armed guards he felt he needed to protect him from the vengeance of the Orsini," an arrogant Cesare, even in his demise. Lorenzo
the Magnificent was provided with an armed guard to "defend him from domestic plots" following the Pazzi conspiracy, furnished by Florentine citizens to protect him from other citizens in the city. Before he became pope, Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici returned to Florence, in 1512, "with 1,500 troops and entered his former palace in the full panoply of his rank with the air of a man who had returned to his native city in order to rule it." As Machiavelli observes, the "constitution was destroyed," and force was required to return to the (Medici faction) former modes of governing. Corrupt factions "make laws and statutes not for the public benefit but for their own." 

In the Discourses, Machiavelli cautions that a prince should not rule "tyrannically" and "violate the laws," for "princes should learn... that they begin to lose their state the moment they begin to break the laws and to disregard the ancient traditions and customs under which men have long lived." (III. 5, 395-6) Yet, Machiavelli remarks, in Chapter Twenty-six, that "nothing brings so much honor to a man rising newly as the new laws and the new orders found by him." (Ch. 26, 103-4) At every opportunity, then, in the Prince, Machiavelli mocks the new prince for his reliance on force rather than the rule of law, the beast that overtakes reason.

Of mercenary arms, Machiavelli notes that they are both "useless and dangerous," (Ch. 12, 48) and "have led Italy
into slavery and disgrace." (Ch. 12, 53) Most importantly, "one sees that only princes and armed republics make very great progress; nothing but harm ever comes from mercenary arms. And a republic armed with its own arms is brought to obey one of its citizens with more difficulty than is a republic armed with foreign arms," (Ch. 12, 50) such as those of "Alberigo da Conio from Romagna" who first "gave reputation to this kind of military," followed by, "among others, Braccio and Sforza, who in their times were the arbiters of Italy. After them came all the others who have controlled these arms until our times," (Ch. 12, 52-3) which includes Cesare Borgia who was, himself, a condottieri. Thus, "Italy has been overrun by Charles, taken as booty by Louis, violated by Ferdinand, and insulted by the Swiss," as a result of the Italian mercenaries who fought disgracefully, with "military orders" described by Machiavelli as "discovered by them... so as to escape trouble and dangers." (Ch. 12, 53)

In Chapter Thirteen, Machiavelli continues his argument against "useless arms," (Ch. 13, 54) those of auxiliary and mixed forces. Auxiliary arms "are those of a power that is called to come with its arms to help and defend you," (Ch. 13, 54) as in the example of Pope Julius II, who created alliances with France, Germany, and Spain. "Mixed" arms are "part mercenary and part [one's] own." (Ch. 13, 56) Machiavelli gives the example of France, who hired the
Swiss, but a more pertinent example would have been Cesare Borgia who relied on a few of his own forces, the French, and the Italian mercenaries. Nor does Machiavelli mention that Louis not only hired the Swiss, but relied on Cesare, as well.

With mercenary arms, Machiavelli notes that "laziness is more dangerous," while with auxiliary arms, "virtue is," for with auxiliary forces, "ruin is accomplished; they are all united, all resolved to obey someone else." (Ch. 13, 55) Machiavelli is consistent in this opinion in his works, which contributes to an air of authenticity in his satire. And in his conclusion to Chapter Thirteen, he reiterates a familiar theme, applicable to republics and principalities alike; "without its own arms no principality is secure; indeed, it is wholly obliged to fortune [as was Cesare Borgia] since it does not have virtue to defend itself in adversity." (Ch. 13, 57) Nevertheless, there are elements of distortion in both Chapters Twelve and Thirteen.

In Chapter Twelve, Machiavelli cites Philip of Macedon, who "was made captain of their troops by the Thebians; and after his victory he took their liberty from them." (Ch. 12, 50) As Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. observes, however, "Philip (who does not appear to have been a mercenary captain) became king of Macedon in 359 and occupied Thebes in 338." The example of Philip, then, is not appropriate to the context of mercenary arms, and renders the text untrustworthy.
In the example of Pope Julius II, in Chapter Thirteen, Machiavelli states that he turned to foreign (auxiliary) arms but was saved by his "good fortune" and the Swiss; "for when his auxiliaries [Spain] were defeated at Ravenna [in 1512], the Swiss rose up and, beyond all expectations, his own and others, drove out the victors; and he came out a prisoner neither of his enemies [France], who had fled, nor of his auxiliaries, since he had won with arms other than theirs." (Ch. 13, 54) Julius was saved by mercenary arms, the Swiss, whom Machiavelli lauds as "masters of modern warfare." (I. 16, 321) Machiavelli creates confusion over the issue of mercenary arms by giving praise to the Swiss mercenaries while faulting mercenary arms generally. Had he made the point that the Swiss exhibited extraordinary ability in Chapter Twelve, he would have contradicted his criticism of mercenary arms, which, despite his reference to the "Carthaginians" and "Philip of Macedon," (Ch. 12, 50) was aimed solely at his fellow Italians. Of the Swiss, he states that they "are very well armed and very free," (Ch. 12, 50) thereby neglecting to define them as mercenaries, as in his reference to Julius II, in this chapter, who was saved by the "Swiss" when his "auxiliaries were defeated at Ravenna."

While Machiavelli makes the point that Julius II did not come out a "prisoner" of France or Spain, as a result of his campaign, the Florentines did become prisoner of the
Medici once again, a notion that Machiavelli would avoid in a work dedicated to the Medici, but one that is appropriate to his republican sentiment. He refers to Florence in the following sentence, but in a different context, (Ch. 13, 54) prompting the realization that what Julius avoided was, as a result of his actions, visited on his native city. Subtle nuances of interpretation rely on an intimate knowledge of the satirist's thoughts and beliefs, and therein resides the elusive quality of indirect satire, far better understood in intimate circles of the author, among those who are not fooled by the slick surface of sincerity but who are, rather, regaled by his wit and chicanery.

As a Condottieri, Cesare Borgia's arms were in the hire not only of the Church (which funded his enterprises), but also of others, such as "Bentivoglio" of Bologna, who "engaged the pope's son as a condottieri in his service, promising to reward him with 100 cavalry squadrons of three men each--a sizeable revenue for Cesare." Further, "the Florentine government signed a treaty with him, offering him a condotta--that is, taking him for three years as a condottieri at a salary of 30,000 ducats a year, with Cesare supplying 300 cavalry squadrons," although the Florentines "had signed the agreement without the slightest intention of sticking to it." In Chapter Twelve, Machiavelli makes a "pun on the contract (condotta) by which a condottieri is hired," in reference to the faults of mercenaries. As
Cesare was a condottieri, then, with arms for hire, a great irony is apparent, for when Machiavelli praises the arms of Cesare, he is, in fact, praising the arms of a mercenary in Italy.

In praise of having arms of one's own, in Chapter Thirteen, Machiavelli gives the example of David and Goliath from the Old Testament, in an illustration that is loaded with symbolism appropriate to satire, and one that has (justifiably) bewildered scholars down to the present; Machiavelli puts a knife in David's hand:

I want further to recall to memory a figure of the Old Testament apt for this purpose. When David offered to Saul to go and fight Goliath, the Philistine challenger, Saul, to give him spirit, armed him with his own arms—which David, as soon as he had them on, refused, saying that with them he could not give a good account of himself, and so he would rather meet the enemy with his sling and his knife. (Ch. 13, 56)

Machiavelli's "account of this episode differs significantly," as Harvey C. Mansfield observes, "from the biblical original in I Samuel 17:38-40, 50-51."14 Indeed, having refused the armour and sword offered by Saul, the bible gives the following account of David's arms; "And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand; and he drew near the Philistine."15 Clearly David had no knife, nor did Saul offer him one. "Since [the biblical account] says that
David had no sword, coltello is hardly to be translated sword, as often in sixteenth-century Italian. David is, however, often represented with Goliath's sword, which he took after striking the giant down with a stone from his sling," as Felix Gilbert explains. L. Arthur Burd remarks, "strictly speaking this is inaccurate: there is no mention of 'cotello' in I. Samuel xvii. Possibly Machiavelli misread verse 51." That is, if Machiavelli didn't get it right, he must have read it wrong--not a very compelling explanation. Machiavelli was very familiar with the Bible, having made several references to it in his works.

A more likely explanation is that Machiavelli intended the "knife" to represent a satirical marker, a device to "call attention" to a "disruptive detail" which is "funny [or remarkable] when it is considered a sign of inferiority," which is indeed the effect Machiavelli achieves, when it is understood. Because David is misrepresented, the story of David and Goliath is robbed of its moral integrity and meaning.

According to the account in the Bible, "David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. Therefore, David ran, and
stood upon the Philistine and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. Thus David used, in part, the arms of another, his enemy, to slay Goliath. In weighing the value of one’s own arms, there are shades of humor and irony in his example.

The point that Machiavelli makes in the example of David, however, represented with a knife, is that modern princes combat their enemies more often than not with treachery, rather than meet their foe on the battlefield, the traditional proving ground of valor and ability (and even in battle, the Italian mercenaries fought disgracefully). Cesare Borgia did not defeat the Orsini and Colonna in the arena of battle, but with villainous deceit. A "knife" reflects the inglorious path of murder, conspiracy, intrigue and revenge, while a sword symbolizes the art of war, glory, and military virtue, a notion expressed in Aristophane’s The Clouds—a play that emphasized the departure from custom and tradition (Philosophy) evident in the moderns (Sophistry), and the teachings of Socrates:

**Philosophy**

Er... Peleus, for example. His virtue won him a sword.

**Sophistry**

A sword, you say? What a charming little profit for the poor sucker! Look at our Hyperbolos: nothing virtuous, about him, God knows, and yet, what with
peddling lamps—plus a knack for swindling—he piled up a huge profit. All cold cash. No swords for him. No sir, hypbolos and swords just don't mix.21

If the sword is associated with chivalry and military might, the knife, in contrast, reflects underhanded methods that are often used to combat power and authority, as in conspiracies against princes. In the Discourses, Machiavelli remarks that a prince "can never so despoil anyone but that there will remain to him a knife with which to wreak vengeance," (III. 6, 400) and in the Prince, he cautions that the new prince "is always under necessity to hold a knife in his hand" if he does not commit all offenses "in a stroke," (Ch. 8, 38) in which case a prince would likely have every necessity to beware of conspiracy. In the Pazzi conspiracy, Giuliano de' Medici, brother of Lorenzo the Magnificent (who survived) was murdered with a knife, and perhaps Machiavelli intended that the knife in David's hand symbolize that event and other conspiracies against the Medici, which I will discuss in connection with the particular relevance of David to the Republic of Florence.

Symbolism is a useful device in the satirists arsenal of creative artifice. "Like the poet, the satirist uses symbols frequently, but his reason for using them is not quite the same as that of the poet. The poet uses symbols to represent things; the satirist sometimes uses symbols to misrepresent things. He often makes use of symbols as a
means of indirection and distortion." Machiavelli used the "knife" both to represent and misrepresent David, in the eyes of his fellow Florentines.

In the biblical account of David and Goliath, David is the moral exemplar of virtue inspired by his faith in God, and it is his faith that is compromised by Machiavelli’s misrepresentation with the knife. The point is not that David downed the giant with his sling and a stone, but that they were sufficient because he was empowered by God, anointed as the new king of Israel. Therefore, when Machiavelli states that David "could not give a good account of himself [Italics mine] with Saul’s arms," (Ch. 13, 56) he makes it appear that the defeat of Goliath was David’s personal victory, thus robbing David of his faith, which mirrors the lack of faith in modern princes. Putting a knife in David’s hand removes the obstacle of faith altogether.

On another level, as I said above, the knife may have been intended to represent the defence of the Florentine republic. David "had long been a symbol of Florentine liberty" and "civic virtue," represented in the marble figure of David by Michelangelo, completed in 1504, and "placed at the entrance of the Palazzo Vecchio, on the Piazza della Signoria," in Florence. Michelangelo’s David is described as having the quality of "some timeless moment as a personification of vigilance and courage," appropriate
to the traditional republican ideals of the city. Although he did many works of sculpture for the Medici during his lifetime, Michelangelo remained in Florence during the period in which the Florentines fought to restore the republic, (1527-30) and the Medici were in exile, designing fortifications to aid in defense of the city. His fidelity to the Republic of Florence would seem to have outweighed any sense of personal gratitude he may have felt toward the Medici, as his benefactors of long standing.

A knife in David's hand, then, may have signified the defense of Florentine liberty by a means as corrupt as the Medici were themselves, whose lack of "civic virtue" and disregard for "liberty" perverted the traditional symbolism of David. There was another figure of David that also stood in the Palazzo Vecchio, that of Donatello's, which was associated with the Medici. From the time of Cosimo, Donatello's David stood in the Medici courtyard. In 1495, however, following Piero de' Medici's exile from Florence, it was moved to the Palazzo, and is described as having "little to do with the ethos of Biblical heroes," reflecting "not an ideal but an object of desire, strongly androgynous in its combination of sinewy angularity with feminine softness and fullness,"\(^{26}\) attired in "military boots," and a hat similar to "a type of hat popular in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries for hunting and traveling."\(^{27}\) It was a modernized David, and not the sort of image that would
likely have appealed to Machiavelli as a representation of David's virtue, or as symbolic of republican liberty and civic virtue. In the *Discourses*, Machiavelli observes that idle republics become "effeminate or give rise to factions" in time of peace, "and these two things, either in conjunction or separately, will bring about its downfall."

(I. 6, 123) The Medici faction contributed to the ruin of the republic, and the Medici themselves typified the Renaissance as patrons of the arts and men of letters, the refined pursuits that times of peace provide. As Machiavelli observes in the *History*, "the discerning have noted that letters come after arms, and that in countries and cities generals are born earlier than philosophers... the virtue of military courage cannot be more corrupted with a more honorable laziness than that of letters, nor with a greater and more dangerous deception can this laziness enter into well-regulated cities." The Medici typified the honorable pursuits that defined the Italian Renaissance, but by Machiavelli's standards, their appreciation of the past was but a superficial endeavor. That is, it was one thing to be familiar with the ancients and their ethics and values, but quite another to think of imitating them in one's own actions and character.
Michelangelo’s Sculpture of David
Donatello's Sculpture of David
Donatello’s David, then, poised in the shade of his Renaissance hat, typified in its own way the transition from military virtue to the more delicate pursuits that dignified the Medici and other great men of the Renaissance era. That is not to suggest that Machiavelli did not find such pursuits honorable; "those are to be held to be infamous and detestable who extirpate religion, subvert kingdoms and republics, make war on virtue, on letters, and on any art that brings advantage and honour to the human race, i.e. the profane, the violent, the ignorant, the worthless, the idle, the coward," (I. 10, 135) but "honour" for the "human race" is not quite the same thing as seeking reputation as patrons of the arts for personal reputation and political gain. As Garrett Mattingly remarks, the motives of "Italian prince-lings" led them to "[patronize] scholars" in order "to foster an empty Ciceronian elegance designed solely to secure the immortality of the patron by enshrining his name in aureate verse and ornate prose," and while these pursuits, including the construction of great buildings, can be said to have benefited the public, they also contributed to the persona of wealth and power enjoyed by the Medici, whom Machiavelli might have charged with having more concern for their personal reputation than the safety and preservation of the city of Florence and her liberty, particularly in times that demanded full attention to military preparedness. Donatello’s David, then, may have suggested the subject of
David for his satire, especially when viewed in contrast with Michelangelo's David, each symbolic of different values in different times, reflecting the corrosive influence of the Medici themselves on the traditional ideals of Florence, "civic virtue" and "liberty," more revered in the past than in the corrupt present.

Machiavelli introduces Chapter Fourteen with the notion that the new prince should think of nothing but war; "Thus, a prince should have no other object, nor any other thought, nor take anything else as his art but the art of war and its orders and disciplines; for that is the only art which is of concern to one who commands," (Ch. 14, 58) and "he should never lift his thoughts from the exercise of war, and in peace he should exercise it more than in war." (Ch. 14, 59) I'm not certain that anyone could say, with confidence, what he intended to convey in the latter sentence. In the former, however, he clearly meant to exclude from the reader's consideration all other arts associated with princely rule save that of the art of war. John H. Geerken makes the point that "Fabrizio Colonna, who is the principal interlocutor in The Art of War (Book One), said that war is not his only business and occupation; rather, his profession is governing his subjects well and defending and protecting them—ends requiring as means the simultaneous study of the arts of peace and war," and in the Discourses, Machiavelli argues that a "good prince" provides for the security of his

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subjects with "a world replete with peace and justice," (I. 10, 137) in which the common good is not sacrificed to the ambition of the ruler. Because the new prince must think of his own interests before all other considerations, however, he must constantly be in "command" and conduct his affairs accordingly. If his rule is absolute, he will always be at war with his enemies within, who desire to recover their liberty, nor can he grant any measure of authority to his subjects, without diminishing that of his own.

Machiavelli betrays his own principles when he states that "it is of such virtue [the art of war] that not only does it maintain those who have been born princes but many times it enables men of private fortune to rise to that rank," (Ch. 14, 58) a reference to men like Julius Caesar, Sulla, and Marius:

When a citizen had been for long in command of an army, he won the army over and made it his partisan; so that it came in time to forget of the Senate and to recognize its commander alone as its head. It thus came about that Sulla and Marius were able to find troops to support them in actions contrary to the public good, and it thus came about that Caesar was able to reduce his country to subjection. Had the Romans not prolonged offices and military commands, they would not have attained such great power in so short a time, and, had they been slower in making conquests, they would also have been slower to arrive at servitude. (III. 24, 474)

Machiavelli's "heroes" were men like "Agesilaus and Timoleon, Brutus and Scipio" rather than "Pisistratus or
Julius Caesar who extinguished republican regimes and destroyed their spirit by exploiting human weaknesses. With their armies, "Caesar" and "Agathocles... at one stroke subjugated their country by means of the forces they commanded," while others, such as "Pisistratus" and "Pandolfo Petrucci" achieved the same "aim" with smaller forces, over time. (III. 6, 421) Ruin comes about because, in corrupt times, the people are "blinded" and "unaware of the yoke which they themselves [have] placed on their necks." Thus, even "when Caesar was killed, and Gaius Caligula and Nero were killed, and the whole of Caesar's stock was exterminated," Rome "was not only unable ever to maintain liberty, but could not even make a start... This was due to the corruption with which the Marion faction had impregnated the populace." (I. 17, 158) One is reminded of Pope Leo's motto, "Truly my yoke is easy," written beneath "his personal device--an ox-yoke," in Florence, reflective of the power of the Medici faction, destructive to the liberty of Florence as was the Marius faction in Rome.

Machiavelli's recommendation, then, that the new prince take no art but the art of war, together with his tacit approval of commanders who rise through the military to the rank of prince indicate the degree to which he distorts his advice in the Prince, to suit the necessity of the prince. Machiavelli himself imitates the moderns by advocating the ends and means of his adversaries, those who craved personal
power and empire. He puts into his own mouth the counsel of a fool, in mockery of the times and the men who shaped events.

And as Machiavelli exhorts the new prince to "do as some excellent man has done in the past who found someone to imitate who had been praised and glorified before him, whose actions he always kept beside himself," he includes the example of "Caesar" who imitated "Alexander." (Ch. 14, 60) Machiavelli did not consider Julius Caesar an "excellent man," but his example reminds one of Cesare Borgia who in turn imitated Julius Caesar--and always kept the actions of his "illustrious namesake" beside himself in the "episodes of Caesar's triumphs" that were "engraved" on his "parade sword." As Garrett Mattingly remarked, reading "The Prince as satire... gives a new dimension and meaning to passages unremarkable before," even in the small details that otherwise pass unnoticed.

Machiavelli's mention of Xenophon's "Life of Cyrus," in Chapter Fourteen, permitted him--should anyone wonder that a prince take no art but the art of war--the pretense of sincerity, for Cyrus was a great warrior who created an empire. The modern princes, however, did not have the requisite military virtue to imitate Cyrus in the art of war. Machiavelli displays his caustic humor in suggesting such comparisons.

Most obvious, however, is Machiavelli's omission of
Cesare Borgia, his model prince, in a chapter devoted to war and its modes and orders—for Cesare was a man born to arms, the quintessential prince who thought of nothing but war, the prime exemplar whom, Machiavelli states, he would imitate himself if he "were a new prince."\textsuperscript{37}
Chapter XIV. Effectual Truth: The Vices of Princes

In Chapters Fifteen through Eighteen, Machiavelli discourses on the character of the new prince, and how he should conduct himself with regard to those qualities that are deserving of praise or blame—whether to be liberal or parsimonious, cruel or merciful, faithful or unfaithful, and how to avoid hatred and contempt. He remarks, "and because I know that many have written of this, I fear that in writing of it again, I may be held presumptuous, especially in disputing this matter I depart from the orders of others. But since my intent is to write something useful for whoever understands it, it has appeared more fitting to go directly to the effectual truth of the thing than to the imagination of it," because "a man who wants to make a profession of good in all regards must come to ruin among so many who are not good." Therefore, "it is necessary to a prince, if he wants to maintain himself, to learn to be able not to be good, and to use this or not use it, according to necessity." (Ch. 15, 61)

There is nothing revolutionary (or even new) in the notion that in affairs of state republics, monarchs and princes alike have always been under the necessity to be vigilant in their responsibility to the governed, to correctly and prudently assess the actions of any power that might threaten the peace, stability, and well being of their state, and respond accordingly. Machiavelli's intent is not
merely to admonish the new prince to exercise caution, however, as any wise ruler should do. Rather, he has set up in the minds of his readers a necessity to pursue corrupt means, thus "departing from the orders of others," the ancients whose wisdom and virtue he resolutely defends in his other works. He just closed Chapter Fourteen with the reminder that Cyrus should be imitated, (Ch. 14, 60) the example of a prince who did not "come to ruin" despite his virtuous qualities and actions. Unlike the modern princes, Cyrus is praised by Machiavelli for his virtue in Chapter Four, and in the Discourses, Machiavelli offers his example to illustrate the point that "humanity" often "makes a much greater impression than an act of ferocity or violence." (III. 20, 461-2)

If a "wise prince should observe" the "modes" that Cyrus exemplifies, (Ch. 14, 60) as Machiavelli recommends in Chapter Fourteen, Machiavelli appears to contradict himself in the following chapter, when he advises the new prince to "learn not to be good," and indeed it is a contradiction. He observes that if the prince doesn’t "learn not to be good," he will "come to ruin among so many who are not good," and this is the key to understanding his real intent. In referring to the "many who are not good," he is making a statement about the present era, the quality of the times, an age in which "the vices" are "as clear as the sun," one in which no one thinks of "imitating" the past, "as if the
heaven, the sun, the elements and man had in their motion, their order, and their potency, become different from what they used to be." If men would only turn their thoughts to the ancient example of virtue, perhaps present abuses could be corrected. While he "consider[s] in what honour antiquity is held" in the present, he observes that the past "is rather admired than imitated; nay, is so shunned by everybody in each little thing they do, that of the virtue of bygone days there remains no trace." And he expresses a desire to effect a change; "Since I want to get men out of this wrong way of thinking, I have thought fit to write a commentary on all those books of Titus Livius" which "will comprise what I have arrived at by comparing ancient and modern events and think necessary for a better understanding of them, so that those who read what I have to say may the more easily draw those practical lessons which one should seek to obtain from the study of history," the example of virtuous actions and character.

"A bad citizen cannot do much harm in a republic that is not corrupt," (III. 8, 426) in which "political life is still vigorous." But "if anyone... wants to seize supreme power in a republic and to impose on it a bad form of government, it is essential that he should find there a material which has in course of time become disordered, and that this disorder shall have been introduced little by little and in one generation after another. And this, as we have
remarked in a previous discourse, must of necessity come about unless that republic be given fresh life by the example of good men or by fresh legislation be brought back to what it was at the start." (III. 8, 429)

As Allan Gilbert remarks, Machiavelli wanted to "teach the ignorant and give advice to the erring," and if at times he seems cynical and pessimistic in his dim view of the present, he yet expresses optimism in the belief that, with proper education, the young will turn from the ways of the present, and follow the path demonstrated in the examples from antiquity. Nor does he withhold this opinion from his other major work, the History, in which he condemns the present age, from the time Cosimo came to power in 1434:

The reader will see there that at last a new road was opened to the barbarians, and Italy put herself back into slavery to them. So if the things done by our princes, abroad and at home, cannot, like those of the ancients, be read with wonder because of their ability and greatness, perhaps for their other qualities they will be viewed with no less wonder; for one can see how such weak and badly handled armies held in check so many splendid peoples. And if in describing the things that happened in this corrupt world, I do not tell of the bravery of soldiers or the efficiency of generals or the love of citizens for their country, I do show with what deceptions, with what tricks and schemes, the princes, the soldiers, the heads of the republics, in order to keep that reputation which they did not deserve, carried on their affairs. It is perhaps as useful to observe these things as to learn ancient history, because if the latter kindles free spirits to imita-
tion, the former will kindle such spirits to avoid and get rid of present abuses.5

Thus, Machiavelli attempted to show, in the History and the Discourses, that the cause for Italy's decline was the growth of corruption, and in the Prince he voices the same criticism. (Ch. 15, 61) It was an overarching concern for the former statesman of the Republic of Florence, who understood that "only in corrupt times can liberty be overthrown."6

In Felix Gilbert's "analysis of the evolution of the Florentine Histories," he finds a "consistency between [Machiavelli's History] and the Prince and Discourses grounded in the process of corruption and decline."7 In fact, Machiavelli thought Italy more corrupt than "all other lands," (I. 55, 244) the result of "weakness... misery... the defenselessness of the faction ridden Italian principalities of his own day before the trampling armies of the great, well-organized, national states of the North and West,"8 invited by popes and princes alike.

The phenomenon of corruption and its influence was especially observable in Florence. Prior to 1434, "equality of opportunity was a basic principle of Florentine constitutionalism," enhanced by "the system of electing magistrates by lot." This system was eroded by the Medici, "especially Lorenzo," for they "used the oligarchical trend in Florentine politics to underpin their personal ascendancy," a

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process that was not reversed until 1494, with the "vesting of sovereign power in a [Great Council] of over 3,000 citizens," a reform that remained in place until the return of the Medici in 1512, at which time it was abolished. Machiavelli observes that "where equality exists, it is impossible to set up a principality, and, where it does not exist, impossible to set up a republic," (I. 55, 243) and, thus, as the Medici gained power, the phenomenon of the rising private individual reflects the eroding influence of inequality. And if Florence "was still, in name, a republic" at the time Lorenzo was a young man, his "iron hand within the velvet glove was quietly extinguishing the liberty of Florence. At ten-year intervals, in '70-'71, '80 and '90, reforms had gradually restricted the governing power in ever fewer hands, faithful to Lorenzo, which ensured the security of his personal rule... The corruption of morals, beginning with the corruption of political life, which arose inevitably from the changing times and was imported from other courts, was favored by Lorenzo as an instrument of government," prompting Machiavelli to remark, "The one who could rend his fellows most cleverly, was deemed the wisest and most estimable." As for the reforms of the Medici, his contempt is revealed in the Discourses:

Those who governed the state of Florence from 1434 to 1494 [the Medici] used to say that it was necessary to reconstitute the government every five years;
otherwise it was difficult to maintain it; where by 'reconstituting the government' they meant instilling men with that terror and that fear with which they had instilled them when instituting it—in that at this time they had chastised those who, looked at from the established way of life, had misbehaved. As, however, the remembrance of this chastisement disappears, men are emboldened to try something fresh and to talk sedition. Hence, provision has of necessity to be made against this by restoring that government to what it was at its origins. (III. 1, 388)

Machiavelli is clearly voicing a criticism of the Medici as their example follows that of the Roman Republic, which returned to "its start" with the "introduction of the plebeian tribunes, of the censorships, and of all the other laws which put a check on human ambition and arrogance," (III. 1, 387) a prescriptive antidote he might have liked to impose in some form in Florence.

The rise of corruption, then, can be thwarted by "laws," "institutions," and the example of "the simple virtue of one man" whom "men seek to imitate," (III. 1, 388) all of which were demonstrated in the ancient model of the Republic of Rome. At regular intervals, renovation is required to return the government to its original principles—to "show [the] people that not only is it essential to uphold religion and justice, but also to hold in high esteem good citizens" (III. 1, 386) which, as an ideal, stands in stark contrast to the notion of renovation in the example of the Medici, who "reconstituted" the government at regular
intervals by "instilling men" with "terror" and "fear" as they "had instilled them when instituting it."
(III. 1, 388)

In the Discourses, Machiavelli advises how to found a state for the purpose of establishing and preserving liberty—for the benefit of the people and the glory of the country. In the Prince, he reverses himself, instructing a would-be prince how to acquire, establish, and maintain himself as an absolute ruler, a tyrant who must take as his first priority his own security and his own interest. In the Discourses, Machiavelli offers the models from antiquity as exemplary and worthy of imitation. In the Prince, he makes a mockery of the advice he gives in the Discourses, offering instead the modern examples of vice and corruption as deserving of emulation and praise, even discounting ancient wisdom and the traditional notion of how a good prince should conduct himself and his affairs, as commonly recorded in the numerous handbooks for princes, and understood in the traditional ideas of morality and virtue. If Machiavelli did not oppose tyranny, why did he bother to write the Discourses, to instruct the many in how to defy the currents of corruption and defeat the rise of tyranny?

In fact, Machiavelli opposed tyranny in both the Prince and the Discourses, but by two different means. In the latter, he took the approach of one, as defined by Bernard Crick, whose theory for republican government qualifies him
for favorable comparison with Aristotle." In the Prince, he adapts his views to the genre satire, in which he criticizes tyranny by exploring the modes and orders of absolute rule that are anathema to liberty and democratic principles. And by relating it to modern examples, he shows how far Italy had plunged into corruption. It is clear in the passage from the History cited above how he views the lessons from the past and the present, and how they should be applied. While the Discourses reveal the value of "ancient history" which inspires "free spirits to imitation," the Prince reflects his observation of "things that happened in [the] corrupt world," from "1434-94," that "should kindle such spirits to avoid and get rid of present abuses."13

The Prince then, constitutes the unmasking of that corrupt world (lest we be fooled by appearances) in an extraordinary and unprecedented manner, by lauding the art of tyranny itself, written in such detail as to resemble a prescriptive manual, accompanied by a sense of urgency that almost makes it compulsory as a matrix of essential attributes the new prince must acquire. He not only should have these attributes, he must have them, to succeed, which magnifies to an even greater degree the reader's perception of the distance between how things ought to be, and what is, the reality. Like Shakespeare's "principal Machiaval, Iago—who is probably the most famous of all such characters," the "very obviousness [of his villainy] to the audience
presumes its invisibility to the characters,"\(^{14}\) just as Machiavelli intended that his readers recognize the new prince as the villain and rogue that he was, oblivious to his own greed, ambition, and the prospect of inevitable ruin, a warning that Garrett Mattingly reminds us occurs several times in the *Prince*, despite its "brevity."\(^{15}\)

This political reality is defined by Machiavelli as the "effectual truth of the thing," rather than the "imagination of it." (Ch. 15, 61) As I am not aware of any other reference to "effectual truth" in his works, and because he places considerable emphases on it in the *Prince*, in any case, it perhaps has a special significance that is pertinent to this work alone. "Effectual truth" can be defined as a truth that is derived from observing effects, as in the outcome of one's actions, or the end achieved—as opposed to what is "imagined," what it is thought to be in appearances, or the ideal. An example would be Pope Alexander VI. The papal image is one of holy piety, humility and faith, although Alexander's true nature allowed none of those qualities. The founding of the papal office, augmented by centuries of custom and tradition, created an ideal which the popes of Alexander's time nourished with appearances, but the effects of their actions (more notably repugnant in Alexander than in any of his predecessors) exposed the reality. By the end of his reign, little evidence remained of those attributes formerly associated with the Vicar of
Christ, the Bishop of Rome, and the head of the Church. The Romans did not mourn his death,¹⁶ and as Voltaire would later comment, "the holiness of his ministry made him more guilty."¹⁷

The "effectual truth of the thing" may be deserving of praise or blame, and it is not always justified. To make this point, Machiavelli gives the example of Romulus in the Discourses:

... Many perchance will think it a bad precedent that the founder of a civic state, such as Romulus, should first have killed his brother and then have acquiesced in the death of Titus Tatius, the Sabine, whom he had chosen as his colleague in the kingdom. They will urge that, if such actions be justifiable, ambitious citizens who are eager to govern, will follow the example of their prince and use violence against those who are opposed to their authority. A view that will hold good provided we leave out of consideration the end which Romulus had in mind... Wherefore, the prudent organizer of a state whose intention it is to govern not in his own interests but for the common good, and not in the interest of his successors but for the sake of the fatherland which is common to all, should contrive to be alone in his authority... It is a sound maxim that reprehensible actions may be justified, by their effects, and that when the effect is good, as it was in the case of Romulus, it always justifies the action." (I. 9, 131-2)

Further, "it is the man who uses violence to spoil things, not the man who uses it to mend them, that is blame-worthy." (I. 9, 132) Therefore, in defense of liberty, Machiavelli offers "counsel" that "merits the attention of,
and ought to be observed by, every citizen who has to give advice to his country," that, as in the example of Romulus, the end justifies the means, and that course should be adopted "which will save the life and preserve the freedom of one's country," and no man will "blame him for taking such action, however extraordinary, which may be of service in the organizing of a kingdom or the constituting of a republic." (I. 9, 132)

Although Machiavelli states, however, that "reprehensible actions" (the means) are justified when the "effect is good" (the end), as he defines good (with regard to kingdoms and republics), further elaborated in the example of Romulus, he does not state that sole authority is justified in establishing or preserving a tyrannical state in which the effect is not good vis-a-vis the destruction of freedom, liberty, or the common good—even in the Prince—although he gives the appearance of justification in the notion of necessity. Machiavelli does not state that a ruler is justified in seizing absolute power because he was opposed to it in every form. Government under a "good prince" (one who is not a tyrant) should serve the public interest, esteem "virtue" (not vice), promote "peace" and security (not war and disorder), respect the "senate's authority" and honor the "magistrates" (not destroy the institutions of government), allow the "rich citizens [to enjoy] their wealth" (not rob them of it at every convenience), (I. 10, 137) and
most importantly, "regulate his conduct by laws." (I. 58, 252) Therefore, the means are not justified by the end (tyranny), in the Prince, because the end itself is not justified. This point is central to his satire. His arguments for absolute power, always from necessity, are thus fraudulent and deceptive, having only the appearance of justification.

Appearances play a major role in Machiavelli's satire, and the art of appearances that he employs, in the Prince, he also advises the new prince to cultivate. The wonderful irony, then, is that he does to the prince what he tells the prince to do to others. As he cautions, in Chapter Eighteen, "men are so simple and obedient to present necessities that he who deceives will always find someone who will let himself be deceived." (Ch. 8, 70)

In the notion of "the effectual truth of the thing," then, Machiavelli strips away the mask of appearances while, at the same time, encouraging the new prince to perfect that art. By instructing the new prince to turn vice to his advantage, and call it virtue, Machiavelli reveals the prince for the nefarious character that he is, and one is treated to the comic spectacle of Machiavelli's persuasive rhetoric imploring the new prince to pursue his own folly.

Machiavelli shows his contempt for tyranny in the notion of blame as well. In the Discourses, he states, "Those who set up a tyranny are no less blameworthy than are
the founders of a republic or a kingdom praiseworthy," (I. 10, 134) for "when they might have founded a republic or a kingdom to their immortal honor, turn their thoughts to tyranny, and fail to see what fame, what glory, security, tranquility, conjoined with peace of mind they are missing by adopting this course, and what infamy, scorn, abhorrence, danger, and disquiet they are incurring." (I. 10, 135) Machiavelli's remonstrance has the tone of "the teaching of a moral reactionary," even in the Discourses. In the Prince, he brings it to life in the Borgia model, although his indictment is specifically aimed at the Medici who represent the current threat of further calamity across the peninsula.

Of all the princes of their kind, the Medici most successfully fostered the art of appearances. With Leo as the new pope, the impression of religiosity was brought to great heights in that family. Lorenzo the Magnificent had ulterior motives, however, when young Giovanni was made cardinal at the age of sixteen, "so that he could look after the interests of the family and of Florence in Rome," virtually one and the same thing. Nor could a more liberal family be found in Italy, and with their liberality they gained renown at home and abroad, with the additional benefit of gaining loyal partisans, who formed a Medici faction to whom they showed their gratitude with public offices and other benefices. If a little cruelty was called for in maintaining
their position, necessity demanded it in Italian politics.

Bernard Crick makes the point that "the strong indictment of tyranny in this discourse [I. 10, pp. 134-8] makes it clear how intensely Machiavelli hated tyranny, and hence the last thing he had in mind in composing The Prince was to help would-be princes to set up a tyranny. He believes that autocracy is called for in certain circumstances, and that these circumstances were realized in the Italy of his day, but never tyranny."\textsuperscript{22}

Machiavelli does not recommend autocratic rule under any circumstances, however, or any form of power that is absolute, with the notable exception of the Prince. What he does recommend, in the Discourses, is the appointment of a dictator, circumscribed by law, based on the Roman model of the republic. The appointment of a dictator provided a means by which a republic could respond to crisis, for republics are "slow in functioning," and "reconciliation of diverse views takes time," (I. 34, 195) In conferring authority in one person, efficacy is greatly enhanced, but by no means did he intend that the title of dictator be understood as the granting of unlimited power:

It is clear that the dictatorship, so long as it was bestowed in accordance with public institutions, and not assumed by the dictator of his own authority, was always of benefit to the state. For it is magistrates that are made and authority that is given in irregular ways that is prejudicial to a republic,
not that which is given in the ordinary way, as is clear from the fact that during a very long period in Rome's history, no dictator ever did anything but good to that republic.

The reasons for this are obvious. First, if a citizen is to do harm and is to obtain extraordinary authority, he must have many attributes which in a republic that is not corrupt it will be impossible for him to acquire; for he will need to be very rich and to have numerous adherents and partisans, which he cannot have so long as the laws are observed; and, even if he had them, men of this kind are so dreaded that people would not freely vote for him.

Furthermore, a dictator was appointed for a limited time, and for the purpose of dealing solely with such matters as had led to the appointment. He had the authority to make what decisions he thought fit in order to meet a definite and urgent danger, and to do this without consultation; anyone he punished had no right of appeal. But he could do nothing to diminish the constitutional position of the government, as would have been the case if he could have taken away the authority vested in the senate or in the people, or have abolished the ancient institutions of the city and made new ones. Wherefore, in view of the short duration of the dictatorship, of the limited authority which the dictator possessed, and of the fact that the Roman people were not corrupt, it was impossible for the dictator to overstep his terms of reference and to do the state harm. 23

Machiavelli states that the dictator "acquired the more fame the sooner he resigned," (I. 30, 186) exemplified in Camillus, who never abused his power and authority, "having thrice been dictator [and who] always administered that
office to the benefit of the public, not in his own inter-
ests." (III. 30, 485) As mentioned above, it was not the
title of dictator but the length of office that lead to
tyranny. (I. 34, 193-4)

In Machiavelli's discourse on religion (I. 12,
pp. 143-46), in which he boldly criticizes the Roman Church
as a cause of Italy's decline because it contributed to
corruption by neglecting divine worship, and because the
Church "keeps Italy divided," (I. 12, 142-3) he does suggest
the need for some form of unity in Italy; "Now of a truth no
country has ever been united and happy unless the whole of
it has been under the jurisdiction of one republic or one
prince, as has happened to France and Spain." (I. 12, 145)
Although his preference was always for republics, he admired
the kingdom of France in which "the kings are pledged to ob-
serve numerous laws," (I. 16, 156-7) "maintained by parlia-
ments" which renovate the laws and institutions "whenever it
takes action against a prince of this realm or in its judge-
ments condemns the king." (III. 1, 389-90)

Further, he states that the Church has had neither the
"power" nor the "virtue" to enable it "to usurp power in
Italy and become its leader," (I. 12, 145) despite its
efforts to the contrary, for, in Machiavelli's time, the
great usurpers streamed out of the vatican, and the term
"leader," as a designation of power, reflects restraint (if
not humor) on Machiavelli's part. The Church is the "cause
why Italy has never come under one head, but has been under many princes and signori," bringing "disunion" and "weakness, thus becoming "prey" of anyone who attacks it, for which our Italians have to thank the Church and nobody else," yet another reference to the need for some form of sole authority. (I. 12, 144-5)

In none of the above instances however does Machiavelli call for a tyrant, despot, or autocrat to fulfill that need, nor would he. Even when he refers to the Church and its inability to "usurp power in Italy," the end he states is leadership, not acquisition of the peninsula in the grip of tyranny. In fact, Machiavelli closes this discourse with praise for the Swiss religious and military "institutions," which he suggests would be ruined if the Vatican relocated in their midst.

Despite Machiavelli's charges against the Church, however, in the Prince he appeals to the vatican to unite Italy, for the power he hoped would accrue to Giuliano and then Lorenzo did not reflect their potential, but that of Pope Leo as head of the Church, and that potential did not promise the end of peace and security, but disunity, chaos, and power,—precisely as the Borgia had attempted, although the short life of popes promised almost no hope for success. Without the wealth and power of the Church to assist him, a fledgling prince had little hope to triumph, as the major powers in Italy would move against him, most especially--as
Machiavelli remarks in the *Discourses*—the Church, which was never "so weak that it could not, when afraid of losing its dominion over things temporal, call upon one of the powers to defend it against an Italian state that had become too powerful." (I. 12, 156)

In the *Prince*, then, Machiavelli calls upon the Church to promote the rise of a power in Italy, which would not benefit the Church, however, although greatness would redound to "the Church," (Ch. 11, 47) but the new prince as beneficiary of papal nepotism—the acquisition of a Medici principality. And if the precepts in the *Prince* are followed by the new prince, the end Machiavelli calls for in Chapter Twenty-six would result in "a bad form of government" (III. 8, 429) rather than liberty and freedom, as suggested in the notion of freeing Italy "from the barbarians." (Ch. 26, 101)

Reality, and the imagination of it, is expressed in the notion of what is and what should be, or ought to be, by Machiavelli, as when he states, "it is so far from how one lives to how one should live that he who lets go of what is done for what should be done learns his ruin rather than his preservation." (Ch. 15, 61) The 'is' and the 'ought', so to speak, form a basis for comedy in which the degree of humor achieved resides in the amount of distortion the satirist creates between the ideal and the reality, between what should be, as given in custom, tradition, education, and
sensibility, and what is presented as reality, which is the property of the satirist in any case. Machiavelli used the 'is' and the 'ought' as a device in his comedies, what Douglas Radcliff-Umstead refers to as the application of "the same effective truth... about how people really do live, not how they ought to live," which succeeds as comedy because how the characters behave proceeds against an understanding, on the part of the audience, of how they should behave. In his farcical and comic play, Mandragola, Machiavelli satirized the "foibles and baseness of Italian Society," mirrored in such characters as "a doleful lover, a judge by no means shrewd, a friar living wickedly, a parasite the darling of malice [who] will be sport for you today."

As James B. Atkinson observed, Machiavelli "seized upon comedy as a useful tool for hammering out his political message so that it reached a more immediate audience... like Aristophanes, Machiavelli unsettles his audience with incongruity, distortion, and other techniques bordering on the grotesque." In the Prince, Machiavelli's clever manipulation of the notion of what is and what ought to be forms the lifeblood of his satire, given full reign in Chapters Fifteen through Eighteen. "Wit has its eyes glued on reality. It distinguishes, it makes invidious comparisons... wit strips away flattering disguises and checks the poor, naked anatomy that remains," fully exposed by Machiavelli in his archetypal new prince, who is not new in the sense that
Machiavelli invented him, but in the sense that he personifies the modern princes as opposed to those of antiquity. Like Tacitus, Machiavelli uses "irony" to "contrast the appearances of public life with the underlying realities of power, and a deliberate cultivation of ambiguity."\(^{31}\) Machiavelli recommends that the prince "needs to have a spirit disposed to change as the winds of fortune and variations of things command him, as I have said above, not depart from good, when possible, but know how to enter into evil, when forced by necessity," (Ch. 18, 70) in which case evil is still evil and good is still good. Yet, he also states, "if one considers everything well, one will find something appears to be virtue, which if pursued would be one's ruin, and something else appears to be vice, which if pursued results in security and well being," (Ch. 15, 62) and by his application of the word "appears," vice and virtue become conditional entities, necessity becomes the operative, and, as Mark Hulliung remarks, Machiavelli creates "a transvaluation of values, in which what had been called virtue--Christian and stoic virtue--is henceforth deemed corruption, and what has been considered vice--Machiavellian politics--becomes virtue."\(^{32}\)

In Machiavelli's pairing of those qualities that "all men," but "especially princes, since they are placed higher," are deserving of "blame or praise," (Ch. 15, 61) one finds that it is impossible to generate a listing of them
Machiavelli was a clear and logical thinker. Yet, in his haphazard ordering of the paired qualities in the text (and one need not organize it into columns to recognize it), it is impossible to discover what he considered "of the above mentioned qualities" to be those "that are held good," (Ch. 15, 62) or deserving of blame. As he remarks in the Discourses, "So that this is just one of those things in which evil is so closely associated with good, and so bound up are they one with the other, that it may easily happen that he who thinks he will get one, gets the other."

(Machiavelli's satire in the Prince attacks what passes for virtue or, as Edgar Johnson says of satire in general, "foolishness" that passes for "sense:"33

But satire everywhere attacks evil arrogant and triumphant, pride victorious
and riding for a fall. It attacks those conventional respectabilities which are really hidden absurdities or vices blindly accepted by thoughtlessness, habit, or social custom. It attacks... stuffed shirts, hypocrisies aping merit... counterfeit passing for true. The merely foolish, satire may be content to take down a peg or two; the dangerous and vicious it would reduce to ruin... the ugliness revealed in its true colors has masqueraded as merit.

The vices that call for the scourge of satire, observes Sylvan Forester in Melincourt, "are those which pervade the whole frame of society, and which under some specious pretense of private duty, or the sanction of custom and precedent, are almost permitted to assume the semblance of virtue, or at least to pass unstigmatized in the crowd of congenial transgressions."

The elements of satire discussed above are appropriate to the Prince in many respects. Machiavelli not only gives vice "the semblance of virtue," but attempts to justify it in the "specious pretense of private duty," in his call to the Medici to save Italy. His intent, however, was not to establish the Medici as tyrants in Italy, but to warn against the threat of tyranny. Just as Rome "sunk under tyranny, having lost her virtue," Machiavelli thought Italy was doomed as well, owing to the currents of corruption.

Because the Prince was not recognized as satire, it is not surprising that it created such a scandal. "The horror with which plain citizens heard of his counsels is suggested by the fact that 'Old Nick', though already a familiar alias for the devil, came to be associated with his name; that The
Prince was called the Devil's Catechism or the Ten Commandments Reversed,\(^{36}\) and their horror was justified if they were among the faithful who observed the teachings of the Bible; "woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter,"\(^{37}\) a verse that Machiavelli himself was probably familiar with. Those citizens might have been less horrified if they knew the Prince was a satire, but his irreverence would likely have been appalling to them nonetheless.

Much has been written about Machiavelli's concept of virtue: whether pagan or Christian, civic or military, ancient or modern. The difficulty arises primarily from his writing in the Prince, in which he departs from his defense of liberty in the Discourses and the History. Everything is made new or "afresh," patterned on his advice in the Discourses that "he who proposes to set up a despotism or what writers call a 'tyranny', must renovate everything," (I. 25, 176) and "leave nothing of that province intact, and nothing in it, neither rank, nor institution, nor form of government, nor wealth, except it be held by such as recognize that it comes from you." (I. 26, 177) Therefore, while in republics the purpose of renovation is to restore the government to its "original principles," (III. 1, 385-6) in reference to tyranny, Machiavelli recommends renovation by obliteration.

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Virtue is reflected in the traditional values Machiavelli associates with republican government in the *Discourses*, while in the *Prince*, he reverses himself to accommodate the necessities of tyrannical rule. The only conceivable bridge between the two works, that could be said to harmonize with his democratic principles, is the notion that in defense of liberty and for the preservation of a free city or state, the end justifies the means, as I discussed above. In that context, the lessons he gives the new prince should be observed by those that would defend their freedom, the threat of tyranny personified in the new prince himself. Beyond that consideration, however, any attempt to justify his transvaluation of vice and virtue in the *Prince* is fundamentally flawed, because there is no justification for the precepts of the *Prince* in his political theory, as expressed in his other major works. As he states in Chapter Eighteen, "in the actions of all men, and especially of princes, where there is no court to appeal to, one looks to the end," (Ch. 18, 71) and in the minds of modern and corrupt princes, it mattered little whether or not the end was justified.

In persuading the new prince to pursue the path of vice, and thus to let go "of what should be done" for what "is done" (Ch. 15, 61) Machiavelli seems to make the worse argument appear the better, a technique that originated with the sophists; a form of rhetoric (forensic) utilized in the
art of persuasion. As a humanist scholar of antiquity, Machiavelli would have been familiar with the sophists and their arguments from the "antithesis of Nature and Convention as moral authorities:

Among the most significant thinkers of the fifth century B.C. were the traveling lecturers known as sophists. They were primarily teachers of political excellence whose aims were practical and immediate and whose investigations led in many cases to a philosophical relativism. Of these, Protagorus is the best example. To him absolute truth was unknowable and perhaps nonexistent. Man is the measure of all things... and truth must be approximated in each individual time and place somewhat in the manner that the just is determined in a court of law. In this process, rhetoric is useful and legitimate, for only when two sides are persuasively presented can the choice between them be clearly perceived and intelligently made. Similarly, in political life no universal principles can be accepted. Courses of action must be determined between alternatives presented in persuasive fashion.

Protagarus was the "originator of the Doctrine of Two Logics (or Antilogoi)," the "so called Just (or Major or Better) Logic and the Unjust (or Minor or Weaker) Logic." The Just is represented in "Nomos, with honor as its reward... [nomos] represents the ideal for man," that which is given in law, custom, and tradition. The Unjust is represented in "Physis... acts from motives of self-interest." "Physis, or nature" is thus antithetical to "nomos, or law and custom."
In his comedy, *The Clouds*, Aristophanes creates a "formal debate, between the Just and Unjust Discourses," in which, as Lois Spatz explains, the "Unjust Discourse is certain that he can manipulate the audience because they are fools," while the "Just Discourse [relies] on the truth, assuming the audience wise enough to discern it. He, of course, believes that absolute truth and justice exist, established by the gods as standards by which man is judged and gains honor... the Unjust Discourse denies the existence of any such standard." Aristophanes thus used the "Doctrine of the Two Logics" for comic effect. As William Arrowsmith remarks, Aristophane's *Logos is not logic but a prelogical discourse of the whole human reason," and, therefore, "the Just argument is helpless against his opponent. His case cannot be expressed logically, and yet it remains rational." Further, "for Aristophanes the antilogoi are transparent sophistry, humbug on a huge scale, and he accordingly makes the debate between the two Logoi the climax of his comedy."^46

Although Machiavelli was familiar with Aristophanes' *The Clouds*, as I mentioned above, and wrote a play in imitation of it, "Le Mechere* (The Masks),^47 one can only speculate concerning the influence Aristophanes' comedy may have had on Machiavelli, with regard to the Just and Unjust arguments that seem apparent to me, in the *Prince*. I have referred to Aristophanes' comedy, however, to introduce the
dynamics of making the worse argument appear the better, and
to make the point that using the antilogoi for comic effect
had a precedent in at least one work that is associated with
Machiavelli.

Machiavelli discusses liberality and its contrary,
mean, in Chapter Sixteen, the first of those qualities he
listed in the eleven pairs of contraries in the previous
chapter. As he explains, "someone is considered liberal,
someone mean (using a Tuscan term because avaro [greedy] in
our language is still one who desires to have something by
violence, miserо [[mean]] we call one who refrains too much
from using what is his." (Ch. 15, 61)

Liberality is a virtue that received considerable at-
tention from the humanists. "The subject of princely vir-
tues" was important to them "as formulated in the medieval
mirror of princes," and "by confining themselves to the com-
position of catalogues of virtues, the writers could pattern
themselves closely on ancient models and adopt schemes pro-
vided by Aristotle in the Nicomachean ethics or by Cicero in
De Officiis... under this influence the humanist catalogue
of virtues took on a new aspect and came to differ from
those of the middle ages. Purely worldly virtues took their
place beside the religious ones and even superseded them in
the degree of interest they aroused... those worldly virtues
were considered purely from the point of view of their ef-
fec t, their advantages or disadvantages being exactly
weighed. This is particularly true of liberalitas, which
was now regarded as a means of consolidating the position of
the ruler."48

Machiavelli conforms to the humanist notion of liberal-
ity as a useful "means of consolidating the power of a
ruler," in his discourse, but he distorts the issue by
recommending means that disregard the public welfare and
favors, instead, the greed and avarice of an ambitious
prince. The intended "effect," to be sure, was not in
harmony with Renaissance expectations of ruling power, which
he must have known would lead to reasoned objections, par-
ticularly as he departed from broad generalizations in his
discourse, and began to focus on specific virtues that in-
vited the scrutiny of centuries of scholarship. His de-
fense, however (should he need one), lay in present neces-
sity, grounded in the notion of effectual truth or political
reality that he offers in Chapter Fifteen. Therefore, even
though it is clear from the Discourses that Machiavelli
praised ancient virtue and deplored modern vices,49 he freed
himself, in a sense, to treat liberality (and the other vir-
tues) in a manner that reflects his satirical malice. In
the court of public opinion Machiavelli might be thought
perverse, but it would have been difficult for his adversar-
ies, such as the Medici, to charge him with sedition, howev-
er transparent his mask of innocence.

Aristotle "defined virtue as a habitual moderation,
that is to say, the habitual avoidance of extreme modes of conduct. Extremes are always evil, while virtue is a mean between extremes. Aristotle’s definition of virtue and its associated vices provides the insight for understanding the method Machiavelli used to develop his arguments in such a way that vice is given the appearance of virtue. In Aristotle’s listing of "twelve important virtues," liberality, for example, appears as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vice of Deficiency</th>
<th>Virtue of Moderation</th>
<th>Vice of Excess</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illiberality</td>
<td>Liberality</td>
<td>Prodigality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Machiavelli did not adhere to Aristotle’s labeling of the virtues and associated vices, when they were the same or similar. Rather, he gives his own interpretation. Thus, while Aristotle labels mean as an associate vice of the virtue magnificence, Machiavelli pairs mean with the virtue liberal, which may or may not have relevance to his satire. The important point to consider, however, is Aristotle’s definition of virtue as "habitual moderation," the mean between the vices of excess and deficiency, which reflects three aspects of each quality. In his eleven pairs of contraries, Machiavelli only includes two aspects. By excluding one of the associated vices, for example, it becomes a free agent, so to speak, which he thus incorporates into his argument as part of his strategy. To illustrate the point,
Machiavelli excludes the vice of excess in his pairing of liberal and mean:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vice of Deficiency</th>
<th>Virtue of Moderation</th>
<th>Vice of Excess</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>[Not Represented]</td>
</tr>
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As Machiavelli develops his argument regarding liberality, however, it becomes clear that it is grounded solely in the extremes of deficiency and excess. He deceptively introduces the vice of excess into his argument, and it is that vice (and not the virtue of moderation) that is used to rationalize the necessity for adopting the vice of deficiency, meanness. The virtue of moderation is thus excluded, and the contraries are redefined, from moderation-deficiency to excess-deficiency. The thrust of Machiavelli's argument, then, is predicated on relevance to political expedience and necessity, or physis, the Unjust. Nomos, represented in the virtue of moderation, retains its original quality. The vice of deficiency triumphs over the vice of excess and, as such, is given the appearance of virtue. In fact, Machiavelli has merely chosen the greater of two evils, that which affords the greatest utility for the prince. Machiavelli begins by stating the Just argument, followed by the Unjust:

Beginning, then, with the first of the above mentioned qualities, I say that it would be good to be held liberal; none
theless, liberality, when used so that you may be held liberal, harms you. For if it is used virtuously and as it should be used, it may not be recognized, and you will not escape the infamy of its contrary. (Ch. 16, 62)

When Machiavelli states that "it would be good to be held liberal," he reflects the time-honored standard of liberality passed on from antiquity in custom, tradition, and education; the Just. He never defends it, however, as a viable option for the prince.

With the phrase, "nonetheless," he introduces the Unjust argument, which redefines the contraries; "nonetheless, liberality when used so that you may be held liberal, harms you." To suggest that liberality be used for the purpose of being held liberal imputes ulterior motives to one's actions. In the following sentence, he identifies the motive as recognition; "For if it is used virtuously and as it should be used, it may not be recognized...," which is to say, one will not acquire a reputation for liberality, if it is used moderately. If liberality is used extravagantly, however, it will be recognized, not just among the few, but the many; "And so, if one wants to maintain a name for liberality among men, it is necessary not to leave out any kind of lavish display...," (Ch. 16, 63) a statement that clearly defines the vice of excess. The original notion of being held liberal, as stated by Machiavelli, "I say that it would be good to be held liberal," has been corrupted by his introduction of the word used. As a consequence, the virtue
of moderation (deserving of praise) has been replaced by the vice of excess (deserving of blame), and the transition is clear even before he elaborates on "lavish display;" "For if it is used virtuously and as it should be used, it may not be recognized, and you will not escape the infamy of its contrary." In the first place, it is a false claim to state that if liberality is used virtuously (that is, in habitual moderation, the defining quality of virtue), one will incur the "infamy" of meanness, the "contrary." Had he stated, "For if it is used virtuously and as it should be used, you will not escape the infamy of its contrary," one can see how foolish the statement is, for in that case, one is virtuous and, at the same time, mean. By adding "it may not be recognized," however, meanness (the contrary) becomes contingent upon recognition, and the argument is altered to reflect the extremes of the associated vices, excess and deficiency. The virtue of moderation is replaced by the vice of excess.

Machiavelli assails excess when he states that it is "liberality when used so that you may be held liberal" that "harms you," in the desire for reputation. He continues his attack in the notion of "lavish display." The prince will "consume" all of his recourses "in such deeds." It will be "necessary" to "burden the people extraordinarily," to resort to "taxes," and "do all those things that can be done to get money." As a result, the prince becomes "hated by
his subjects," who will "esteem" him "little" as he becomes "poor." (Ch. 16, 63)

The notion that excessive use of liberality will lead to hatred of the prince allows Machiavelli to move toward his advocacy of the vice of deficiency in his argument. "Thus, since a prince cannot, without damage to himself, use the virtue of liberality so that it is recognized, he should not, if he is prudent, care about a name for meanness." (Ch. 16, 63) The virtue of liberality is again misrepresented as the vice of excess in this statement, with the words use and recognize. Machiavelli reasons that the prince should be reluctant to use his own resources, and "spend," rather, "from what belongs to someone else," in which case, "he should not leave out any part of liberality [excess]." (Ch. 16, 64) That is, "Either the prince spends from what is his own and his subjects, or from what belongs to someone else." (Ch. 16, 64) Machiavelli makes a distinction between what belongs to the prince and his subjects, and what belongs to someone else, but it should be understood that his intent was to make the point that the wealth of the people belongs to the prince, which constitutes the wealth of someone else as well. He excludes the wealth of the people as using someone elses, but his examples of Julius II and King Ferdinand dispel that notion.

Pope Julius II, Machiavelli observes, "while he made use of a name for liberality to attain the papacy, [he] did
not think of maintaining it later, so as to be able to make war," an example of a "mean" prince, who "will always be held more and more liberal when it is seen that with his parsimony his income is enough for him, that he can defend himself from whoever makes war on him, and that he can undertake campaigns without burdening the people." (Ch. 16, 63) Julius' "income," however, was the wealth of the Church, which he plundered to conduct his enterprises, wealth that belonged to the institution of the Church, comprised of the people over whom the pope presided as prince; his subjects, so to speak. Julius also used the wealth of someone else in another sense, the spoils of a conqueror. Julius "dispossessed Cesare... appropriating [his] conquests for himself and the papacy," a fact that may also clarify the reference Machiavelli makes to Julius in Chapter Eleven; "Julius found the path still open to a mode of accumulating money, never used before Alexander," (Ch. 11, 47) a comic portrayal of Cesare’s demise and the vengeance of Julius.

King Ferdinand of Spain offers the best evidence for satirical malice, however, among the examples given by Machiavelli for meanness. He comments that if Ferdinand "had been liberal, he would not have been able to make war or win so many campaigns." (Ch. 16, 64) Although Spain was generating wealth as the result of exploration in the new world, in the context of using someone else’s, Machiavelli’s
intent was to demonstrate, by Ferdinand's example, the plunder of one's own subjects. And while he goes on to elaborate on his enterprises, "he has always done and ordered great things, which have always kept the minds of his subjects in suspense and admiration, and occupied with the outcome," one can interpret his meaning as reflective of the "Marranos" specifically rather than the general population, in which case his statement reeks of sarcastic venom.

Machiavelli also includes the example of King Louis XII of France, who was "publically ridiculed for his economy," as Allan Gilbert observes in his notes to the Prince. Machiavelli makes the point that "the present king of France carried on many wars without imposing an extraordinary tax on his subjects, because the extra expenses were administered with his long practiced parsimony." (h. 16, 63-4)

Perhaps the king's parsimony was facilitated by the fact that Italy was "taken as booty by Louis," as stated by Machiavelli in Chapter Twelve, which shows the effects of using someone else's from the perspective of the exploited. Machiavelli's mention of Louis reminds one of his predecessor, King Charles VIII, an example that had particular significance for the Florentines. In the Discourses, Machiavelli states, "In regard to untrustworthiness, for instance, everybody knows how often money was given to King Charles VIII, and how he promised to restore the fortresses of Pisa and never did so; whereby this king displayed alike
his untrustworthiness and no small avarice." (III. 43, 518) Machiavelli's recommendation that a prince use someone else's gives tacit approval to the means used by King Charles (as well as Louis), which would not have pleased the Florentines.

In defense of the vice of deficiency, then, Machiavelli states, "Therefore, so as not to have to rob his subjects, to be able to defend himself, not to become poor and contemptible, nor to be forced to be rapacious, a prince should esteem it little, to incur a name for meanness, because this is one of those vices that will enable him to rule." (Ch. 16, 64) It would be difficult to find a more rapacious prince than King Ferdinand, however. Nor could Julius have conducted his enterprises, in regaining the papal states, without using the wealth of his flock. And although Machiavelli only refers to one pope, Julius, the recommendation that one should use the wealth of others extends to the simony and nepotism of his predecessors, especially Alexander VI, and excuses their immoral and venal practices.

Further, the issue of being "able to defend himself" is not the issue. Rather, in the examples of Pope Julius, Louis XII, King Ferdinand and Julius Caesar, (Ch. 16, 64) the issue is making war on others, the great campaigns and enterprises that give reputation to the prince, and bring disorder and chaos to the people. Most certainly Machiavelli had the Catholic king in mind when he mentions
"a certain prince of present times, whom it is not well to name, never preaches anything but peace and faith, and is very hostile to both."  

Although Machiavelli argued against the use of liberality for the purpose of acquiring reputation, because all of one's resources are used in doing so, he concludes that "when you are on the path" to becoming prince, "it is indeed necessary to be held liberal" (Ch. 16, 64) This is true, of course, because it is the method by which an aspiring prince earns the reputation that elevates him above the rank of his fellow citizens, and by which he gains power through his influence, and followers who become his partisans. Machiavelli deplored such men and their methods as anathema to his republican principles. Their excessive liberality hastened the process of corruption and decline in a republic which in turn made the rise of a prince possible, and threatened the destruction of freedom and liberty. A case in point is Lorenzo the Magnificent, and in his example one discovers that even when one's wealth has been consumed, the way is open to using that of the public coffers, that which belongs to the people, nor do such means lead to hatred and low esteem. Quite the contrary.

In his *History of Florence*, Francesco Guicciardini remarks that Lorenzo, who used his liberality to "gain him the goodwill of the great," spent lavishly while his income "diminished." He "knew nothing about business and paid
little attention to it, so that his affairs on many occasions fell into such disorder that he was on the point of bankruptcy and had to fall back on his friend's money and on public funds." Further, in financing the war in 1478, "he arranged that the soldiers be paid by the Bartolini bank in which he had shares. By his orders, they held back in their payments about eight percent, which was to the detriment of the commune since the condottieri keeps so many fewer men and the commune had to pay for extra commissions. At other times, too, he used public funds to supply his own needs."\(^{57}\) When Lorenzo died, there was "great sorrow" among the people, "especially" the "lower classes" who were always kept by him in abundance, with many pleasures, entertainments, and feasts," although, as Guicciardini remarks, "those who were repressed were glad when he died."\(^{58}\)

Christopher Hibbert also faults Lorenzo's character and use of public funds; "Refusing as always to allow moral scruples to inhibit political or personal ambition, he did not hesitate to delay that ruin by dipping his hands into funds that did not belong to him... [he] helped himself to money from the public treasury. After his death his heirs were held responsible for the return of almost 75,000 florins which had been withdrawn without the sanction of any law and without authority, to the damage and prejudice of the commune."\(^{59}\)

Despite his abuse of privilege and power, however,
Lorenzo was by no means universally despised for his actions. The many benefitted from his extravagance, and as he controlled the government of Florence, the few who might have raised objections had no recourse for their grievances. In fact, the Medici were perhaps the most esteemed family in Italy, and certainly so, in Florence.

Machiavelli does not raise the issue, however, of where an aspiring prince might turn when his resources are depleted, certainly an important issue for one who is on the "path" and who must rely on his own wealth. This omission is significant because Machiavelli could not have addressed it without drawing attention to the Medici, his intended target. But the implications are there if one reads the discourse carefully, and if a powerful citizen could rob the people in a republic with impunity, how much greater the opportunity to rob his subjects, should he become a tyrannical prince, particularly when he views their wealth as his own. This is the comic truth, the political reality that underlies his recommendation that the prince use someone else's money although it is hidden by the connotation he gives to using someone else's—as the spoils of acquisitions, in empire. In the latter sense, one can compare Cesare Borgia or Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici to the examples given by Machiavelli, "of Cyrus, Caesar, and Alexander," (Ch. 16, 64) who were very liberal with someone else's—a comparison that invites profound ridicule of the
modern princes and their aspirations.

With the introduction of the qualities "giver" and "rapacious," Machiavelli advises the prince to indulge in the vice of excess, but with the wealth of someone else, which conforms, rather, to the vice of deficiency—a ironic twist in his argument that can be demonstrated by returning to the earlier model (see Figure 1):

Figure 1: Liberal and Mean
The model illustrates the shift in Machiavelli’s argument, as the vice of excess takes the place of the virtue of moderation, and thus the contraries are redefined to reflect the associated vices; virtue is no longer represented. "Giver" and "rapacious," the second pair of contraries listed in Chapter Fifteen (Ch. 15, 61), conform in substance, as defined by Machiavelli in Chapter Sixteen, to the vice of deficiency and thus, by definition, neither quality represents a virtue. (Ch. 16, 64) "Giver" represents excess, but with the use of someone else’s wealth.

Further, Machiavelli represents giver as one who also takes, and rapacious as one who also gives. That is, he defines "giver" in the following manner; "And of what is not yours or your subject’s one can be a bigger giver, as were Cyrus, Caesar, and Alexander, because spending what is someone else’s does not take reputation from you but adds it to you; only spending your own is what hurts you."

And in reference to what qualifies as rapacious, Machiavelli advises, "And for the prince who goes out with his armies, who feeds on booty, pillage, and ransom and manages on what belongs to someone else, this liberality is necessary; otherwise he would not be followed by his soldiers." (Ch. 16, 64) On the surface, Machiavelli’s argument appears logical and compelling, but we should not be fooled by appearances as Machiavelli intended that the new prince be deceived in his little work.
The notion that a prince will only be followed if his soldiers are allowed to pillage and plunder is a significant marker for satire, for Machiavelli thus describes a prince who either lacks discipline and authority, or one who is so poor he cannot afford to pay them by any other means. It should be noted that in the Discourses, Machiavelli praises the Roman practice of paying their soldiers, which redounded to the public benefit. Because they were paid, the Consuls were not as generous with them concerning booty. "They thought it a good plan that the public should benefit by it, so that they would not have to tax the city to pay for their enterprises. In a very short time, this made the treasury very rich." (II. 6, 293) This seems good advice for a prince, especially one whom Machiavelli has counseled to take no art but the art of war--were it not for the fact that it is not in the best interest of a tyrannical prince to consider the public good.

Despite the fact that Machiavelli condoned rapacious behavior as a necessary mode of liberality, as in the example of the military above, he condemns having "a name for rapacity" in his conclusion. "So there is more wisdom in maintaining a name for meanness, which begets infamy without hatred, than in being under the necessity, because one wants to have a name for liberality, to incur a name for rapacity, which begets infamy with hatred." (Ch. 16, 65) In either case, Machiavelli only represents the associated vices.
Moderation, as a matter of policy and good governance, is never considered in this discourse. The Unjust argument was destined to triumph from the beginning, for no matter which vice Machiavelli preferred, utility for the prince, *physis*, was his sole consideration, grounded in his argument which deliberated the advantages or disadvantages of either vice. Vice has not become virtue, however, nor has virtue become vice. Machiavelli has merely condoned vice, the vice of deficiency deemed more efficable for an established prince, and the vice of excess favorable and necessary when on the path to becoming prince.

Machiavelli did not intend to instruct the modern prince with his advice concerning liberality, or the "effectual truth of the thing." (Ch. 15, 61) Rather, in their actions and character, the modern princes instructed him and he, in turn, as a servant of the public good, took it upon himself to share his knowledge with others in the hope that in doing so, he might inspire a desire for reform. The Medici could not have been pleased to find their excessive liberality exposed as a means to an end, and detrimental to the greater good of Florence. How fortunate then, for them, that his message was drowned in a flood of damnation against which he could never defend himself without admitting the true nature of the *Prince*—and that it was dedicated to the oppressed rather than their oppressors—a revelation that would have held the promise of dire consequences for the
former statesman of Florence.

Machiavelli used a similar methodology in his treatment of the contraries cruelty and mercy, in Chapter Seventeen. Cruelty represents the vice of deficiency, and mercy, the virtue of moderation. As in the previous example of liberal and mean, the vice of excess is not represented. He begins by stating the Just argument:

Descending next to the other qualities set forth before, I say that each prince should desire to be held merciful and not cruel. (Ch. 17, 65)

Machiavelli probably intended that his reference to "descending" have a double meaning. He is, of course, descending down the list of paired contraries given in Chapter Fifteen. At the same time, however, he is also descending further into that evil that earned him the title of "Old Nick," an unrepentant evil that masqueraded as virtuous conduct, clothed in verbal irony, including "absurd suggestions made with apparent sincerity," as "praise of harmful things under the pretext that they are good."

As in the previous chapter, the Just argument is never elaborated or defended. In the examples of Manlius Torquatus and Valerius Corvinus from the Discourses, however, Machiavelli amplifies his views of mercy and harshness with regard to princes and republics. Manlius and Valerius were both successful generals, but proceeded by different means. Manlius used "severity," while Valerius was consid-
erate and "homely." Of Manlius, Machiavelli concludes:

For a citizen who is living under the laws of a republic, I think it more praiseworthy and less dangerous to adopt the procedure of Manlius, since this way of behaving was entirely in the public interest, and was in no way affected by private ambition, for it is impossible to gain partisans if one is harsh in one's dealings with everybody and wholly devoted to the common good, because by doing this one does not acquire particular friends or—as I have just called them--partisans. Wherefore, than such a procedure none can be more advantageous or more desirable in a republic, since it neither fails to take account of the interests of the public nor does it suggest that personal power is in any way being sought. (III. 22, 469)

Of Valerius, however, Machiavelli cautions that such generals who gain the "goodwill of the troops" in a republic, especially if he "should retain his command for long" may, in its effects, "be prejudicial to liberty" (as was the case with Julius Caesar). Although for these reasons Machiavelli finds the modes of Valerius inappropriate in a republic, he finds them desirable in a prince:

But if one takes the case of a prince, which is the case Xenophon is considering, we should have to decide wholly with Valerius and to discard Manlius. For a prince should seek to gain the obedience and affection of his soldiers and of his subjects; their obedience by his fidelity to the constitution and by the reputation he has for virtue; their affection by his affability, kindliness, compassion, and the other qualities for which Valerius was conspicuous; and Cyrus also, so Xenophon tells us. For that a prince should be well liked by each of his subjects and should have a
devoted army, is in conformity with other features appertaining to his princely status. (III. 22, 470)

Machiavelli concludes that the method used by Valerius, if used by a private citizen, "prepares the way for tyranny," while the behavior of Manlius "in a prince," is "harmful," (although he does not elaborate). (III. 22, 470-1)

In considering the qualities of cruelty and mercy in the *Prince*, however, Machiavelli offers advice that contradicts that given in the *Discourses*. The modes of Manlius, severe and "harsh," are favored in the new prince rather than the "affection," "kindliness," and "compassion" displayed by Valerius—which he praised as the qualities a prince should have. The untrustworthiness of his argument in the *Prince*, then, can be inferred both on the basis of that contradiction and the devices he employs in the argument itself, the *Unjust*, in which, as in the previous chapter, he redefines the contraries.

Having stated that "each prince should desire to be held merciful and not cruel," he continues:

Nonetheless, he should take care not to use this mercy badly. Cesare Borgia was held to be cruel; nonetheless his cruelty restored the Romagna, united it, and reduced it to peace and to faith. If one considers this well, one will see that he was much more merciful than the Florentine people, who so as to escape a name for cruelty, allowed Pistoia to be destroyed. A prince, therefore, so as to keep his subjects united and faithful, should not care about the infamy of cruelty, because with very few examples
he will be more merciful than those who for the sake of too much mercy allow disorders to continue, from which come killings or robberies, for these customarily harm a whole community, but the executions that come from a prince harm one particular individual. And of all princes, it is impossible for a new prince to escape a name for cruelty, because new states are full of dangers. (Ch. 17, 65-6)

In the notion that a prince should "not use this mercy badly," badly is defined as "too much mercy," which represents the vice of excess. Cruelty, the vice of deficiency, is thus deemed "more merciful." The mean (the virtue of moderation represented as mercy) is excluded from the debate and, as in the previous chapter, the contraries have been re-defined, from moderation-deficiency to excess-deficiency. Ironically, "more" (excess) is also reflected in the less (deficiency) side of the argument, demonstrated by Machiavelli in the notion that a prince will "be held more and more liberal" when he practices "parsimony," as well, in the previous chapter. (Ch. 16, 63) There are, then, both intriguing and comic aspects to his Unjust arguments.

Machiavelli targets Cesare Borgia, in Chapter Seventeen, to satirize Borgia's cruelty and the cruel nature of a tyrannical prince. As I mentioned above, Garrett Mattingly challenged Machiavelli's assumption that Cesare's "cruelty restored the Romagna" and "united it." Machiavelli "never mentions these statesmanlike achievements" in his reports from Borgia's camp, "nor do any of the other reports from
observers in the area, Spanish, French, Venetians, Sienese; nor do any other contemporary sources. All the indications are quite the contrary... the duke did nothing to end factional strife and anarchy in the Romagna; he merely superimposed the brutal rule of his Spanish captains on top of it." Mattingly's conclusion is supported by the fact that Cesare's so-called unified state rapidly disintegrated with the death of Alexander VI.

Further, Machiavelli's assertion that Cesare "reduced [the Romagna] to peace and faith" is a questionable statement. One might say that order is reduced to chaos or that good is reduced to evil, but it seems inappropriate in the sixteenth century to refer to the population within the papal states as having been "reduced" to "faith." The Romagna was, of course, regained for the Church, but as Ferdinand Schevill says of Cesare's "brutal seizures and bloody conquests... in the course of little more than three years he succeeded in uprooting a score of petty tyrants planted in papal territory and in assembling his whirlwind gains into a single political unit. Technically, even after his conquests had been consolidated, they constituted not his personal realm but the state of the Church and owned the pope as their ruler. No one doubted, however, that [Cesare] was firmly resolved to keep as his property what he had seized, as it was universally assumed that the pope, his father, was so completely under the son's domination that he
was fully prepared to commit the monstrous felony of alienating the patrimony of St. Peter in order to supply his bastard with the territorial basis required for a self-perpetuating dynasty." By "reduced" to "faith," then, Machiavelli seems to convey the oblique nature of his conquests, relevant to the greater good of the Church, as a "rebel of Christ."  

Machiavelli refers to the "killings" that arise from "too much mercy" in the example of the Florentines, noting that "these customarily harm a whole community," while the "executions that come from a prince harm one particular person," suggesting that killing one particular person would have no such impact. The first "particular" person the tyrant must eliminate, however, is the head of state. Cesare was responsible for the murder of Astorre Manfredi of Foenza, Guilio Cesare Varano of Camerino, and prince Alfonso of Aragon, husband of Cesare's sister, Lucrezia, among others. Cesare was implicated in the death of his brother, Juan, whom the pope was excessively fond of, and wanted to "elevate... to the throne of Naples." His elimination of the Orsini and Colonna parties, praised by Machiavelli in Chapter Seven in reference to events in Sinigaglia, resulted in many murders, including "the tragic death of Cardinal Orsini." William Ebenstein remarks that, in addition to the assassination of Cesare's brother and his sister's husband, "the number of his other assassinations is 318
Machiavelli does not go directly to the issue of hate, as he did in Chapter Seven, when he stated that Remirro’s “past rigors had generated some hatred.” Rather, he directs our attention to love and fear, fear representing a response to cruelty that is less inciteful than hate, particularly when considered in the context of whether it is better for a prince to be loved or feared, a question that reflected the concerns of the ancients, the subject of long debate. He introduces the notion of fear with the phrase, “nonetheless,” which generally signals movement to, or within, the Unjust argument, although his statement has the appearance of returning to the Just, and moderation:

Nonetheless, he should be slow to believe and to move, nor should he create fear for himself, and he should proceed in a temperate mode with prudence and humanity so that too much diffidence does not render him intolerable. (Ch. 17, 66)

The prince should practice his cruelty with “humanity” (a contradiction in terms), being neither “too confident” (overbearing) or too “diffident” (hesitant) in proceeding. He should adopt a “temperate mode” (moderation), the mean between two extremes. Under cruelty (the vice of deficiency), then, Machiavelli has constructed the appearance of a
virtue and its associated vices. "Humanity" represents the virtue of moderation, while "too much confidence" (excess), and "diffidence" (deficiency) represent the associated vices. In the process, he has introduced the paired contraries, "humane" and "proud," given in Chapter Fifteen, (Ch. 15, 62) represented in "humanity" and "too much confidence," respectively. Combined with "diffidence," the three aspects thus appear to conform to Aristotle's model of virtue and its associated vices—but one should not be confused by this distortion, for all three aspects fall under the heading of vice, and there is no virtue in vice. (See Figure 2)

Nor was there anything humane in Cesare Borgia's actions. Rather, he was "universally feared," "hated" and "despised," as "pitiless as a beast of the jungle... prepared to go through fire and wade through blood to reach his goal."73

Indeed, Cesare Borgia had "created" inordinate "fear for himself," which Machiavelli never addresses. Rather, he moves from the specific example of Cesare's cruelty to the more general issue of "whether it is better to be loved than feared, or the reverse. The answer is that one would want to be both the one and the other; but because it is difficult to put them together, it is much safer to be feared than loved." (Ch. 17, 66) Machiavelli thus diverts attention away from Cesare (who is not mentioned again in this
chapter), for Machiavelli's answer contradicts that given by one ancient writer in particular, Cicero, who raised the same question in his De Officiis.

Figure 2: Cruelty and Mercy
Cicero maintained that "fear... is a poor safeguard."\(^7\)

"To banish fear and hold fast to love, Cicero had affirmed, offers the best means to maintain our influence over other people and our own safety at the same time. Machiavelli responds with a flat contradiction," in his statement that "it is much safer to be feared than loved." Further, "Cicero had gone on to add that there is no power so great that it can hope to last if it is upheld by fear (II. 7, 25). Machiavelli replies that, because men are in general so self-interested, they will break the bonds of love whenever they find it useful, whereas fear of punishment will always hold them effectively."\(^7\)

Innocent Gentillet, writing in the sixteenth century, argues that Machiavelli's position is "entirely erroneous, for there is nothing easier for a prince than to obtain them both [love and fear], as sound reason will attest," exemplified in "the good emperors of old, such as Augustus, Trajan, Hadrian, Antonius, and others, who were dreaded, loved, and revered all at the same time."\(^7\) Certainly Machiavelli's advice that it is "safer to be feared than loved" does not conform to his example of Valerius Corvinius in the Discourses, and if a prince should conduct himself in the manner of Valerius, which has the greater weight of his writings in support of it, the Prince has the appearance of an aberration, by design. His contradiction of Cicero was meant to be obvious; he makes a mockery of ancient wisdom

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and in so doing, apes the moderns who have no more regard for it than he himself displays. "For Cicero, the honestum, or the common good, and the utile, or individual interest, cannot conflict because man is a part of a larger social and moral whole, which makes radical individualism unacceptable as a basis for ethical action. In such cases where the two values appear to conflict, utility, to be sure, is the norm invoked to resolve the conflict. But it is utility on a social level, utilitus rei publicae," not that of the prince. Machiavelli's regard for physis, represented in "safety" or the security of the prince, thus refutes Cicero. Only in the Prince, however, does Machiavelli abandon the public welfare, which indeed must be the case when the advantage for the prince is the sole consideration.

The notion that "love is held by a chain of obligation, which, because men are wicked, is broken at every opportunity for their own utility, but fear is held by a dread of punishment that never forsakes you," (Ch. 17, 66-7) is defined by Innocent Gentillet as "a truly tyrannical precept," and one that is doomed to failure if Cicero is correct, in his belief that no power can last if "upheld by fear." Such a regime is predicated on mutual fear, however. The people fear the prince because he is a tyrant who has taken their liberty, and will "revolt" (Ch. 17, 66) whenever they have the opportunity. The tyrant fears the people, because he cannot give them their liberty and retain
his own power at the same time. Therefore, he is under the necessity to protect his own interests by every possible means. As Garrett Mattingly observes, Machiavelli seems to issue a warning to the prince, further elaborated in his remonstrance that the prince "should nonetheless make himself feared in such a mode that if he does not acquire love, he escapes hatred." (Ch. 17, 67)

A prince will avoid hatred if he "abstains from the property of his citizens and his subjects [a sovereign prince does not have citizens] and from their women, and if he also needs to proceed against someone's life, he must do it when there is suitable justification and manifest cause for it. But above all, he must abstain from the property of others, because men forget the death of a father more quickly than the loss of a patrimony." This would seem good advice for any ruler, but Machiavelli also uses the occasion to ridicule his model prince, Cesare Borgia, in his statement that "men forget the death of a father more quickly than the loss of a patrimony." While Pope Julius "was confiscating all the duke's possessions," Cesare met with Guidobaldo of Urbino at the Vatican, and uttered the following sentiments:

He made two extremely deep bows and laid the blame on his youth, the bad advice he had been given, the wicked deeds and totally perverted character of the pope, and all those who had encouraged him in the venture. He cursed his father's
memory. He promised to give back everything he had taken at Urbino... this was a strange sight for those who had known the arrogant Cesare in his time of triumph. But... he was preparing for the future, believing that fickle fate would allow him to return to power, perhaps with his former victim's help. This time he was mistaken; no one took him seriously.\(^3\)

Nor should one forget the example of Liverotto da Fermo, who turned on his adoptive father, Giovanni Fogliani, and had him killed in order to claim his patrimony. (Ch. 8, 35-7)

Such "epigrams [as] 'a man will forget the death of his father sooner than the loss of his patrimony'... all seem to come out of some sort of philosophical Grand Guignol and, like the savage ironies of Swift's *Modest Proposal*, are rendered the more spine chilling by the matter-of-fact tone in which they are uttered."\(^4\)

Cesare not only plundered the property of Guidobaldo of Urbino and countless others, he also had a reputation for violating women during his escapades as well. Caterina Sforza (of Forli and Imola) and her forces were attacked by Cesare at her fortress, "La Rocca." Caterina "was taken prisoner" to "the town of Forli," where "Cesare installed her in the same house as himself and treated her brutally, even, if the story is to be believed, forcing her to sleep with him... One of her partisans sent the pope a letter impregnated with poison. The plot was uncovered, the man
arrested, and he declared himself ready to lose his life if, in killing Alexander, he could save his native city and his princess.\(^\text{85}\) Cesare is described by Ivan Cloulas as an "unscrupulous seducer... refusing to let anything stand in the way of his enjoyment and pleasure."\(^\text{86}\) Machiavelli could not have chosen a more spectacular model for the Prince than Cesare Borgia. His exploits were well known, and thus his example usually emphasizes the fallibility of Machiavelli's counsel, as he intended, among those who understood the facts.

Machiavelli returns to the question of cruelty and mercy in his examples of Hannibal and Scipio. He mentions Hannibal's "inhuman cruelty," and his "infinite virtues," which together made him successful. (Ch. 17, 67) Of Scipio, Machiavelli reflects on his "excessive mercy" and his "agreeable nature" which "would in time have sullied Scipio's fame and glory if he had continued with it in empire; but while he lived under the government of the Senate, this damaging quality of his was not only hidden, but made for his glory." (Ch. 17, 68) One could go in depth into a discussion over these points, but in considering the relevance of these examples for the Prince, I think it comes down to one issue. As Machiavelli states in the Discourses, "those who desire to imitate [Valerius Corvinus and Manlius Torquatus] may, however, fall into the vices I mentioned in connection with Hannibal and Scipio, namely the evoking of
contempt or of hatred, vices which you can avoid only if in you there be more than ordinary virtue, but not otherwise." (III. 22, 468) Hannibal and Scipio had such virtue, but the modern princes did not. Therefore, Cesare is the more blameworthy for his excessive cruelty, which earned for him the hatred he deserved.

Scipio's "excessive mercy" represents the vice of excess in the Unjust argument, and Hannibal's "inhuman cruelty," the vice of deficiency. The paired contraries, "hard" and "agreeable," (Ch. 15, 62) are reflected in Hannibal and Scipio respectively; "agreeable" is mentioned specifically, while "hard" must be inferred from "venerable and terrible," (Ch. 17, 67) with regard to Hannibal. Neither "agreeable" or "hard," then, reflect the virtue of moderation. Machiavelli has excluded virtue from his argument, and, as in the previous chapter, the vice of deficiency (cruelty) is deemed more worthy than the vice of excess (too much mercy), giving it the appearance of virtue.

In his concluding statement, Machiavelli remarks, "returning to being feared and loved, that since men love at their convenience and fear at the convenience of the prince, a wise prince should found himself on what is his, not on what is someone else's; he should only contrive to avoid hatred, as was said." (Ch. 17, 68) If the prince "should only contrive to avoid hatred," it is reasonable to question why Machiavelli failed to offer "the classical analysis of
cruelty, from Seneca’s De dementia,” which “denounced cruelty as the characteristic vice of tyrants, and hence as the evil most of all to be avoided by true princes.” He might also have turned to Cicero to clarify the point that “immorality is expedient.” That is, “There are certain actions, such as tyrannicide and some forms of civil disobedience, which are good and expedient even though they violate the moral law,” but that would have been manifestly inappropriate for consideration in the Prince, and the same could be said for Seneca’s advice, for Machiavelli’s new prince was not a "true prince," but a tyrannical usurper whom both Cicero and Seneca would have opposed.

Machiavelli turns to the subject of faith and keeping one’s word in Chapter Eighteen. It would be difficult to construct a model based on virtue and its associated vices in this chapter because Machiavelli has confounded such efforts by including three virtues in his opening arguments. He begins by stating the Just:

> How laudable it is for a prince to keep his faith, and live with honesty and not by astuteness, everyone understands. (Ch. 18, 68)

"Honesty" and "faith" represent virtues, while astuteness reflects the vice of deficiency in so far as cleverness suggests manipulation of the truth and, thus, shades of dishonesty. In the Unjust argument, he introduces a third virtue, "loyalty:"

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"Honesty" and "faith" represent virtues, while astuteness reflects the vice of deficiency in so far as cleverness suggests manipulation of the truth and, thus, shades of dishonesty. In the Unjust argument, he introduces a third virtue, "loyalty:"
Nonetheless one sees by experience in our times that the princes who have done great things are those who have taken little account of faith [breaker of faith] and have known how to get around men's brains with their astuteness; and in the end they have overcome those who have founded themselves on loyalty. (Ch. 18, 69)

Loyalty represents neither excess or deficiency, but Machiavelli gives it the appearance of the vice of excess. That is, the paired contraries "breaker of faith" and "faithful," given in Chapter Fifteen (Ch. 15, 62) represent deficiency and moderation respectively—and, thus, loyalty takes on the appearance of excess. "Honest" and "clever," paired contraries that are given in Chapter Fifteen (Ch. 15, 62) represent moderation and deficiency respectively, as in "how to get around men's brains" with "astuteness," represented in the cleverness of the fox. I have discussed Machiavelli's notion of "fortunate astuteness" in connection with Chapter Nine on civil principalities. (Ch. 9, 39)

Machiavelli refers to law, but dismisses its further consideration on the grounds that it is insufficient:

Thus, you must know that there are two kinds of combat: one with laws, the other with force. The first is proper to man, the second to beasts: but because the first is often not enough, one must have recourse to the second. Therefore, it is necessary for a prince to know well how to use the beast in man. 69

Machiavelli omits law from his discourse on the basis that "it is often not enough," but he doesn't say in what
circumstances law is not enough, or when force is necessary. Where laws are observed, however, reason prevails, as law is "proper to man," and "combat" is conducted in courts of law. Where laws are overturned or not observed, force or fraud may be the issue, reflecting the domain of beasts, in which case "combat" is conducted in an arena outside the jurisdiction of established law and justice. With regard to the new prince, I refer to Chapter Nine, to give an example of what Machiavelli may have had in mind in the notion that law is "often not enough." He counsels that a "wise prince" should find a way to rid himself of the magistrates because he won't "have time in the midst of danger to seize absolute authority," (Ch. 9, 42) and thus the prince must either destroy the government by force or resort to fraudulent means by filling the magisteries and other government posts with partisans he can rely on not to obstruct his designs. In that sense, Machiavelli's remarks concerning man and beast are intended as a criticism of force and fraud as a means to an end, for he would never have approved of such methods for the purpose of installing a tyrant. He makes a clear distinction in the Discourses between princes (and even tyrants) who observe the laws, however, and those who do not. Even a "tyrant" can address the "demand for freedom" (which he can never satisfy) by providing the people with security in good laws. One means is to "introduce such institutions and laws as shall, in conjunction with the
power of the prince, make for the security of the public as a whole. When a prince does this, and the people see that on no occasion does he break such laws, in a short time they will begin to live in security and contentment." (I. 16, 155-6) Machiavelli issues no such counsel in the Prince, however, that a prince should "on no occasion" break the laws. Law and justice are never defined as principle components of the new regime, which is not surprising if one considers that, by his very nature, a tyrant of the sort described in the Prince must obtain to force and fraud to maintain his power—or be undone by revolt or conspiracy.

In advancing his argument that a prince should learn to use the beast in man, Machiavelli refers to "ancient writers" who told of princes "given to Chiron the centaur to be raised, so that he would look after them with his discipline. To have as teacher a half-beast, half-man means nothing other than that a prince needs to know how to use both natures; and one without the other is not lasting." (Ch. 18, 69) The example of Chiron, however, betrays Machiavelli's own use of the beast, the clever fox. Unlike the other centaurs who were "violent" and "fierce creatures," Chiron was a gifted teacher of medicine, "wise and kindly" known everywhere for his goodness and wisdom... He alone among the centaurs was immortal," but having been injured in battle, "Zeus permitted [him] to die rather than live forever in pain." In yet another story, which gives
the example of Chiron a particular relevance to the Prince, he was "willing to die" for Prometheus, who "refused to submit to cruelty and tyranny," and whose "name has stood through all the centuries, from Greek days to our own, as that of the great rebel against injustice and the authority of power." Chiron, then, who is half-beast, represents that which is proper to man, while Machiavelli's prince stands for what is proper to beasts, and thus the example of Chiron constitutes a great irony that is loaded with symbolism, particularly with regard to Prometheus and what he represented, as a foe of "tyranny" and "injustice."

"Necessity" dictates that the prince must "know well how to use the beast." "The lion does not defend itself from snares and the fox does not defend itself from wolves. So one needs to be a fox to recognize snares and a lion to frighten the wolves." (Ch. 18, 69) More to the point (if one considers the modes used by the Medici and the Borgia), one "needs to be a fox" to set "snares," and a "lion" to devour the wolves, but at the same time, it is also "necessary to know well how to color this nature, to be a great pretender and dissembler." (Ch. 18, 70)

Quentin Skinner makes the point that, in addition to satirizing hypocrisy:

Machiavelli's other and even more pointed satire is contained in his suggestion that rulers must cultivate two natures—a good one which they should follow when
possible, and a bad one which they must be prepared to follow when this is dictated by necessity. Cicero had already observed in De Officiis that there are two ways of gaining one's ends. One is by argument, the other by force; the first is proper to man, the second only to beasts (I. 11, 34) Sharpening the distinction, Cicero had added that beastly methods, encompassing the use of fraud as well as force, are completely unworthy of men. Force reduces us to the level of the lion, fraud to that of the fox, and both must be avoided at all costs (I. 13, 41).  

A tyrant, however, need not avoid beastly behavior, because he is not encumbered with ethical and moral concerns. Machiavelli "reduces" him to "the level of the lion" and "the fox," by attributing those qualities to him.

Mark Hulliung argues that "Machiavelli's image of the lion and the fox is, then, Cicero's stoicism stood on its head," for "there is in Machiavelli no passage more quoted than his insistence... that the prince must avail himself of the force of the lion and the fraud of the fox. Not a single humanist had excuse to miss the significance of Machiavelli's words, which were taken from Cicero's De Officiis--a work well known to all students of the classics--and turned upside down." Further, Hulliung remarks that "from Machiavelli's point of view, the decisive baptism of Cicero was the one sponsored by Dante:"  

Of all malicious wrong that earns Heaven's hate the end is injury; all such ends are won either by force or fraud. Both perpetrate evil to others; but
since man alone is capable of fraud, God hates that worst; the fraudulent lie lowest, then, and groan deepest.\textsuperscript{96}

In "overturning both Cicero and Dante," Hulliung argues, Machiavelli overturned "Stoicism and Christianity in one efficient and brilliant move. And he did so using the imagery (the lion and the fox) and the language (either force or fraud) of On Duties and The Divine Comedy, two works with which every educated person in Renaissance Italy was conversant."\textsuperscript{97}

Only in the Prince, however, is there strong evidence for Hulliung's argument. In his other works, and particularly in the Discourses, Machiavelli makes compelling arguments for virtuous character and actions, most notably from the example of the Roman republic, expressing the ancient wisdom he is accused of overturning. Perhaps Machiavelli chose Cicero and Dante as sources precisely because "every educated person in Renaissance Italy was conversant" in them, and thus his satire would not elude the erudite who might be expected to perceive his departure from conventional wisdom as a clear marker for his intent; to issue a critique of evil. If Machiavelli were the devil incarnate, as his accusers believed, his fiendish motives were kept well hidden during the course of his service to the republic, and all that it represented. And if he really desired employment from the Medici, why would he ply his diabolical counsel in what amounts to a public epistle to his would-be
benefactors, revealing the sum of his wisdom to anyone who chanced to read the circulating manuscript? It is absurd to think that he would, especially if one considers that Machiavellian diplomacy and art of state in the *Prince*, were dependent on deceit and cultivated appearances for success, which by their very nature demand a covert application.

In order to succeed as a "pretender and dissembler," it is only "necessary" that one "appear" to be "merciful, faithful, humane, honest, and religious and to be so, but to remain with a spirit built so that, if you need not to be those things, you are able to know how to change to the contrary," and Machiavelli mentions Alexander VI as a good example, "because he well knew this aspect of the world." (Ch. 18, 70) "To be" or "not to be" is a question the prince must decide, predicated on necessity, and "This has to be understood: that a prince, and especially a new prince, cannot observe all those things for which men are held good, since he is often under a necessity, to maintain his state, of acting against faith, against charity, against humanity, against religion." Therefore, he should "not depart from good, when possible, but know how to enter into evil, when forced by necessity." (Ch. 18, 70)

In his play, *Mandragola*, Machiavelli’s characters "become comic especially when they fall into the traps the truly cunning persons set for them," and there is a like quality to the *Prince*, if one can imagine a new prince
taking Machiavelli at his word—trying to figure out how to use cruelty mercifully, or how to be a generous miser, a humane executioner, a religious non-believer, or an honest dissembler. The essential incongruity is reminiscent of the comic tension created in Machiavelli's ill-fated "spirited man riding a cowardly horse," (II. 18, 319) in which little progress can expect to be made.

For added emphasis, Machiavelli repeats that "a prince should thus take great care that nothing escape his mouth that is not full of the above-mentioned five qualities and that, to see him and hear him, he should appear all mercy, all faith, all honesty, all humanity, all religion. And there is nothing more necessary to appear to have than this last quality." (Ch. 18, 70-1) This represents, it seems to me, a distinct criticism of the Vatican and papal ambition for they, above all others, were expected not to appear to be, but to be the embodiment of the Church and its beliefs and orders--the exemplars of Christian piety and ethics. Their actions and example, however, hastened the onset of the Protestant Reformation, and created chaos, misery and fear among those Italian states that fell victim to the emerging power of the Church. Machiavelli's emphasis on "religion," then, should be taken as a barb flung at the feet of Leo X and Alexander VI, but with an important and somewhat comic distinction. While Leo's opportunity to generate disorder was as great as that manifest in the
Borgia, the Medici were compromised by their lack of ability, so that whatever spectacle they might create across the peninsula, although threatening to be sure, carried with it a certain humorous aspect when compared to the more formidable Borgia, or even the impetuous Julius II, for that matter. Machiavelli counsels the new prince to take note of the astute fox, but the Medici hardly needed lessons in the art of fraud and deceit. If he had really intended to give sincere advice to that family, Machiavelli would have focused instead on how the lion devours the wolves, the combination of force and treachery that made the Borgia so powerful.

The views of Cicero, then, take on a special significance in Machiavelli's time, for Machiavelli's frame of reference included princes of the Church, as well as secular rulers. In fact, most particularly it included the popes, and Machiavelli's essential refutation of Cicero reflected a refutation of the "ethical doctrine" handed down from the Stoics, blended with "popular Platonism" and "Aristotle" that was evident in "the writings of the Christian Fathers." Cicero maintained that "the virtue one seeks to advertise must be virtue that one actually possesses. The essence of the problem, he says, is to be what we wish to be thought to be. Hypocrisy wins no glory; but equally important, it simply does not work. Sooner or later, the hypocrite will be found out. In the long run, it requires less
effort to possess virtue than to try to fake it."\(^{100}\)

To be sure, one cannot resort to deceit too often for, among princes, if a contract, treaty, or verbal agreement is broken, the injured party would be imprudent indeed to put his trust in the perpetrator again. "Cicero's De Officiis," observes Quentin Skinner, "had treated it as axiomatic that the keeping of promises represents the foundation of justice (I. 7, 23). It had thus become proverbial to say that, even when dealing with our enemies, we must always regard our word as our bond,"\(^{101}\) although breaches of faith may be reasonable in certain circumstances.

In the Prince, however, Machiavelli portrays breaches of faith as commonplace, a game of cunning in which he who is most clever outsmarts all of the others. "Nor does a prince ever lack legitimate causes to color his failure to observe faith. One could give infinite modern examples of this, and show how many peace treaties and promises have been rendered invalid and vain through the infidelity of princes; and the one who has known best how to use the fox has come out best." (Ch. 18, 69-70) As he states, in a letter to Francesco Vettori (April 29, 1513), "And of loyalty and of promises no one today makes any account."\(^{102}\) Pope Alexander once said of Cesare, "no one ever kept his word more faithfully than he; nor has he ever broken a promise,"\(^{103}\) but as Machiavelli remarks of the pope himself, he "never did anything, nor ever thought of anything, but how
to deceive men." (Ch. 18, 70) In the end, however, Cesare was compelled to rely on good faith in the hope of retaining his acquisitions, and as Machiavelli wrote in his dispatches from Rome, "The duke, who never kept faith with anyone, is now obliged to rely on the faith of others." Yet, in the Discourses, Machiavelli makes a point of distinguishing exceptional circumstances in which a ruler may break his word with good cause. "Promises extracted by force ought not to be kept," for "it is not shameful to fail to keep a promise which you have been forced to make. Forced promises affecting the public will, in fact, always be broken when the force in question is removed, and this without shame to those who break them." (III. 42, 515-6) The Florentines, for example, signed a treaty with Cesare Borgia, but only to "rid" themselves of his "formidable army." And regarding fraud generally, Machiavelli states, "Although to use fraud in any action is detestable, yet in the conduct of war it is praiseworthy and glorious. And a man who uses fraud to overcome his enemy is praised, just as much as is he who overcomes his enemy by force... I do not mean that a fraud which involves breaking your word or the contracts you have made, is glorious; for, although on occasion it may win for you a state or a kingdom, as has been said in an earlier discourse, it will never bring you glory." (III. 40, 513) Bernard Crick comments that "this
treatment of the legitimate and even 'glorious' use of 'fraud' (something admitted to be 'dishonorable') both narrows the grounds to war and to states of emergency, and, compared to Prince 18, specifically excludes failure to keep one's pledged word and the breaking of promises as legitimate types of fraud."

Perhaps, then, Machiavelli does not excuse the fraud and deceit that he advises the prince to use, in the Prince, despite appearances to the contrary, on the grounds that it is dishonorable and, therefore, inglorious. He does refer to the Prince in the Discourses, in this regard, but in an ambiguous manner; "Everywhere in history one comes across examples of this [forced promises] of one kind or another, and everyone is aware that it happens also at the present day. And not only are forced promises not observed by princes when the force in question is no longer operative; but we also find that all other promises are broken when the reasons which caused such promises to be made no longer hold good. Whether this is praiseworthy or not, and whether a prince should or should not behave in this way, we have discussed at length in our treatise on The Prince. Here, therefore, nothing will be said about it." (III. 42, 516) Machiavelli does not state, in the Prince, that he deems such behavior as "praiseworthy," but he does make a point of exposing the fraudulent means used by princes; such statements as, "Nor does a prince ever lack legitimate causes to
color his failure to observe faith" and the prince need not observe faith, because "they are wicked and don't observe faith with you" indicate the extent to which the observance of faith had been corrupted. (Ch. 18, 69) Machiavelli gives the reader a sense of the degree to which princes do not observe good faith when he refers to "infinite modern examples," of the "infidelity of princes," although they "color this nature" by pretending fidelity. (Ch. 18, 69-70) Machiavelli does not state that such actions bring glory to the prince.

Further, Machiavelli observes, "Where there is no court to appeal to, one looks to the end. So let a prince win and maintain his state [by force or fraud]; the means will always be judged honorable, and will be praised by everyone. For the vulgar are taken in by the appearance and outcome of a thing, and in the world there is no one but the vulgar; the few have a place there." (Ch. 18, 71) There is "no court to appeal to" where "law," as he said in his opening argument, is "not enough" (as when one wants to stop an aggressor), whether power is seized by force, or by fraud (when the laws are subverted to benefit one individual or one faction over time). The "means" will be judged "honorable" by the "vulgar," the many who "judge more by their eyes than by their hands, because seeing is given to everyone, touching to few." (Ch. 18, 76) As he has emphasized throughout this chapter, appearances are deceptive. But the
reader should not be deceived, for if one can touch the
prince, which he has given to all, the deception is foiled,
nor should we think that a prince who makes a practice of
fraud—-and even endeavors to be the best at his craft, "the
one who has known best how to use the fox [will] come out
best"—(Ch. 18, 70) is either honorable or glorious. Rather,
he is dishonorable and worthy of blame.

Pope Julius II made many promises prior to his election
as pope, including the "restitution of the whole state of
Romagna" to Cesare Borgia. Machiavelli, "believing it to be
impossible that the pope could have forgotten his old hat-
reds and his exile, concluded with a touch of irony: "The
Duke allows himself to be carried away by his brave confi-
dence, and believes that other people's words are more to be
relied upon than his own were.'"¹⁰⁷ Machiavelli's model
prince would not have served as a good exemplar, then, for
his discourse on the benefits of fraud and deceit, for
Cesare illustrates the point that even the most clever will
eventually become the prey of someone more wickedly splendid
than themselves.

When Machiavelli states that "in the world there is no
one but the vulgar; the few have a place there," Harvey C.
Mansfield, Jr. notes that "one manuscript says, "the few
have no place there... '," and the authorities are divided,
Casella, Russo, and Sasso accepting 'no place,' Chabod and
Bertelli 'a place.'"¹⁰⁸ I think it is more appropriate to
accept "no place there," which applies to Machiavelli himself. Those who understood the means used by princes to achieve their ends had no voice to contest the will of the many—who were taken in by the "false semblance of good" and "renown," (I. 10, 135) and the "false appearance of advantage," (I. 53, 238) as he himself describes appearances in the Discourses. As Machiavelli said of Cosimo de' Medici, "they are all methods that bring men flying to the principate," although the people do not understand that they are, nor do they listen to "such accusations." In that sense, then, those who did understand were alienated from the many. Machiavelli did not retreat from the issue, however, and he should be admired both for his courage in writing the Prince, and for his own brilliance as a pretender and a dissembler which proves, even in our own century, that a clever fox can trap the unwary in any corrupt age.
Chapter XV. The Courts of Princes: How States are Lost: Fortune

Machiavelli's satire is well developed by the conclusion of the first eighteen chapters. He has defined both the character of the new prince, and the means by which he will satisfy his ambition. Necessity dictates his actions, grounded in the reality of a corrupt world. He has also defined political reality as "the effectual truth," (Ch. 15, 61) in which the effect or outcome of a thing determines its value, and thus utility for the prince outweighs moral and ethical concerns. The public welfare is nowhere at issue, nor is there any evidence of a visible government or civic virtue which, together with his advocacy of vice, reflect the essence of his satire.

Ashley Brown observes that, in Swift's A Modest Proposal, "the reader must see the difference between the horrible attitude he is being asked to endorse and some true moral standard. The tone of the essay is so 'reasonable,' and the modern reader may consider overpopulation such a danger, that he could get well into the satire before he realized that he was in effect approving a mass-murder. What Swift wants to do is shock the public into awareness." The same could be said for Machiavelli's Prince, especially with regard to his contemporary readers. The matter-of-fact tone of the Prince, coupled with the desperate need to rid the peninsula of foreign intruders and resolve the political
conflicts within tended to obscure the fact that Machiavelli was indeed calling for the rise of a tyrant—as a solution to the threat of servitude. His dedication of the work to the Medici further clouded the issue so that, even among those who were somewhat familiar with Machiavelli and his political beliefs, one could, indeed, "get well into the satire" before realizing what they were "being asked to endorse" on behalf of the greater good of their country. If Machiavelli did succeed in shocking some of his readers into "awareness," they were too few in number to have an impact on the political reality in Florence.

A prince who goes "beyond morals, laws, and customs," instilling fear with his "hypocrisy and ingratitude, meanness, cruelty, and treachery," and who revels in "diabolical cunning" and "ruthless disregard for moral standards" cannot escape hatred and contempt for long. In anticipation of that objection, Machiavelli devotes two chapters to the subject, but in doing so, he also adds emphasis to the problem, treating it in his usual manner by giving assurances that the new prince can avoid the inevitable, if he handles his affairs properly.

He begins by suggesting that the prince "should think how to avoid those things that make him hateful and contemptible," (Ch. 19, 71-2) which consists of virtually everything that Machiavelli has advised the prince to do up to this point in his discourse. "When he avoids them, he
will have done his part and will find no danger in his other infamies." He reminds the prince once again that "taking away either property or honor from the generality of men" will make him "hated above all." (Ch. 19, 72) His vices, then, including cruelty, will not generate the same degree of hatred; those "other infamies" that will pose "no danger."

Taking away "honor from the generality of men" represents more than tampering with the women of one's subjects. Dismissal from public office without just cause, persecution, calumny, violence, unjust punishments, a display of malevolence, executions, and ingratitude all constitute private injury that may bring dishonor to an individual or his family, especially when there is no opportunity to obtain justice. When Machiavelli states that the prince "should insist that his judgments in the private concerns of his subjects be irrevocable," (Ch. 19, 72) he is making the point that the prince himself represents law and justice.

Machiavelli cautions that "what makes him contemptible is to be held variable, light, effeminate, pusillanimous [and] irresolute, from which a prince should guard himself as from a shoal." (Ch. 19, 72) These qualities, however, although undesirable in a ruler, apply most earnestly to military commanders. In Chapter Twenty-three, Machiavelli suggests that Emperor Maximilian I was irresolute and variable, and while he may have been held in contempt by Luca
Rinaldi, a "bishop and ambassador of the emperor," he offers no evidence that the people found him contemptible. Robert Ridolfi remarks that he was a "good," "generous and noble prince." A cowardly and irresolute prince would not bode well for the state, but in a military leader, the qualities mentioned above could mean certain disaster.

Machiavelli creates a false impression, then, by listing the most contemptible faults of military commanders as those qualities that would generate the greatest contempt for princes. As a commander in the field, a prince would indeed earn the disdain of his men if he exhibited those qualities. But in the business of governing, it is the other vices of the prince that would engender the deepest scorn and desire for revenge, whether it be his cruelty and inhumanity, robbing his subjects of their property and wealth, molesting their women, or threatening their lives. (III. 6, 400)

Yet, when Machiavelli turns to the subject of conspiracy, he does not caution the prince against personal injuries, except to say that he should avoid hatred. Rather, he frames conspiracy in the larger context; "For whoever conspires always believes he will satisfy the people with the death of the prince, but when he believes he will offend them, he does not get up the spirit to adopt such a course, because the difficulties on the side of the conspirators are infinite." (Ch. 19, 73) If this is true, that the conspira-
tor "always believes he will satisfy the people with the
death of a prince," private vengeance is omitted as probable
cause for conspiracy, which is not true. As Machiavelli
observes in the Discourses, "The chief cause which led the
Pazzi to conspire against the Medici was the inheritance of
Giovanni Bonromie of which they had been deprived by the
Medici orders." (III. 6, 400)

There is "another cause, and this a very powerful one,
that makes men conspire against a prince," which Machiavelli
neglected to mention as a warning to the prince, "the desire
to liberate their fatherland [in which case the conspirator
would "satisfy the people" with his death] of which the
prince has seized possession. It was this that caused
Brutus and Cassius to turn against Caesar... nor can any
tyrant prevail over this spirit, except by discarding his
tyranny. And since one does not find tyrants doing this,
one finds few who have not come to a miserable end. Hence
the verse of Juvenal:

To Pluto's realm few kings unscathed
descend nor tyrants oft escape a sticky
end. (III. 6, 400-01)

Machiavelli warns, in Chapter Five, that in republics
accustomed to liberty prior to their acquisition by a
prince, there is "greater hatred," and "desire for revenge,"
(Ch. 5, 21) yet he fails to reiterate this important point
in the context of conspiracies. Having been accused of
conspiracy by the Medici, however (of the liberation vari-
ety), it would have been unwise for Machiavelli to suggest any obvious parallels with himself in connection with conspiracy on behalf of liberating one's native city. Nevertheless, in his discourse on conspiracies, he speaks from the point of view of the conspirator, reflecting on the difficulties and warning that one can only "find company" from "malcontents," and when you "disclose" a conspiracy to a malcontent, "you give him the matter with which to become content," because a content malcontent hopes "for every advantage from it." (Ch. 19, 73) This passage probably had a deeper significance for Machiavelli and his acquaintances, as it has the tone of a comic tribute of sorts.

Machiavelli mentions "Nabis the Spartan" in this chapter, who "with[stood] every thrust." (Ch. 19, 72) As Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. notes, Machiavelli "does not disclose here, as he does in the Discourses on Livy III. 6, that Nabis was in fact killed by a conspiracy." Since it is clear that Machiavelli knew the facts, his misrepresentation suggests a deliberate distortion of the truth, which has the effect of ridiculing his own advice, and renders the text unreliable.

In his discussion pertaining to "how not to make the great desperate and how to satisfy the people and keep them content" with regard to conspiracies and avoidance of hatred and contempt, Machiavelli refers to the examples of the ten emperors, "from Marcus the philosopher to Maximus."
There are certain discrepancies in the text that distort the truth in support of his arguments. He remarks, for example, that "Pertinax... created hatred for himself, and to this hatred added disdain since he was old...," which caused his ruin. In the Discourses, however, Machiavelli observes that "in Rome indeed no attention had ever been paid to age; what it had always looked for was virtue, whether in the young or in the old."

Of Alexander, he states, "He was of such goodness that among the other praise attributed to him is this: that in the fourteen years he held the empire no one was ever put to death by him without a trial." In fact, military anarchy began during his reign, and "large sections of the civilian and military populace lost faith in the government at Rome and lapsed into lawlessness." By his remark, Machiavelli gives the impression that there was good civil order, but Alexander was incompetent in every aspect.

Severus personifies the qualities of the "lion" and the "fox" (force and fraud) that Machiavelli advised the new prince to acquire. Severus was extremely corrupt, but a good example of successful crime, and Machiavelli calls him a "criminal" in the Discourses. He also notes that of the twenty-six emperors from Caesar to Maximinus, sixteen were assassinated and only two died a natural death... if among those who died ordinary deaths, there was a wicked man, like
Severus, it must be put down to his great good luck and to his 'virtue,' two things of which few men enjoy both." (I. 10, 136-7) Machiavelli attributed fortune but not virtue to Cesare Borgia, nor does he assign virtue to the Medici. The vices of the new prince disqualify him as virtuous, as well, and, therefore, the new prince would do well to learn from the "history of the emperors" to "distinguish between the ways of renown and of infamy, the ways of security and fear," as Machiavelli advises in the Discourses, (I. 10, 136) counsel he does not offer in the Prince.

Machiavelli attributes the success of Marcus to the fact that he "succeeded to the empire by hereditary right and did not have to acknowledge it as from either the soldiers or the people," and to his "virtue." (Ch. 19, 77) He also makes the point that "Pertinax and Alexander, because they were new princes, it was useless and harmful to wish to imitate Marcus, who was in the principate by hereditary right." (Ch. 19, 82) Machiavelli contradicts this notion in the Discourses, however. "It will be seen, too, from a perusal of their [Roman emperors] history on what principle a good kingdom should rest; for all the emperors who acquired imperial power by inheritance were bad men, with the exception of Titus; those who acquired it through adoption were all good, like the five counting from Nerva to Marcus; and when it fell to their heirs a period of decadence again ensued." (I. 10, 137) Alexander, like Marcus, was also
Caracalla's "excellent parts that made him marvelous in the sight of the people and pleasing to the soldiers" (Ch. 19, 79) reflects neither his actions nor his character, which were abominable, or his physical attributes which earned him the nickname, "Tarautus," after "an ugly, insolent, and bloodthirsty gladiator whom he was thought to resemble." Machiavelli offers modest praise of Caracalla, but adds, "nonetheless, his ferocity and cruelty were so great and unheard of... that he became most hateful to all the world," (Ch. 19, 79) and of his assassination, he warns, "Here it is to be noted that deaths such as these, which follow from the decision of an obstinate spirit, cannot be avoided by princes because anyone who does not care about death can harm him." (Ch. 19, 79) As he states in the Discourses, however, Caracalla was suspicious of Macrinus, and asked a friend in Rome to "inquire of the astrologer whether anybody was aspiring to become emperor." He was informed that "Macrinus was the man who had this idea in mind, but the letter fell into the hands of Macrinus before it got to the emperor, and, in consequence, Macrinus saw that it was necessary either to kill him before a further letter came from Rome, or to be killed," and he "instructed Martialis," a "devoted" centurion, to "assassinate the emperor." (III. 6, 411-12) There is a comic quality, then, in Machiavelli's reference to Macrinus as an "obstinate
spirit," and "one who does not care about death". He cared deeply for his own life, however, so much so that he ensured the death of his predecessor to preserve it.

In the example of Maximinus, Machiavelli charges that he was "hated and contemptible, in part because "he had formerly herded sheep in Thrace (which was very well known everywhere and caused great disdain for him in the sight of everyone)." (Ch. 19, 80) It is unlikely that Machiavelli accepted this explanation. Maximinus was never recognized as emperor by the Senate in Rome, and the "disdain" in which he was held by "everyone" undoubtedly had less to do with his shepherd origins than with the fact that his office was not sanctioned by the government, which put forth two senators, Maximus and Balbinus, and thus his reign reflected civil strife within the empire.

The example of the ten emperors illustrates, above all, that cruel, arrogant, tyrannical rule leads more often than not to the premature death of princes, yet Machiavelli has advised the new prince to adopt similar means to achieve his ends. In his conclusion, he simply remarks that it "was useless and harmful" for the new princes, "Pertinax and Alexander," to imitate Marcus who was "in the principate by hereditary right," a misleading remark for the reasons given above. And he notes that "Caracalla, Commodus and Maximinus" failed in their "pernicious" effort to imitate "Severus," because they lacked his "virtue." Having no
"hereditary right," then, a "new prince in a new principality cannot imitate the actions of Marcus," nor "is it necessary to follow" the actions "of Severus," (Ch. 19, 82) although Machiavelli has argued that "a prince is compelled of necessity to know well how to use the beast," the "fox" and the "lion," (Ch. 18, 69) as did Severus, who provides his example. Machiavelli advises, then, that the prince take "from Severus those parts that are necessary to found his state," although the new prince lacks his "virtue" and perhaps his "good luck," for there are "few men who enjoy both." (I. 10, 136-7) And he advises the new prince to take from Marcus that which is "fitting and glorious to conserve a state that is established and firm," despite his observation that to do so is "useless and harmful" without hereditary right.

As Marcus evidenced extreme loyalty in making his adoptive brother "co-emperor" by his "own insistence," observed the laws, a "field most congenial to him," displayed "personal nobility and dedication," and pursued intellectual interests, most notably the writing of the "Meditations... basically the moral tenets of Stoicism,"¹⁰ he was a prince worthy of imitation, but not for Machiavelli's new prince whom he advises against loyalty, and does not counsel to observe the laws or traditional ethics. The example of Marcus contradicts everything Machiavelli has endeavored to teach the new prince, who has seized power and
must maintain it with extraordinary measures. Most especially, Machiavelli would not recommend that the new prince adhere to the beliefs of "Marcus the Philosopher," (Ch. 19, 75) who contemplated the "moral tenets of Stoicism" in his quiet hours which Machiavelli, in his own leisure, wholly rejected in the Prince.

Machiavelli considers the subject of fortresses in Chapter Twenty, both in military terms, and for their efficacy as a defense against one's own subjects. He also discusses other matters related to the prince and the military, such as fostering animosities for the purpose of gaining reputation:

Without doubt, princes become great when they overcome difficulties made for them and opposition made to them. So fortune, especially when she wants to make a new prince great—since he has a greater necessity to acquire reputation than a hereditary prince—makes enemies arise for him and makes them undertake enterprises against him, so that he has cause to overcome them and to climb higher on the ladder that his enemies have brought him. Therefore, many judge that a wise prince, when he has the opportunity for it, should astutely nourish some enmity so that when he has crushed it, his greatness emerges the more from it. (Ch. 20, 85)

The Pazzi conspiracy afforded Lorenzo the Magnificent such an opportunity, and contributed to his greatness.

Pope Sixtus IV and King Ferdinand of Naples had sided with the Pazzi family in their dispute with the Medici which, as I said above, precipitated the conspiracy that the
Pazzi conducted against the Medici. The Pope and Ferdinand represented a "faction" in Italy that was opposed to the "Venetians, the Duke of Milan, and the Florentines," and the "outbreak of war" threatened daily.\textsuperscript{11} When the Pazzi conspiracy failed to kill both Giuliano and Lorenzo, the pope and Ferdinand threatened to attack Florence, claiming "they did not wish anything from that city except that it should rid itself of Lorenzo de' Medici, who alone of all the Florentines, they held as an enemy."\textsuperscript{12} Meanwhile, the pope excommunicated the Florentines.

In the History, Machiavelli recreates, in a set speech, the words uttered by Lorenzo to a gathering of city dignitaries. Lorenzo grieved over the attack on his family, and rejoiced that the city "defended" himself, and "avenged" his brother. He said God had not deserted his family, and denied that they had "privately wronged" those who were "hostile;" "They wrong rather you than us, rather this Palace and the majesty of this government than our house... you have always raised our house on high with such complete agreement, for no other reason than it has striven to surpass everybody in courtesy, in liberality, in conferring benefits."\textsuperscript{12} Lorenzo concludes, "Would God it were true," that the king and the pope were only coming after himself and his house. If it were, "gladly would I put out your fire with my ruin," and he offered "to end with my own blood this war begun with that of my brother." The citizens,
moved by his words, promised to defend him and provided Lorenzo with a personal guard.

The pope and Ferdinand attacked Florentine territory in 1478, and war continued into 1479. Because Florence was "distressed" by both war and plague, Lorenzo was sent to Naples to seek terms from King Ferdinand. He was received with "honor and with great expectation because, since so important a war had been begun only to crush him, the greatness of his enemies had made him appear very great." Although they reached agreement, Ferdinand held him until spring to see if disturbances might arise in Florence to his advantage. When they did not, Lorenzo returned to the city "exceedingly great," and because the threat of continued war resulted from the exclusion of the pope and the Venetians from the peace agreement, the government was further consolidated under Medici control.

Clearly Lorenzo was provided by his enemies with a "ladder" to greatness, and the "enmity" that he "nourished" (Ch. 20, 85) with the Pazzi family (because he feared their power)—that ultimately involved the enemies of Florence from without—worked in his favor to further advance his position of power and erode the liberty of the Florentines.

In offering his recommendations to the new prince, then, Machiavelli also revealed, at the same time, how the actions of princes effect the public welfare, an 'effectual truth' that is never directly stated in the Prince, but is meant to
be understood.

Machiavelli brings his roguish wit to the issue when he suggests, in reference to those who aided the prince from within to seize the principality, "If it is not natural affection toward them but only because those supporters were not content with that state, he will be able to keep them his friends with trouble and great difficulty, because it is impossible for him to make them content. And while reviewing well the cause of this, with examples drawn from ancient and modern things, he will see that it is much easier to gain as friends to himself men who were content with the state beforehand, and therefore were his enemies, than those who, because they were not content with it, became friends and gave him support in seizing it." (Ch. 20, 86) The example of Florence (and Machiavelli's own experience) contradicts this advice in so far as the Medici returned to power, in 1512, with the support of their partisans within, who enabled them to consolidate their power in a matter of days. While it may not have been possible for the Medici to satisfy or make "content" all of those who supported their return, they would have been imprudent to put their trust in old adversaries, some of whom conspired against them within months of their restoration. On one level, Machiavelli seems to suggest that a new prince cannot trust anyone. But there are two other interpretations of this passage, as well, that show the duplicitous character of Machiavelli.
In the passage cited above, Machiavelli uses the word "content" four times, which emphasizes the importance of it, with regard to his intent. As a former adversary of the Medici, he is in fact a new malcontent under the new regime. Therefore, I think he had a dual purpose in mind. First, to offer some sort of reasoned argument in support of his masquerade as a former opponent who asks to be trusted, in the capacity of adviser to the new government, a proposition that finds no support in logic. If the former malcontents cannot be made content in the new government, how will the prince hope to content the new malcontents, his former enemies? His other purpose, then, is to suggest with delicate subtlety the teaching he gave in the previous chapter, that one contents a malcontent by disclosing a conspiracy to him, (Ch. 20, 86) from which he would gain considerably more advantage than present circumstances provided—a comic reflection on a tragic reality.

Of fortresses, Machiavelli states, "the prince who has more fear of the people than of foreigners ought to make fortresses, but the one who has more fear of foreigners than of the people, ought to omit them." (Ch. 20, 86-7) He then goes on to say, in the same paragraph, "the best fortress there is, is not to be hated by the people, because although you may have fortresses, if the people hold you in hatred fortresses do not save you." (Ch. 20, 87) As the two statements contradict one another, he creates confusion in the
text. In his examples and in his concluding statement, he supports the notion that a fortress won't save the prince from the hatred of his subjects; "so, having considered all these things, I shall praise whoever makes fortresses and whoever does not, and I shall blame anyone who, trusting in fortresses, thinks little of being hated by the people." (Ch. 20, 87) He reflects the confusion of his earlier statements, then, when he states, "I shall praise whoever makes fortresses and whoever does not." From the Discourses, it is clear that he did not praise those who made fortresses. "It must be borne in mind, then, that fortresses are constructed as a defense either against enemies or against subjects. In the first case they are unnecessary, and in the second case harmful." (II. 24, 353) In his lengthy discourse on the subject, he condemns reliance on fortresses generally, (II. 24, 352-59) and thus his ambiguous approach in the Prince illustrates a desire on his part to intentionally mislead the prince in a comical way—not to give too much or too little, but just enough to give the appearance that his advice is in accord with his beliefs—and therefore represent himself as genuine and above reproach.

Chapters Twenty-one through Twenty-five constitute a curious amalgam of new ideas and old concepts revisited, so to speak, to enhance the veneer of the new prince. Machiavelli considers how the prince might gain esteem and
reputation in Chapter Twenty-one, both at home and abroad. The advice he gives would have certain appeal to an arrogant, self-centered prince. "Nothing makes a prince so much esteemed as to carry on great enterprises and to give rare examples of himself." (Ch. 21, 87) With his counsel, Machiavelli encourages the most frightening aspect of a prince who undertakes such endeavors to enhance his reputation, the depredations visited on the people in such circumstances, particularly when it could have been avoided.

Lorenzo the Magnificent recommended that force be used against Volterra in a dispute over the alum mines, in opposition to those who thought it the wiser course to attempt to seek terms peacefully. In this "enterprise," force won the day, and Machiavelli notes, in the History, that Lorenzo "rose to a very high reputation" with its success, although "for all of one day [Volterra] was robbed and plundered. Neither women nor holy places were spared, and the soldiers... despoiled them." In a response that he assigns to Messer Tommaso Soderini, Machiavelli expresses his disapproval of the affair: "To me she seems lost, because if you had taken her on terms, you would have gained from her profit and security, but since you will have to keep her by force, in adverse times she will bring you weakness and trouble, and in peaceful times loss and expense." Hence, a prince who undertakes such ventures often creates hazards for himself that a prudent and wise prince would avoid.

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Machiavelli's advice to the new prince, then, has questionable worth regarding benefit either for the prince or for the people that he governs.

With regard to "governing internally," Machiavelli remarks that it "helps very much for a prince to give a rare example of himself... similar to those that are told of Messer Bernabò da Milano, when the opportunity arises of someone who does something extraordinary in civil life, either for good or for ill, and of picking a mode of rewarding or punishing him of which much will be said." (Ch. 21, 89) Bernabò was the uncle of Gian Galeazzo Visconti [1378-1402], who "brought the entire Visconti inheritance into his possession by imprisoning his uncle Bernabò and the latter's sons through a ruse." Bernabò was "killed" by Gian, who "became sole prince of Milan." Machiavelli uses the example of Gian's murder of his uncle, Bernabò, to demonstrate how fraud enables a man of "low position" to rise to a "great position," in the Discourses. "Fraud," he observes, "is always necessary" to those who, "from small beginnings wish to rise to sublime heights, and the better they conceal it, as the Romans did, the less blameworthy it is." (II. 13, 310-312) Machiavelli did not praise fraud, however, as I mentioned above, as a means of winning "a state or a kingdom," which "will never bring you glory." Rather, he spoke of the fraud "used in dealing with an enemy who has not kept faith with you, i.e., of the fraud which is involved in the
Therefore, if the example of Bernabò of Milan is considered, the notion that "a prince should contrive to give himself the fame of a great man and of an excellent talent in every action of his" (Ch. 21, 89) implies infamy, not glory—blame, rather than praise. "Giovan Galeazzo... since it was not enough for him to become Duke of all Lombardy" (after the murder of his uncle), "he wished to conquer Tuscany. But when he thought he was about to get control and then be crowned King of Italy, he died." Had he succeeded, he "would have brought Florence into danger of losing her freedom," but, as Machiavelli observes, "death was always more friendly to the Florentines than any other friend, and stronger to save them than any ability of their own."22

When men are "deceived by... the false semblance of renown," they "slip into the ranks of those who deserve blame," establishing a tyrannical government rather than founding a "republic or kingdom." (I. 10, 135) The new prince, then, does not merit Machiavelli's esteem and praise, but rather his scorn—and it is scorn that he heaps upon him in his satire, "a sardonic description of the political practices of his own day, and not a recommendation of such practices,"23 despite all appearances to the contrary.

"People with nothing to do often are the tool of him
who is attempting to cause a revolution," observes Machiavelli in the History, and the more "elaborate and splendid" the celebration, the longer it will take the people to prepare for it. Therefore, Machiavelli recommends that the prince "at suitable times of the year keep the people occupied with festivals and spectacles."

(Ch. 21, 91)

When Lorenzo the Magnificent chose an Orsini for his bride, Clarice, he was "contriving an alliance with a family of far-reaching influence" who "could raise soldiers as well as money," but the Florentines "did not entirely approve of the match," as it was not the "custom" to "look outside Tuscany for brides and bridegrooms." One means "to reconcile the Florentines to this unwelcomed event" was to arrange a "splendid tournament," which was accomplished at considerable cost and became the "subject" of "Luigi Pulce's La Giostra di Lorenzo de' Medici." Pope Leo was honored in Florence with a "splendid reception," in 1515, at the cost of "70,000 florins."

Savonarola warned, from the "Cathedral pulpit," that "the Florentines had bartered their ancient liberties for the spectacles provided them by a tyrant," in reference to the Medici. As Machiavelli remarks in the History, however, "After these shows had been presented, the citizens returned to their earlier thoughts, and each one followed his own opinion with more zeal than ever." One might conclude,
then, that festivals did provide a temporary distraction from political concerns, and helped the prince gain the goodwill of the people which, together with such things as "prepar[ing] rewards... for anyone who thinks up any way of expanding his city or his state," combined to keep the public suitably occupied and entertained, and the prince in command of the "majesty of his dignity," (Ch. 21, 91) a prime example of Machiavelli's caustic humor.

When Machiavelli turns to the subject of the "secretaries" of princes, in Chapter Twenty-Two, and "flatterers," in Chapter Twenty-Three, he satirizes the government of the new prince. There is no evidence of civil government in the Prince, to administer the affairs of state. There is, so to speak, a head, but no body. The reader can fill the void with assumptions and guesswork, but Machiavelli does not provide the information which, when contrasted with the emphasis he places on institutions, law, and governing bodies in the Discourses and in the History, indicates a form of disregard for the regimes of tyrants. The government is his government, in any case. Nor does Machiavelli make any reference to trade and commerce with regard to governing bodies. He merely suggests that the new prince should "take account" of "guilds" or "clans," and "meet with them sometimes, and make himself an example of humanity and munificence," (Ch. 21, 91) or, in other words, attempt to keep them friendly. Therefore, although Machiavelli devotes
considerable attention to the problem of maintaining the security of the prince, he spends virtually no time at all on the intricacies of maintaining the state in every other aspect, an omission that reflects his cynicism.

Nor is there any notion of civic virtue in the Prince. As Marcia L. Colish observes:

The principle dimension that is present in *De Officiis* and which Machiavelli deliberately omits from the *Prince* is the dimension of civic virtue... the leaders whom Cicero addresses in the *De Officiis* are an aristocracy, but in his own mind they represent and inspire the virtues the whole community can and should manifest. Machiavelli, by contrast, has difficulty envisioning such an organic moral relationship between the ruler and the ruled in a principality. Or perhaps more precisely, he has difficulty envisioning it in the case of a Medici ruler for whom the *Prince* was intended. His omission of the Topos of civic virtue [in] the *Prince* therefore, can be seen as an ironic comment on princes in general and in particular. It is certainly an omission which contemporary readers, steeped as they were in Cicero's *De Officiis*, were bound to notice.\(^{29}\)

It is certainly true that Machiavelli had "difficulty envisioning" an "organic moral relationship between the ruler and the ruled" under the Medici, and modern princes generally, which is the point of his satire. But he offers the example of "good princes" throughout the *Discourses*, in which such things as "peace and justice... nobility and virtue" are praised as worthy of imitation (I. 10, 137-8) by modern princes. Machiavelli did share the views of Cicero,
but he realized that his contemporaries, although "steeped" in Cicero's *De Officiis*, had lost sight of those ancient principles. If he had written a handbook for princes like all the others, it would never have had the impact that the *Prince* has generated. By shocking his readers into awareness, however, he hoped to inspire a desire for reform, and in the *Discourses*, he discussed the means to achieve that end.

In discussing the matter of choosing ministers, Machiavelli defines the second kind of brain, one "that discerns what others understand," (Ch. 22, 92) which imputes limited intelligence, and he states that the prince will "always be reputed wise because he has known how to recognize [a minister] as capable...," "although he does not have the inventiveness by himself," (Ch. 22, 92) in which the word "recognize" is equivalent to "discern," and carries the same assignation of second brain capacity. As I discussed above, in connection with the dedication, Machiavelli attributed the second rank brain to the Medici as well as Pandolfo Petrucci.

Machiavelli makes a credible point in his warning that a minister who is "thinking more of himself than of you, and in all actions looking for something useful to himself," is not trustworthy. (Ch. 22, 93) In corrupt times, however, the new prince would be imprudent if he did not assume that those around him were as corrupt as himself. Therefore, to
"keep" his ministers "good" by heaping "honors" and "wealth" (Ch. 22, 93) on them is dangerous advice, as "conspirators have all been men of standing or intimates of the prince, and, of these, those who have been moved to conspire by too many benefits are as numerous as those moved to conspire by too many injuries, as was the case with Perennis versus Commodus, Plautianus versus Deverus, and Sejanus versus Tiberius. For to all these men their emperors had granted such wealth and so many honors and titles that there seemed to be nothing wanting to complete their power, save the imperial title." (III. 6, 403)

A corrupt court also creates a general climate of corruption among the populace. As Machiavelli remarks in the Discourses, "the faults of Peoples are due to Princes," (III. 9, 483) as the ruler provides an example to the governed, a notion that echoes Cicero's view that a "moral relationship" should exist "between the ruler and the ruled."^30

Machiavelli's statement, "he who has someone's state in his hands should never think of himself, but always of the prince," (Ch. 22, 93) reminds the reader that in tyrannical regimes, the common good is never the first priority, but rather the welfare of the prince himself. Nor does Machiavelli neglect to call attention to the inherent arrogance of the prince within his own court. He comments that a minister "should never remember anything that does not

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pertain to the prince," (Ch. 22, 93) a comic reference, in my estimation, to his self-centered interests, including the notion that a devoted minister should not in fact have anything on his mind but the prince and his prosperity. Certainly many interpretations of this remark are possible, which is true of so many of his humorous asides that, as they may reflect double entendre of a highly personal nature, we may never appreciate the full extent of his meaning or his wit.

Machiavelli's chapter on flattery mirrors a "standard topic in the literature of advice-books for princes, the topic of flatterers and how to avoid them." The underlying reality, of course, is that the Prince itself constitutes the epitome of flattery, in its appeal to the Medici as the designated saviors of Italy--what Garrett Mattingly refers to "at best like empty rhetoric, at worst like calculating but stupid flattery." Indeed, flattery permeates the little work, for the vanity of an arrogant prince makes him a vulnerable target for the shrewd Machiavelli.

In addressing the problem of avoiding flatterers in the court, and in what modes advice should be obtained, Machiavelli notes that men "deceive themselves," (Ch. 23, 93) and he remarks that anyone is "deceived" who thinks that a prince "who establishes an opinion of himself as prudent is so considered not because of his nature, but because of the good counsel he has around him," (Ch. 23, 95) although
in the previous chapter, Machiavelli stridently emphasized that the prince is judged by the men he has around him, "and when they are capable and faithful, he can always be reputed wise... ." (Ch. 22, 92)

Flattery is deceitful because it is insincere and lacks conviction. Machiavelli does not caution the prince to distinguish between truth and deceit, however. Rather, he advises that the prince not accept the "truth" from everyone; "For there is no other way to guard oneself from flattery unless men understand that they do not offend you in telling you the truth; but when everyone can tell you the truth, they lack reverence for you. Therefore, a prudent prince must hold to a third mode, choosing wise men in the state; and only to these should he give freedom to speak the truth to him, and of those things only that he asks about and nothing else." (Ch. 23, 93-4) If the prince assumes that everyone is telling him the truth (but he need only accept it from "wise men"), he is oblivious to the danger of flatterers. And in failing to distinguish between truth and opinion, he is in danger of losing his state.

In Chapter Twenty-four, Machiavelli considers why the "princes" in Italy have lost their states in modern times. He observes that there are two reasons for this problem: a "defect in arms," and the fact that either the "people" were "hostile" or, if "friendly," the "lords" failed to "secure themselves against the great." (Ch. 24, 96)
The point Machiavelli is really trying to make in Chapter Twenty-four, is that the princes of Italy lost their states because they were incompetent with regard to arms. He states, "For men are much more taken by present things than by past ones, and when they find good in the present, they enjoy it and do not seek elsewhere." (Ch. 24, 96). If they "appear ancient," (Ch. 24, 96) it is not in the image of Cyrus, or the mythical founder of Rome, Romulus.

Machiavelli's reverence for the ancients is generally acknowledged among scholars of his works. More often than not, they will make reference to his letter to Francesco Vettori, December 10, 1513, in which Machiavelli expresses, with delicate elegance, his profound respect for antiquity, and the virtue and wisdom which adorned that distant age. Writing from his farm in Sant' Andrea during the period of his exile, he refers to the mundane tasks of his day, and the time he spends at the "inn" with local inhabitants, the "vulgarity" of his pursuits, playing "cricca" and "trick-track," and the "thousand disputes and countless insults with offensive words... fighting over a penny... we are heard shouting as far as San Cascino." And with these "trifles," I keep my brain from growing mouldy, and satisfy the malice of this fate of mine, being glad to have her drive me along this road, to see if she will be ashamed of it." But "on the coming of evening," Machiavelli leaves the vulgar and mundane behind, the debris of his meaningless
existence, and revels in the glories of the past, from which he draws his courage and resolve:

I return to my house and enter my study; and at the door I take off the days clothing, covered with mud and dust, and put on garments regal and courtly; and reclothed appropriately, I enter the ancient courts of ancient men, where, received by them with affection, I feed on that food which alone is mine and which I was born for, where I am not ashamed to speak with them and to ask them the reason for their actions; and they in their kindness answer me; and for hours of time I do not feel boredom. I forget every trouble, I do not dread poverty, I am not frightened by death; entirely, I give myself over to them.

He continues with a reference to the Prince, giving the impression that everything he learned in his long hours of study, he condensed into that little work. More than that, not only what he learned, but what he found worthy of instructing others to imitate:

And because Dante says it does not produce knowledge when we hear but do not remember, I have noted everything in their conversation which has profited me, and have composed a little work On Princedoms, where I go as deeply as I can into consideration on this subject, debating what a princedom is, of what kinds they are, how they are gained, how they are kept, why they are lost. And if ever you can find any of my fantasies pleasing, this one should not displease you; and by a prince, and especially a new prince, it ought to be welcomed. Hence I am dedicating it to His Magnificence Giuliano. Filippo Cassavecchia has seen it; he can give you some account in part of the thing in itself and
the discussions I have had with him, though I am still enlarging and revising it.\textsuperscript{35}

Machiavelli, of course, learned two paths from his study of antiquity, that of virtue and wisdom, reflected in the \textit{Discourses}, as evidenced by his own statements regarding his purpose in writing that work,\textsuperscript{36} and the path of tyranny and corruption, that he criticized in the \textit{Prince}. That is not to suggest that he does not discuss bad government in the \textit{Discourses}. The example of Julius Caesar's corrupt rise to power is not neglected, (I. 10, 134-8), nor does he fail to mention many others, including Nabis, Phalaris, and Dionysius, (I. 10, 135) and the ambitious designs of such men as Spurius Cassius and Manlius Capitolinus, (III. 8, 426-29) who were crushed in their efforts because the people valued their liberty and were as yet uncorrupted. But the \textit{Discourses} is a work dedicated to reviving ancient virtue, and the examples he finds worthy of imitation, such as Lucius Quintius (Cincinnatus), (III. 24, 473-4) the two Catos, (III. 1, 389) and Brutus and Cassius (III. 6, 400) reflect the character and actions that he admired. He praised those in antiquity who had regard for the welfare of others, rather than a high regard for their personal advantage. As Allan Gilbert observed, Machiavelli believed that government should serve the greater good of the community.\textsuperscript{37}

Machiavelli champions modern princes in new principalities, in Chapter Twenty-Four, in a discourse devoted to the
question of why princes in Italy have lost their states. He
doesn't simply praise new princes with glory, but "double
glory," for "having made the beginning of a new principali-
ty, of having adorned it and consolidated it with good laws,
good arms, good friends, and good examples." (Ch. 24, 96)
In fact, the new principalities were "adorned" with none of
the above. "Good laws" can be understood in the context of
the good arms=good laws equation I discussed in connection
with Chapter Twelve. Nor were the arms of new princes good
arms. The "defect in arms" (Ch. 24, 96) that Machiavelli
refers to does not necessarily indicate a lack of arms,
which many of the princes (including the popes) obtained in
abundance by calling in foreigners, and hiring Italian
mercenaries. Rather, he means the lack of virtuous arms—
those arms that are owned by the prince himself, and on
which he alone depends, and this applies to republics as
well.

"Good friends" (Ch. 24, 96) were nowhere to be found
when Cesare Borgia needed them most, after the death of
Alexander VI, with the exception of a few Spanish captains.
He had alienated all those with power and influence who
might have come to his aid. And the notion that new princes
should be praised for their "good example" is Machiavelli's
way of ridiculing his own advice, to practice hypocrisy and
decision.

He creates the impression that only hereditary princes
were deprived of their states when he remarks, "double shame" to those "who, having been born a prince," have "lost it through [their] lack of prudence." (Ch. 24, 96) No doubt he meant every word of this accusation. In The Art of War, he remarks, "It did not enter the minds of these poor wretches that they were preparing themselves to be the prey of whoever attacked them," precisely because they were unprepared. But new states were lost, as well, and for the same reason. And in his example of Naples and Milan, (Ch. 24, 96) Machiavelli illustrates this point with a vengeance, for a defect in arms combined with the ambition of a new prince for power (and not one who became prince by hereditary right) resulted in decades of war and chaos in Italy, precipitated by the actions of Ludovico Sforza.

Ludovico was "de facto ruler of Milan... a guardian of the titular duke [Gian Galeazzo, 1476-1494], his nephew and a minor." Gian was married to Isabella of Aragon, daughter of Duke Alfonso of Calabria, and granddaughter of King Ferrante of Naples. When Gian turned twenty, Isabella called on her "southern relatives" to end Ludovico's "long regency, which Ludovico resisted, having "long ago decided never to yield his place." King Ferrante declared war, and Lodovico called on King Charles VIII of France to "undertake the long threatened campaign to vindicate his right to the Neopolitan Crown." In the summer of 1494, the King of France "emerged upon Italian soil." The invasion by France
began "forty years of war," and, for that reason, Machiavelli accuses Ludovico of causing Italy's "ruin," in the History. Ludovico was also the cause of his own ruin. After the mysterious death of Gian Galeazzo, in 1494, Ludovico became Duke of Milan, described as a "tyrant," "utterly unscrupulous," and "pricked with ambition," a new prince thoroughly in accord with the quality of the times. Following the death of Charles VIII, in 1498, Louis XII became King of France and, in 1499, Louis invaded Italy, with the intent to lay claim to both Milan and Naples. As Machiavelli relates, in Chapter Three, Ludovico lost Milan. He was taken prisoner to France, where he died in 1510. "No Italian with as much as a touch of patriotism can have viewed the catastrophe of the Moor with any other feeling that a traitor had received his reward." Thus, both new and old states were lost in Italy, despite impressions to the contrary created by Machiavelli. Had he also emphasized new princes who were deprived of their states, Cesare Borgia, his model prince, would have figured prominently among them, as Machiavelli maintained that he could "find no fresher example than the actions of that man." (Ch. 7, 33) His absence in this discourse is conspicuous, and intended to be so, to contradict the notion that new princes were secure in their new principalities, and deserving of "double glory" (Ch. 24, 96) for their acquisitions, particularly with regard to arms.
With the exception of those like the Duke of Urbino, whose subjects tried to come to his aid, most of the princes of Italy were undefended, which is precisely the point that Machiavelli is trying to make. The notion of a "hostile people," or failing to secure oneself "against the great," (Ch. 24, 96) while not without importance, is in this instance a ruse on his part, a means of ridiculing princes for not organizing and training their subjects into a military strong enough to defend the state. Therefore, a defect in arms was the cause for the princes losing their states, as "those defenses alone are good, are certain, and are lasting, that depend on you yourself and on your virtue." (Ch. 24, 97)

In his conclusion to the Art of War, Machiavelli considers the plight of Italy with regard to military preparedness:

He then who despises these ideas, if he is a prince, despises his principedom; if he is a citizen, his city. And I repine at Nature, who either should have made me such that I could not see this or should have given me the possibility for putting it into effect. Since I am an old man, I do not imagine today that I can have opportunity for it. Therefore, I have been liberal of it with you who, being young and gifted, can at the right time, if the things I have said please you, aid and advise your princes to their advantage. By Italy's condition I do not wish you to be dismayed or terrified, because this land seems born to raise up dead things, as she has in poetry, in painting, and in sculpture. But so far as I am concerned, since I am
advanced in years, I have no hope. Yet assuredly if Fortune had in the past granted me a state large enough to permit such an attempt, I believe that in a short time I could have shown the world how much ancient customs are worth. Without doubt I would have made my state greater with glory or lost it without shame.\textsuperscript{46}

Machiavelli addresses the question of how fortune can be opposed in Chapter Twenty-five. He makes the point that "many have held and hold the opinion that worldly things are so governed by fortune and by God, that men cannot correct them with their prudence, indeed they have no remedy at all." (Ch. 25, 98) And "because of the great variability of things which have been seen and are seen everyday, beyond every human conjecture," (Ch. 25, 98) people are more inclined to that opinion than ever. He notes that he has, himself, "been in some part inclined to that opinion," (Ch. 25, 98) a sentiment that is echoed in the Discourses as well:

Hence men who in this life normally either suffer great adversity or enjoy great prosperity, deserve neither praise nor blame; for one usually finds that they have been driven either to ruin or to greatness by the prospect of some great advantage which the heavens have held out, whereby they have been given the chance, or have been deprived of the chance of being able to act virtuously. Fortune arranges this quite nicely. For, when it wants a man to take the lead in doing great things, it chooses a
man of high spirits and great virtue who will seize the occasion it offers him. And in like manner, when it wants a man to bring about a great disaster, it gives precedence to men who will help to promote it; and, if anyone gets in the way, it either kills him off or deprives him of all power of doing good. (II. 29, 371)

Machiavelli remarks that "men may second their fortune, but cannot oppose it," yet they should never give up, "because there is always hope... ." (II. 29, 372) Although he states that fortune cannot be opposed, and even deprives men of the chance to act virtuously, he allows that in some circumstances, virtue can oppose fortune. In reference to Camillus, in the Discourses, Machiavelli remarks, "One sees here how great men remain the same whatever befalls. If fortune change, sometimes raising them, sometimes casting them down, they do not change, but remain ever resolute, so resolute in mind and conduct throughout life that it is easy to see that fortune holds no sway over them. Not so do weak men behave; for by good fortune they are buoyed up and intoxicated, and ascribe such success as they meet with, to a virtue they never possessed, so that they become insupportable and odious to all who have anything to do with them," and when their fortune changes, they become "base and abject." (III. 31, 488) Further, he states, "For where men have but little virtue, fortune makes a great display of its power; and since fortune changes, republics and governments frequently change; and will go on changing till someone
comes along so imbued with the love of antiquity that he regulates things in such fashion that fortune does not every time the sun turns round get a chance of showing what it can do." (II. 30, 375-6)

The notion that virtue can oppose fortune is also stated by Machiavelli in Chapter Twenty five; "It happens similarly with fortune, which shows her power where virtue has not been put in order to resist her and therefore turns her impetus where she knows that dams and dikes have not been made to contain her. And if you consider Italy, which is the seat of these variations, and that which has given them motion, you will see a country without dams and without any dike. If it had been diked with suitable virtue, like Germany, Spain, and France, either this flood would not have caused the great variations that it has, or it would not have come here." (Ch. 25, 98-9) The idea that the flood would not have come to Italy is in reference to foreign invaders, against whom Italy had no virtuous arms (defined as one's own, comprised of citizen or subject armies) for defense. His reference to Italy as the "seat of these variations, and that which has given them motion," however, is a criticism of Italy within--the lack of virtue that led to disorders and, ultimately, to attack from foreign powers. Across the corrupt landscape of Italy, as Machiavelli portrayed it in the Prince and in the Discourses, there was no virtue to oppose fortune--not in the sense of arms, in the
rule of princes, in the institutions of government or in the Church, nor was there virtue in the people themselves. There is a tone of lament in this discourse, a sense of loss or foreboding, or perhaps helplessness on Machiavelli's part, to affect the changes he desired for Italy and especially Florence. Despite the fact that he could have entertained little hope for change, however, he remained a relentless critic of the present.

The first indication that he is offering a distorted perspective on his views regarding fortune is contained in the statement, "I judge that it might be true that fortune is arbiter of half of our actions, but that she leaves the other half, or close to it, for us to govern." (Ch. 25, 98) The idea that our actions are governed by fifty percent fortune and fifty percent free will—or close to it—is pure fiction, and he makes no effort to defend it. By adding "or close to it," Machiavelli suggests that free will might not quite represent fifty percent, in which case our will is even more seriously compromised or disadvantaged. And if it isn't fifty percent, what component fills the void that remains? Machiavelli, it would seem, has intended that the new prince ponder these foolish notions.

Free will, of course, means that a prince can choose the path of virtue or vice, good or evil. Machiavelli makes the point in the Discourses that he who acts in accordance with the times will be the most prosperous. A "republic,"
he maintains, "enjoys good fortune for a longer time than a principality, since it is better able to adapt itself to diverse circumstances owing to the diversity found among its citizens than a prince can do." (III. 9, 431) It is difficult to change our ways because "it is impossible to go against what nature inclines us to," and when "a certain line of conduct" works well, it is "impossible to persuade men that they can get on well by acting otherwise. It thus comes about that a man's fortune changes, for she changes his circumstances but he doesn't change his ways." (III. 9, 431-2) As he does in the Prince, he gives the example of Julius II, whose impetuous actions accorded with the times, and allowed for his success.

As fortune varies, then, a prince will prosper or not, according to his ability to adjust to the "quality of the times." (Ch. 25, 99) Machiavelli clearly defines the quality of the times as corrupt when he states, "For one sees that in the things that lead men to the end that each has before him, that is, glories and riches, they proceed variously: one with caution, the other with impetuosity; one by violence, the other with art [force and fraud]; one with patience, the other with its contrary—and with these different modes each can attain it." (Ch. 25, 99) Of glory, Cicero "sternly warned in the De Officiis against assuming that true glory can ever be gained by vain displays or hypocritical talk. All such pretenses fall to the ground as
quickly as fragile flowers, for nothing counterfeit possesses any lasting quality." It is clear, given the precepts in the Prince, that the new prince does not seek glory from virtuous conduct that is genuine, or from virtuous actions that redound to the public good. Rather, he seeks glory in reputation acquired in great enterprises, spectacles of magnificence, and a display of those qualities that have the appearance of virtue and noble conduct. Vanity motivates the new prince, and not a sense of honor. He is then, vainglorious, seeking selfish ends. An honorable ruler, such as Cyrus, gained "repute" from his virtue, and because he did not exhibit those vices associated, by Machiavelli, with bad governing, (Ch. 20, 462) while the new prince relies on cruelty and the other vices to sustain him in his power, without honor or true glory.

With regard to "riches," (Ch. 25, 99) Machiavelli observes that "honour... was paid to poverty in Rome," and the "citizens thought it sufficient to win honours in a war, and to leave all the profits to the public," a "poverty that lasted to the days of Paulus Aemilius, which were the last happy days the republic enjoyed, days wherein a citizen would by his triumph bring riches to Rome, yet himself remain a poor man." (III. 25, 476) This mode helped to preserve the "freedom" of the state. (III. 25, 475) And while Machiavelli believed that a citizen, in his own times, should be free to enjoy his wealth, (II. 2, 280) he strenu-
ously objected to those who used their wealth to advance their private interests which corrupted the city, as evidenced in the actions of Cosimo de' Medici, and to princes, as well, who "were poor, yet desired to live like rich men," and corrupted their subjects in the process.

When the times conform to a mode of proceeding, then, one will prosper, as did Pope Julius II, who "found the times and affairs in harmony with his mode of proceeding," and "he always achieved a prosperous end." Had the "times" changed, however, requiring him to "proceed with caution, his ruin would have followed." (Ch. 25, 101) As the times were corrupt, Machiavelli educated his new prince to proceed accordingly, developing the character and modes of conduct and actions that would enable him to achieve the end he desired. But these were not the ends that Machiavelli thought noble or desirable for Italy. His new prince was a sham--a reflection of the dark and ugly side of fortune that held sway over the country, and "deprived him [Machiavelli] of all power of doing good." (II. 29, 371) As he demonstrated in his play, Clizia, however, fortune is influenced more by "wit and fraud," than by "force," and Machiavelli's wit and fraud constitute the elements of his satire in the Prince that make it the remarkable literary work that it is. Perhaps nowhere in the Prince are these elements better demonstrated than in his concluding remarks, in Chapter Twenty five, in which he urges the new prince to adversely
affect his good fortune by attempting to influence it with force, the least formidable means at his disposal. With all the brutality of a licentious prince, then, Machiavelli beckons him to tempt his own fate:

I judge this indeed, that it is better to be impetuous than cautious, because fortune is a woman; and it is necessary, if one wants to hold her down, to beat her and strike her down. And one sees that she lets herself be won more by the impetuous than by those who proceed coldly. And so always, like a woman, she is friend of the young, because they are less cautious, more ferocious, and command her with more audacity.

(Ch. 25, 101)

As in all of his conduct, necessity pardons the new prince for his violence, even against fortune--the architect of his path to riches, infamy, and power.
Chapter XVI. The Exhortation

In the first twenty-five chapters of the Prince, Machiavelli crafted his satire with subtle shades of meaning that often depended on a word or a phrase to convey his real intent, a lively undercurrent beneath a mask of sincerity offering every appearance of merit and justification. The new prince represented an authentic phenomenon in Italy, but Machiavelli's advocacy of such a man was pure artifice. In this final chapter, he brings the various elements together in a grand finale of rhetorical flourish—adorned with biblical language and symbolism—that transforms his satire. The chilling and sinister matter-of-fact tone of the previous pages gives way to the realm of farce, in the ludicrous and absurd notion that the Medici are poised to fulfill a calling from God to lead their fellow Italians to a Promised Land, a feat given no less significance, by Machiavelli, than the suggestion of the Exodus, led by Moses. The Promised Land before the Italians, however, was not their liberty and freedom in this incredible exhortation, but, rather, the promise of servitude and injustice under new masters.

In his opening paragraph, Machiavelli sets the stage for his blasphemous and ingratiating appeal to the Medici:

Thus, having considered everything discussed above, and thinking to myself whether in Italy at present the times have been tending to the honor of a new prince, and whether there is matter to give opportunity to someone prudent and virtuous to introduce a new form that
would bring honor to him and good to the community of men there, it appears to me that so many things are tending to the benefit of a new prince that I do not know what time has ever been more apt for it. (Ch. 26, 101-2)

The notion that the "matter" will provide "opportunity to someone," specifically a tyrant, defines the times as corrupt. In the Discourses, Machiavelli observes that where there is good "material," the corrupt are thwarted in their ambition, but when the "material" is "corrupt," it is possible to "impress" a form of government that accords with their "ambition." (III. 8, 428) As Machiavelli thought Italy more corrupt than other states, (I. 55, 244) the "matter" he refers to was clearly corrupt, and he concludes that the present times do tend to the "honor of a new prince," and, in fact, he doesn't know "what time has ever been more apt for it." (Ch. 25, 101-2)

Tyranny is the form of government that Machiavelli alludes to in reference to "form," which one can intimate from the precepts given in the Prince, and he makes a point of stating that he has "considered everything discussed above" in reference to his previous chapters. (Ch. 26, 101) Because the times are corrupt, then, the opportunity exists for the rise of a tyrant, whose vices have been made to appear honorable and virtuous as would be consistent with times of that order, and the notion of prudence has given way to "impetuosity." (Ch. 25, 101)

Above all, Machiavelli directs his sarcasm to the root
of the problem of tyranny—a tyrant's disregard for the public welfare. He suggests that the new "form" will not only bring honor to the new prince, but "good to the community of men" as well. In the Discourses, however, Machiavelli observes that "Experience shows that cities have never increased in dominion or wealth, unless they have been independent," while "the opposite happens when there is a prince" for when "tyranny replaces self-government," progress "declines," and he notes that if anyone wants to "confirm" his views on the matter, "let him read Xenophon's treatise On Tyrannicide." (II. 2, 276)

In order to establish the need for the rise of a new prince, Machiavelli appeals to the conditions in Italy, in which the people are "more enslaved than the Hebrews, more servile than the Persians, more dispersed than the Athenians, without a head, without order, beaten, despoiled, torn, pillaged, and having entered ruin of every sort." (Ch. 26, 102) Although conditions were deplorable in Italy, especially from the perspective of a republican who not only lamented the state of war in Italy, but the defeat of the republican government in Florence, as well, what Machiavelli is really describing is the fate that awaits Italy under the rule of a tyrant prince, in which case "enslaved," "servile," and "dispersed" all take on new meaning. And if conditions seemed "deplorable" at the moment, the prospect of the princes of Florence becoming the princes of Italy
made those conditions pale in comparison, with regard to liberty and freedom. He refers to "Moses," "Cyrus," and "Theseus" (Ch. 26, 102) to recall the ancient models of virtue that he offered in Chapter Six, but he omits "Romulus," (Ch. 6, 21-4) as I mentioned above, who would indeed be maligned in an exhortation to oppress the people of Italy, despite the fact that Machiavelli notes at "present," Italy required the "virtue" of an "Italian spirit," (Ch. 26, 102) one who displayed the right intentions of Romulus, a founder who exemplified authentic virtue, by Machiavelli's standards.

The first biblical language employed by Machiavelli is in reference to Cesare Borgia and Alexander VI, in a passage that clearly reflects his irreverence for the Vatican in Rome; "And although up to now a glimmer has shown in someone who could judge that he had been ordered by God for [Italy's] redemption, yet later it was seen that in the highest course of his actions, he was repulsed by fortune." (Ch. 26, 102) In so far as God and fortune are often used interchangeably by Machiavelli, one might interpret his remark as an indication that Cesare was "repulsed" by God, for to suggest that he was ordered by God--to fulfill his own ambition and greed--is an absurd notion. When Cesare died, his sister, Lucrezia, "ordered Strozzi to compose... a funeral chant," in which "Il Valentino is depicted as a hero sent by Providence to unite Italy and restore her to the
glory of ancient Rome,"² a notion that would surely have
astounded Machiavelli, if he knew of it, and suggests the
nature of his satire, if indeed he was familiar with it. In
any case, the idea that Cesare was "ordered by God"
(Ch. 26, 102) seems intended as a mockery of Alexander VI,
from whom Cesare took his orders, and in whom there was
hardly a spark of divine grace.

In Chapter Six, Machiavelli states that Moses was the
"mere executor of things that had been ordered for him by
God." (Ch. 6, 22) He reiterates that theme with regard to
the Borgia, then, and repeats it in his appeal to the
Medici; "Nor may one see at present anyone in whom she can
hope more than in your illustrious house, with its fortune
and virtue, supported by God and by the Church of which it
is now prince, can put itself at the head of this redemp-
tion." (Ch. 26, 102-3) Having called the Medici to "head"
the "redemption," Machiavelli moves in the direction of
farce, for while his previous remarks were outlandish, one
might still judge that, taken at face value, he is sincere
(if a bit poetic). It becomes clear, however, that what
Machiavelli asks the reader to accept, with regard to the
Medici and their mission, is simply preposterous:

This is not very difficult if you summon
up the actions and lives of those named
above. And although these men are rare
and marvelous, nonetheless they were
men, and each of them had less opportu-
nity than the present; for their under-
taking was not more just than this one, nor easier, nor was God more friendly to them than to you. Here there is great justice; "for war is just to whom it is necessary, and arms are pious when there is no hope but in arms." Here there is very great readiness, and where there is great readiness, there cannot be great difficulty, provided that your house keeps its aim on the orders of those whom I have put forth. (Ch. 26, 103)

Machiavelli refers to Cyrus, Moses, and Theseus in his mention of the "actions and lives of those named above." His comment that despite their "rare" and "marvelous" standing, "nonetheless they were men" is not quite true, strictly speaking. Theseus was a mythical hero, and thus not subject to the limitations of man. Had he included Romulus in this chapter, who also had mythical origins, every Italian who read the Prince would have been stupefied to find Romulus reduced to the stature of the Medici, with no greater an opportunity nor, one might assume, ability. The inclusion of Theseus, a hero in Greek mythology, seems less obvious for, like Cyrus and Moses, he did not have historic ties with the founding of Rome.

Nor does Moses quite fit the mold of an ordinary man, having spoken to God, and whose "opportunity" was thrust upon him as a servant of God to fulfill God's will, and not his own ambition. Only Cyrus, whose success is not associated with spiritual or mythical origins, can be said to have relied wholly on his own virtue, and thus answers the description of men implied in Machiavelli's statement. By
suggesting that Moses, Cyrus, and Theseus were (only) men, however, their heroic stature is effectively diminished, and by adding that "each of them had less opportunity than the present," Machiavelli reduced the scope of their achievements to fit the circumstances in Italy. The Medici vision of empire and family power thus invites an unfavorable comparison to the motives of the great founders, who created governments of lasting and profound significance.

Robert Ridolfi remarks that Machiavelli intended to dedicate the Prince "to one who seemed to possess all the qualities of the awaited 'new prince' except one: 'virtue.' For that reason, in his book he quickly passes over hereditary principalities and deals briefly with those acquired with virtue, to expiate instead on those acquired by good fortune. This had been the case with Il Valentino and Pope Alexander, and it was repeating itself with Giuliano and Pope Leo," and, one might add, with Lorenzo as well. By fortune, however, which also applies to the Borgia, Machiavelli meant that side of fortune which raises up men to promote "disaster," when that is fortune's desire. (II. 29, 371)

The notion that "war is just to whom it is necessary," and "arms are pious when there is no hope but in arms" (Ch. 26, 103) refers to armies who are at war, (III. 12, 440-43) and does not echo Machiavelli's beliefs, if necessity pertains to his "exhortation" to the Medici "to seize
Italy." (Ch. 26, 101) In fact, Machiavelli refers to the issue of just arms and necessity, in the History, in the context of liberty, specifically addressed in opposition to the Medici. In a set speech delivered by Rinaldo degli Albizzi, Albizzi endeavors to get "aid against Cosimo's government," from Duke Filippo, in which Machiavelli makes the following assertions:

> By all her people that city deserves to be loved which loves all her people equally, not that city which, neglecting all the others, bows down before a very few of them. No man should condemn in all conditions weapons that citizens turn against their native place. He should not do so because cities, though they are mixed bodies, bear likeness to simple bodies. Just as in simple bodies diseases often appear which cannot be healed without fire and steel, so in cities many times there are such disorders that a merciful and good citizen, when steel is the necessary remedy, would sin much more in leaving them untreated than in treating them. In the body of a republic what illness can be more serious than servitude? What medicine is more necessary than that which relieves it from disease? Only those wars are just that are necessary; and arms are holy when there is no hope apart from them. I do not know what necessity can be greater than ours, or what holiness can surpass that which takes any man's native city from slavery. It is therefore most certain that our cause is holy and just—something that ought to be considered both by us and by you.\(^5\)

In the Prince, however, Machiavelli sanctioned the predatory ambition of the Medici by offering the semblance of necessity and just cause to their aspirations. It was a
function of his satire to put "holy" and "just" arms at the disposal of the unjust and the unholy, and thus make a mockery of necessity and the ends desired by princes. In the words of Plato:

> The people have always some champion whom they set over them and nurse into greatness... . This and no other is the root from which a tyrant springs; when he first appears he is a protector.⁶

There was indeed great "readiness" in Italy, but for the rise of tyranny rather than "redemption" of her ancient glory. In reference to the "corrupt world" from "1434 to 1494," Machiavelli notes that "upon the Roman ruins nothing has afterwards been built to redeem her from those ruins so that under the government of a strong ruler, she could proceed gloriously," for the world he describes was tainted with "deceptions," and with those "tricks and schemes the princes, the soldiers, the heads of the republics, in order to keep that reputation which they did not deserve, carried on their affairs."⁷ The redemption Machiavelli calls for in the Prince, however, is underlined by deceit, hypocrisy, and cleverness--those qualities that created the corrupt world in the first place. Italy would not be redeemed by the new prince, then, but brought to ruin and servitude.

The miracles that God performed for Moses and the Israelites, Machiavelli claims, He is providing for Italy and her redeemer, although he makes the point that they are "without example," (Ch. 26, 103) to be sure:
Besides this, here may be seen extraordinary things without example, brought about by God: the sea has opened; a cloud has escorted you along the way; the stone has poured forth water; here manna has rained; everything has concurred in your greatness. The remainder you must do yourself. God does not want to do everything, so as not to take free will from us and that part of the glory that falls to us. (Ch. 26, 103)

Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. notes that the miracles are not "given in the same order as in the Bible," and that they occur "just before the revelation at Mount Sinai," when God revealed His Covenant with the people of Israel—His laws for their governance, including the Ten Commandments. Machiavelli leads his readers to the threshold, so to speak, but not through the portal. The lesson that can be drawn from the example of Moses, relative to the new prince and his aspirations in Italy, is that law and justice provide the foundation of great cities and states, and his models of virtue all played a significant role in establishing laws, and institutions to uphold them. And of the Ten Commandments, who among the modern princes could be said to have observed them, or the laws given by governments in the cities they coveted, most especially the popes, who had lost all reverence for God’s laws and the laws of man.

The notion that "God does not want to do everything, so as not to take free will from us and that part of the glory that falls to us," (Ch. 26, 103) is a profound distortion, on Machiavelli’s part, of Old Testament teachings. There is
no part of God's glory that falls to us. In Isaiah 48:11, the words of God are expressed thus; "For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? And I will not give my glory unto another."9 Further, in Jeremiah 13:16; "Give glory to the Lord Your God, before he causes darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turns it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness."10 Machiavelli advised the new prince to use religion, for such qualities as religion are "useful," if one appears to have them, (Ch. 18, 70-1) and he, in turn, has used religion to deceive the prince, making that which is done from unjust motives appear just and holy.

Machiavelli notes that the Italians have failed in their "revolutions" and in their "maneuvers of war," because "it always appears that military virtue has died out in her. This arises from the fact that her ancient orders were not good, and that there has not been anyone who has known how to find new ones; and nothing brings so much honor to a man rising newly as the new laws and new orders found by him." (Ch. 26, 103-4) In this passage, Machiavelli clearly denies his regard for ancient military and civic virtue, that which he applauds throughout the Discourses and in his other major works, including The Art of War. The ancient orders of Italy begun with Romulus reached their apogee in the greatness of Rome, that hallowed ground lauded and revered by

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Machiavelli, together with the "highly virtuous actions performed by ancient kingdoms and republics, by their kings, their generals, their citizens, their legislators, and by others who have gone to the trouble of serving their country," which is "so shunned" in the present, "that of the virtue of bygone days there remains no trace... ." The "new laws and new orders found" by the new prince are not informed by ancient wisdom and virtue, then, but discovered in present necessity, as defined by the needs and desires of the new prince, that which is not lacking for introducing every form (Ch. 26, 104) of bad government and incompetent military preparedness. The "honor" that such a prince can expect from his actions will not issue from Machiavelli, however, but from those who praise infamy and its attendant vices.

From the example of the "battle of Ravenna," Machiavelli makes the point that, in the disposition of foreign arms, there are "defect[s]" in the "Swiss and Spanish infantry," (Ch. 26, 103-4) and he calls for a "third order" that "might not only oppose them but also be confident in overcoming them." (Ch. 26, 104) He does not address the issue of cavalry, however, although in the battle of Ravenna the French cavalry won the day, and thus his example leaves a favorable impression of the effectiveness of cavalry generally. In fact, Machiavelli thought the infantry "more highly esteemed" than cavalry, for "infantry, when
well drawn up, can easily break cavalry, but with difficulty are routed by them," and "among the sins committed by Italian princes who have made Italy the slave of the foreigner, there is none more grave than that of having held this arm [infantry] of small account and of having devoted all their attention to mounted troops." (II. 18, 328-30) If this is so, it would seem valuable information to share with a new prince who is called to free Italy from the barbarians. Rather than make the point that infantry is superior to cavalry, however, which is fundamental to his military theory, he finds a "defect" in both the Spanish and Swiss infantry. The lesson the new prince most needed to learn is left untaught, and the status quo is fundamentally maintained—which leaves little to recommend Machiavelli's military expectations of the new prince.

Machiavelli inculcates the "terrifying" aspect of the "Swiss and Spanish infantry" when he observes, "the Swiss have to be afraid of infantry if they meet in combat any that are obstinate like themselves," (Ch. 26, 104) of which they had little to fear from the Italian mercenaries. He observes, however, that if the Italians would learn the defects of the Swiss and Spanish infantry (the Spaniards are overcome by French cavalry, and the Swiss are afraid of combat with Spanish infantry), they could, by establishing a "third order," learn to "resist" cavalry and overcome their fear "of foot soldiers." (Ch. 26, 104-5) These broad
generalizations, if they have any merit, offer little in the way of useful advice and seem designed to confuse rather than clarify the issue. Thus, even when giving military advice, Machiavelli does not quite take the matter seriously, as though he recognized the futility of his efforts. Rather, he seizes the occasion to make light of his knowledge and experience.

The example of the battle of Ravenna also draws attention to Pope Julius II, and another important aspect of the conduct of war on the part of the Italian princes, that of bringing foreign armies into Italy to achieve their ends. Julius II "talked of delivering Italy from servitude and out of the hands of the French." Opposed by the Venetians in his struggle to regain the Romagna, Julius formed the "League of Cambrai" with "Louis XII, Ferdinand of Aragon, and Maximilian I for the reduction of Venice." When the French defeated the Venetians, Julius became alarmed, fearing "the French would become the chief beneficiaries of the league," prompting Julius to "come to terms" with Venice, and turn against the French, who in turn moved to have Julius "deposed" as "pope." Julius formed the "Holy League" with Venice and Spain, "to protect the Church and oust the French from Italy." The French won the battle of Ravenna, in 1512, but lost their commander, "Gaston de Foix." Julius brought "Emperor Maximilian" into the fray, and the French were driven from Italy."
The actions of Julius II illustrate the point that the modern princes gave little thought to the long-term consequences of bringing foreign powers into Italy, to achieve their ends. Alexander VI and Julius II both relied on aid from the "barbarians," and one might expect the Medici to follow the example of Leo X's predecessors. Not only did the Medici lack arms of their own but at the time Machiavelli wrote the Prince, they had dismantled the Florentine militia he had struggled to create, thus demonstrating an utter disregard for the principle of owning one's own arms. Leo intended to "drive the foreigners from Italian soil," and "form central Italy" into a "unified" state, as discussed above. Without sufficient arms of their own, however, the Medici could hardly expect to either acquire in Italy without foreign assistance, or to free Italy from the threat of foreign powers. Machiavelli's call to the Medici, then (or any Italian prince), to free Italy from the barbarians, was intended to mock the general incompetence of the princes in forming their own military—and their reliance on the foreign arms he exhorts them to throw out of the country. The Medici, after all, had not hesitated to recover their former position of power in Florence with the aid of the Spaniards. Machiavelli didn't support their efforts then, and with the exception of the Prince, there is no evidence of his support in his other major writings.

In his concluding paragraph, Machiavelli's passionate
appeal to the Medici is almost unrestrained:

Thus, one should not let this opportunity pass, for Italy, after so much time, to see her redeemer. I cannot express with what love he would be received in all those provinces that have suffered from these floods from outside; with what thirst for revenge, with what obstinate faith, with what piety, with what tears, What doors would be closed to him? What peoples would deny him obedience? What envy would oppose him? What Italian would deny him homage? This barbarian domination stinks to everyone. (Ch. 26, 105)

Would the powers in Italy, so jealous of their states and their power, willingly succumb to the Medici? As Leo Strauss observes, "The last chapter presents a problem not because it is a call to liberate Italy but because it is silent about the difficulties in the way... the chapter creates the impression that the only thing required for the liberation of Italy is the Italian's strong loathing of foreign domination, and their ancient valor: the liberator of Italy can expect spontaneous cooperation from all his compatriots and he can expect that they all will fly to arms against the foreigners once he 'takes the banner,'" and he notes that "before the liberator can liberate Italy, he would have to take not merely a banner, as is said in the text of the chapter, but Italy herself, as is said in the heading. It is a rare if not unique case in Machiavelli's books that the heading of a chapter should be more informative than its body," the "Exhortation to Seize Italy and to
Free Her from the Barbarians." (Ch. 26, 101)

In response to the question, "what envy would oppose him," one need look no farther than Venice, and of "what peoples would deny him obedience," virtually every Italian who valued their liberty would be numbered among them. Machiavelli himself would be the first to "deny him homage," as his satire attests. As Leo Strauss observes, the Medici must conquer Italy to make it their own:

To liberate Italy from the barbarians means to unify Italy, and to unify Italy means to conquer Italy... the liberator of Italy cannot depend on the spontaneous following of all inhabitants of Italy. He has to pursue a policy of iron and poison, of murder and treachery. He must not shrink from the extermination of Italian princely families and the destruction of Italian republican cities whenever actions of this kind are conducive to his end. The liberation of Italy means a complete revolution... Italians have to learn that the patriotic end hallows every means, however much condemned by the most exalted traditions both philosophic and religious... Cesare Borgia did not become master of the Romagna except by "cruelty well used," Philip of Macedon did not become within a short time "prince of Greece" except by use of means which were inimical not only to every humane manner of life but to every Christian manner of life as well."

In the First Decennale, a work that reflects "ten years of Florentine history, 1494-1504," Machiavelli observes that the "kingdoms and the powers are not united and cannot be," due to conflicts among the powers in Italy, and the involvement of foreigners in the affairs of Italy. And in a letter
written to Francesco Vettori, in 1513, the year Machiavelli wrote the *Prince*, it is clear that he had not changed his opinion; "As to the union of the Italians, you make me laugh, first, because there never will be union here to do anything good. Even though the leaders should unite, they are not sufficient, because there are no armies here worth a farthing, except the Spanish, who, because they are too few, are not enough. Second, because the tails are not united with the heads. The people of this generation will compete in submitting to the Swiss before they will move a step to use any opportunity that arises."¹⁹

Allan Gilbert observes of Machiavelli, "once for a moment he became a dreamer, in the last chapter of the *Prince* imagining a united Italy. Nowhere else does he suggest such union as likely or feasible," nor was a union "warranted by immediate conditions"²⁰ But Machiavelli was not an idle dreamer, as his comments above demonstrate. He understood perfectly the limitations of present conditions in Italy.

Eric Whelpton makes the point that, as late as 1525, "the small states in Italy were helpless because their jealousies and rivalries prevented them from uniting,"²¹ nor were "the political, economic, and military means necessary to achieve Machiavelli's patriotic ends... then available in Italy."²²

Sergio Bertelli remarks that, "Machiavelli did not so
much admire or scrutinize Borgia as oppose him, the Secretary being conditioned by the century-old Florentine political and diplomatic tradition of opposing any movement toward unification at the expense of the city's libertas--a position largely borne out by Machiavelli's observations of the Duke recorded in the Legations.23 Most assuredly, if the Medici succeeded in transforming Italy into a Medici principality, liberty would be lost.

In a more perfect world, Machiavelli might have imagined a federation of sorts, comprised of the five major powers, with the authority to grant dictatorial power to one individual in times of crises--one who could marshall resources and reach decisions quickly, without endless arbitration. In such a world, the citizen and subject armies would be well armed and trained, united in common defense of their country. In 1513, however, there was no hope of any such unification, no appreciable arms for defense, no virtuous leaders or military commanders, nor were the people disposed to preserve their liberty. If Machiavelli satirized the comic stage of Italy in a "blaze of revulsion,"24 he did so with good cause, his sense of foreboding clearly manifest in his call to the Medici princes to seize the country--who symbolized the avarice, incompetence and hypocrisy of the powerful who continued to lead Italy to her ruin.

Machiavelli closes his exhortation to the Medici with
lines from Petrarch's *Italia Mia*:

Virtue will take up arms against fury,
and make the battle short,
because the ancient valour in Italian hearts
is not yet dead. (Ch. 26, 105)

Perhaps it is no coincidence that Machiavelli also
wrote another exhortation, *An Exhortation to Penitence*,
which also closed with a quote from Petrarch, expressing a
sentiment with profound relevance to the *Prince*:

And repent and understand clearly
that as much as pleases the world is a short
dream.\(^{25}\)

The date of this oration is "undetermined,"\(^{26}\) but it was
likely written after "1495," the year that Machiavelli
became a member of the "Company of Piety," one of the "reli-
gious companies" that were "common in Florence."\(^{27}\) Whether
it was written before or after the *Prince*, however, it
appertains to that work in the sense that in the *Exhortation
to Penitence*, Machiavelli speaks of God's forgiveness of
those who repent of their "sin," "evil," and their display
of "ingratitude to God," in changing from "angel to devil,
from master to servant, from man to beast."\(^{28}\) Conversely, in
the *Prince*, Machiavelli inculcates sin and evil, satirizing
the beastly and wicked nature of princes.

Machiavelli's pious sentiments are evident in this
oration, in which he states that the Christian faith is
based on charity:

He cannot be full of charity who is not
full of religion, because charity is patient, is kindly, is not envious, is not perverse, does not show pride, is not ambitious, does not seek her own profit, does not get angry, meditates on the wicked man, does not delight in him, does not take pleasure in vanity, suffers everything, believes everything, hopes everything. Oh divine virtue! Oh, happy are those that possess you!  

These qualities, however, are precisely those that are lacking in the new prince. They represent, rather, the qualities of religious faith that Machiavelli advises the prince he need only appear to have, creating an impression of his religiosity. Robert Ridolfi refers to the "sad and pious pages" of the Exhortation to Penitence as "the climax of the author's Christian thought," through time "adjudged by some otherwise most clear-sighted scholars... as a frivolous joke!" Ridolfi upholds Machiavelli's "essential Christianity," the intimate religious foundation of his conscience which breathes from all his works," and "finds that Machiavelli was anti-clerical, but not an atheist... who wrote [in addition to the Exhortation to Penitence] an octave for a miracle play (recently found), and [lamented] that 'no other hope remains to me but God.'" While Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. notes that "none of Machiavelli's jokes" are "frivolous," he maintains that "if Machiavelli had considered penitence according to Christian virtue a serious possibility, he would have discussed it in the Prince and the Discourses, where he put everything he knew." If the
Prince is satire, however, the reason for not including it seems obvious, for in that work he champions everything that is at variance with the notion of penitence. A call to repent in that unrepentant work would have spoiled the subtlety of his grand artifice—by suggesting that the new prince was, in fact, what Machiavelli portrayed him to be, a beastly monster in need of God's forgiveness, and not a man favored by God in a calling equated with that given to Moses. As for the Discourses, perhaps Machiavelli was not inclined to give his political theory the resonance of Savonarola's beliefs, who was "determined to hold high the cross as a symbol of unification, and to root out evil by penitence."^34

Of charity, then, Machiavelli observes that he who "lacks it... does not teach the ignorant... does not advise him who errs... does not help the good... does not punish the evil."^35 By this definition, Machiavelli was indeed charitable, for in his works he always sought to teach the lessons that he had learned from his long consideration of ancient and modern events that shaped the destiny of Florence and the greater peninsula. And he was charitable to his fellow Italians, who gave him little cause for optimism, for he persisted in his belief that, when fortune holds sway over affairs, one should not "despair," because "there is always hope," (II. 29, 372) perversely expressed in his satire.
Machiavelli states, "with what thirst for revenge" the people await their "redeemer," the Medici, under whose "emblem this fatherland may be ennobled and under its auspices the saying of Petrarch's may come true," that the "ancient valour in Italian hearts is not yet dead." (Ch. 26, 105) But Petrarch did not issue a call for revenge in Italia Mia. "It was his indignation" at the outrages within Italy, the "warring" principalities "devastated" by mercenaries, that "made it again what it had been before, the spoil of barbarian hordes," which inspired him to write Italia Mia, "from his desire to see peace re-established" within Italy itself:

If thus by our own hands we have defiled
Our native soil, whose arm shall set us free?

Now, prisoned in one cage
Wild beasts and gentle flocks together dwell,
Until the good must suffer from the base.

'For love of God,' I cry
'Some time take thought of your humanity
And spare your people all their tears and grief!
From you they seek relief
Next after God. If in your eyes they see
Some mark of sympathy,
Against this mad disgrace
They will arise, the combat will be short
For the stern valour of our ancient race
Is not yet dead in the Italian heart.

From strife and slaughter cease,
From hatching grievous ills, and consecrate
Your lives to a better fate,
To deeds of generous worth,
To gracious acts that cheer and bless mankind;
Thus will you gather joy and peace on earth
And heaven's pathway opened wide will find. 37

Petrarch conveys his sense of despair over the conditions in Italy in this "noble ode," 38 that is echoed in Machiavelli's Prince, as well. "Petrarch's work," however, "rings with the cry for peace," 39 the hope of peace to unify Italy within to enable his countrymen to battle the invading hordes. Machiavelli's battlecry differs significantly, then, from Petrarch, for Machiavelli does not call for unity through peace, but a unification predicated on battles for supremacy fought within--an invitation to continued chaos and a further weakening of Italy that made it prey to foreign intruders in the first place.

It seems incredible that anyone should have believed such foolishness to have emanated from the politically astute Machiavelli. After nearly five centuries, no evidence has surfaced to indicate the Medici reaction to the work, nor is there likely to be. As Garrett Mattingly observes, "we have never found the copy which should have had the best chance of preservation--I mean that copy, beautifully lettered on vellum and richly bound, presented with its dedication to the Medici prince. Not only is it absent from the Laurentian Library now, there is no trace that it was ever there. There is no evidence that it ever existed. Probably Machiavelli figured that the joke was not worth the extra expense." 40
But Machiavelli's other work on government, addressed to the Medici, was never intended as a joke. In *The Remodelling*, Machiavelli put forth his ideas for saving the liberty of Florence in earnest, yet with all the diplomacy that the circumstances demanded. Following the death of Lorenzo de' Medici (1519), Cardinal Giulio de' Medici became ruler in Florence, until his election to the papacy in 1523. As no legitimate male heirs remained in the Medici line, Cardinal Giulio, at the request of Pope Leo, solicited the opinions of the Florentines regarding the future government of the city. Pope Leo died in 1521, and the Cardinal was elevated to the papacy in 1523, taking the name Pope Clement VII. As I mentioned above, in his final considerations, Clement probably "never seriously entertained any other thought than to preserve the Florentine dominion for his family," and thus he "disclosed the existence of two young Medici bastards," Ippolito and Alessandro.

Machiavelli's discourse was rejected by the Medici but it is clear, from this work, that he did not favor a Medici tyranny. Following the death of Lorenzo, who provided a military arm, so to speak, for seizing Italy (as had Cesare Borgia to Alexander VI), one might argue that Machiavelli's hopes for a conquered, united Italy (as expressed in the *Prince*, in Chapter Twenty-six) were destroyed, and thus he turned his thoughts away from the prospects of unifying the country, although Giovanni delle Bande Nere (the Medici of a
secondary line) showed the promise for fulfilling the military opportunity compromised by the death of Lorenzo. But Machiavelli did not pursue the ambitious enterprise he called for in the *Prince*, in the *Remodeling*, nor is there any mention of unifying Italy in this discourse. Rather, he pleaded for the return to republican rule and the preservation of liberty—in a work that reflected his true beliefs. He does not adorn the work with extravagant embellishments taken from scripture, or call on the Medici to redeem the ancient glory of Rome by becoming tyrannical lords over greater Italy, in pursuit of empire. The glory of Rome was the ancient republic, and Machiavelli appeals to the Medici to forsake their own personal glory for the greater good of Florence. He could have desired no less for the greater good of Italy as a whole.

With considerable tact, then, Machiavelli invites the Medici, in *The Remodeling*, to satisfy their personal power while they live, but on the death of the pope and the cardinal, to return the government to the people. In preparation for that eventuality, Machiavelli goes into considerable detail on how the government should be constructed, including reconstituting Savonarola’s Great Council, yet "upholding" the "security" of the Medici "friends," and the "power" of the Medici pope. Machiavelli ignored the issue of governing bodies in the *Prince*. But in this discourse, his regard for democratic principles is made plain, and I do not
think anything in Machiavelli's writings, including the
Discourses, so negates the absurd precepts that he offers in
the Prince as this little work in which, with prudent fore-
sight, Machiavelli implores the Medici to give up their
power and choose that path which will bring the greater
glory to their house:

I believe the greatest honor possible
for men to have is that willingly given
them by their native cities; I believe
the greatest good to be done and the
most pleasing to God is that which one
does to one's native city. Besides
this, no man is so much exalted by any
act of his as are those men who have
with laws and with institutions remod-
eled republics and kingdoms; these are,
after those who have been gods, the
first to be praised. And because they
have been few who have had opportunity
to do it, and very few those who have
understood how to do it, small is the
number who have done it. And so much
has this glory been esteemed by men
seeking for nothing other than glory
that when unable to form a republic in
reality, they have done it in writing,
as Aristotle, Plato, and many others,
who have wished to show the world that
if they have not founded a free govern-
ment, as did Solon and Lycurgus, they
have failed not through their ignorance
but through their impotence for putting
it into practice.\textsuperscript{45}

These are not the words of a man predisposed to politi-
cal solutions grounded in force, fraud, and unlimited power
vested in one individual. Even in the most dire circum-
stances, Machiavelli does not advocate tyrannit. He never
intended that the Medici increase either their dominion or
their authority, as he would have us believe in the Prince.
Rather, his intent was to ridicule their ambition and that of modern princes generally, who had become the scourge of Italy. He mocks their ignorance, their failure to comprehend the consequences of their ambition, which held the promise of continued chaos, war, and their own inevitable ruin.

As did Aristotle and Plato before him, Machiavelli endeavored to found, at least with words, a "free government," a republic that redeemed the virtue of his ancestors in the Republic of Rome, in the Discourses. The Prince casts a long shadow over that noble effort. Taken at his word in the Prince, and considering his other works, as well, moral and immoral practices, good and evil, virtue and vice, liberty and servitude, and justice and injustice all vie for their place within the theoretical limitations of a republican regime founded on democratic principles—in which survival depends on rooting out the corrupting influence of vice, immorality, evil, and injustice, which ultimately lead to ruin. Nor can society raise up a tyrant to meet present necessities, and hope to recover lost freedom and liberties when the crisis is past, when necessity becomes the property of the prince.

Machiavelli would never advocate the principles and actions of the new prince he satirized so brilliantly in the Prince. In defense against such a character, however, Machiavelli would deploy every weapon in his arsenal to
combat the threat of tyranny and oppression. "One's country should be defended whether it entail ignominy or glory," for "it is good to defend it in any way whatsoever." (III. 41, 514) Freedom is what Machiavelli fought to preserve in his writings, (III. 41, 515) and if the Prince is understood as satire, there are no exceptions to that principle in his works; the enigma that surrounds Machiavelli thus evaporates. Political life, in his view, was grounded in morality and ethics, an essential component if tyranny, or the corruption that leads to the rise of tyrannical government, was to be avoided. The more decadent and avaricious the public becomes, the greater the danger that ultimately liberty will be lost. If there is a timeless quality to Machiavelli's thought, it resides in this perspective from his works, so long neglected by scholars of history and political science.

In a collection of essays edited by Bhikhu Parekh and R.N. Berki, the question of whether or not "politics has a moral basis" is addressed. Parekh and Berki suggest that "we are today living through an acute moral crisis and in particular through an agonizing state of interregnum in the morality of politics" calling for "a thorough re-examination of the problems of political morality, for a renewed and persistent questioning of the relevant but hitherto neglected principles of moral and political philosophy." "Dogmatism" and "subjectivism," they argue, have failed, and there
is a "need... not for indignant denunciations and unilateral ideological credos, but for patient—even plodding and pedestrian--academic attempts designed slowly to disentangle the knots, and to generate a new spirit of inquiry. Big questions don't always require big answers... ." Machiavelli should not be excluded from this dialogue, for his concern was also for the common good, what Parekh and Berki define as "the public interest of the whole community," that can only be realized when moral and ethical considerations are joined to political principles.

How unfortunate, then, that Machiavelli's genius recoiled on his intentions in the *Prince*. We have been duped by his cleverness, although he could not have expected to escape discovery—perhaps the greatest danger a satirist risks in weaving his deceptions—especially by those who would be expected to weigh the *Prince* against his *Discourses* and other works that followed. Regrettably, however, his satire was not understood and the message was lost. The "counterfeit" passed for "true," and the critic behind the mask became an advocate, a most perverse irony visited on Machiavelli himself. To label such practices (which he would surely disavow) 'Machiavellian,' then, is to play a cruel joke on the sage prankster, although no doubt he would allow that he deserved it. After all, as he confided to his friend Francesco Guicciardini:
For a long time I have not said what I believed, nor do I ever believe what I say, and if indeed sometimes I do happen to tell the truth, I hide it among so many lies that it is hard to find it.
THE REASON WHY FLORENCE THROUGHOUT HER HISTORY HAS frequently varied her methods of government is that she has never been either a republic or a princedom having the qualities each requires, because we cannot call that republic well-established in which things are done according to the will of one man yet are decided with the approval of many; nor can we believe a republic fitted to last, in which there is no content for those elements that must be contented if republics are not to fall. And that this is the truth, we can learn from the governments Florence has had from 1393 until now.

Beginning with the alteration made at that date by Messer Maso degli Albizzi, we see that then the lawmakers intended to give her the form of a republic governed by aristocrats, but their form had so many defects that it did not last longer than forty years; and it would have been less permanent if the Visconti wars had not ensued, which kept it united. Its defects were, among others, that it prepared the list of those eligible to office far ahead of time; because of this, fraud was easy, and the choice could be not good; for, since men change easily and turn from good to bad and, on the other hand, places were given to citizens much ahead of time, it could easily happen that the choice was good and the drawing bad. Besides this, nothing was established to cause fear in great men, so that they would not set up factions, which are the ruin of a government. The Signoria, moreover, had slight prestige and too much power, being able to dispose without appeal of the life and property of the citizens, and being able to call the populace to a parliament. Hence it came to be not the defender

1. A description of the government of Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici, in which the real authority had to get the consent of the nominal authority.

2. A citizen might be fit for an office when his name was put in the pouch containing the names of those eligible, but might be unfit when, much later, on the drawing out of his name, he assumed office.

3. The head of the Florentine government, consisting of the Gonfalonier and (usually) eight Priors.
of the state but a means for causing its ruin, whenever an influential citizen could either control or befuddle it. On the other hand, as has been said, it had little prestige, because, since often it included men of low station, young men, and had a short term, and did not carry on important business, it could not have prestige.

That constitution also suffered from a failing not of slight importance: that men in private station took part in deliberations on public business. This kept up the prestige of the men in private stations and took it away from those in official ones, and it had the effect of taking away power and prestige from the magistrates—a thing opposed to every sort of well-ordered government. To these failings of that constitution was added another, which amounted to as much as all the rest: the people did not have their share. These conditions, altogether, caused countless injustices, and if, as I have said, external wars had not kept that government solid, it would have fallen sooner than it did.

Next, after this, Cosimo's government was established, tending more toward the princedom than toward the republic. If yet it lasted longer than the other, the cause lay in two things: one, that it was established with the people's aid; the other, that it was controlled by the prudence of two such men as Cosimo and Lorenzo his grandson. Nevertheless, such weakness resulted from its having to decide through a large number what Cosimo planned to carry out, that many times he risked the failure of a plan. From this came the frequent parliaments and the frequent exiles that took place during his control, and than at last, at the critical time of King Charles's expedition, the Medici government fell.

After that, the city decided to resume the form of a republic, but did not apply herself to adopting it in a form that would be lasting, because the ordinances then made did not satisfy all the parties among the citizens; and on the other hand, the government could not inflict punishment. And it was so defective and remote from a true republic that a Gonfalonier for life, if he was intelligent and wicked, easily could make himself prince; if he was good and weak, could easily be driven out, with the ruin of the whole government. Since it would be a long matter to set forth all the reasons, I will tell just one: the Gonfalonier did not have those around him who could protect him, if he were

4. His plans became law only through republican channels.

5. Virtually a reference to Piero Soderini, such a Gonfalonier for life, driven out in 1512.
good; nor anyone who, if he were bad, could restrain him or set him right.

The reason why all these governments have been defective is that the alterations in them have been made not for the fulfillment of the common good, but for the strengthening and security of the party. Such security has not yet been attained, because there has always been in the city a party that was discontented, which has been a very powerful tool for anybody who wished to make a change.

The only government now left to consider is that from 1512 to the present, and what its weaknesses and strong qualities have been, but because it is a recent affair and everybody knows it, I shall not speak of it. To be sure, the Duke's death has brought things to a point where new types of government must be considered. So I believe that, to show my loyalty to Your Holiness, I cannot err in saying what occurs to me. First I shall give the opinions of many others as I have heard them stated, next adding my own opinions; if I err, Your Holiness must excuse me as more loving than wise.

I say, then, that some judge no government can be established firmer than that existing in the times of Cosimo and of Lorenzo. Some others wish one more inclusive. They say, indeed--those who would like a government like Cosimo's--that things easily go back to what is natural. For this reason, since naturally Florentine citizens honor your house, enjoy those favors that come from it, and love what it loves, and since they have followed this habit for sixty years, nothing else can happen but that when they see the same ways, the same frame of mind will return to them. Moreover they believe few could continue in an opposing frame of mind--and those few would do so through a habit of opposition, easily got rid of. To these reasons they add necessity, showing that Florence cannot continue without a director; and since she has to have one, it is much better that he be of the house the people are accustomed to bow down to than that either, not having a director, they should

6. The party making them.

7. Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, was in charge of Florence until his death in 1519.

8. Taking in a larger number of citizens.

9. The ways they had been accustomed to under Medici rule.
live in confusion or, having one, should get him elsewhere—which would bring less prestige and less satisfaction to everybody.

Against this opinion we answer that a government of that sort is risky if for no other reason than that it is weak. If the government of Cosimo had in those times so many weaknesses as are abduced above, in these times such a government would redouble them, because the city, the citizens, the times are different from what they were then, so that by no possibility can anyone devise a government in Florence that can last and be like that one. In the first place, Cosimo's government had the approval of the people generally, and the present one has their disapproval. The citizens of Cosimo's time had never experienced in Florence a government that gave greater power to the people; the present citizens have experienced one that they think more just and that pleases them better. In Italy at that time there was neither army nor power that the Florentines, even though standing alone, could not with their armies resist; but now, since Spain and France are here, the Florentines must ally themselves with one of the two; yet if the ally they select loses, at once they are left as the booty of the victor—a thing that in Cosimo's day would not have happened. Formerly, the citizens were accustomed to paying many taxes; now, through either inability or change in custom, they are out of the habit; and to try to get them back into it is a matter hateful and dangerous. The Medici who were governing then, since they had been educated and brought up among the citizens, conducted themselves with such friendliness that they gained favor. Now, they have grown so great that, since they have gone beyond all the habits of citizens, there cannot be such intimacy and consequently such favor. Hence, considering this unlikeness in times and in men, there cannot be a greater deception than to believe that upon such differently shaped matter one can stamp the same form. And if in that day, as I said above, every ten years the Medici were in danger of losing control, now they would actually lose it. Nor should anyone believe that men easily return to a way of life that is old and habitual, because in truth they do so when the old way of living is more pleasing than the new one, but when it pleases less, they do not return to the old way unless forced to, and they live in it only as long as that force lasts.

Besides this, though it is true that Florence cannot

10. P. 103, "the frequent parliaments." Cf. DISCOURSES 3. 1; HISTORY OF FLORENCE 6. 7; 7. 1 end.
exist without a director, and that if she should have to
decide between one unofficial director and another, she
would like better a director from the house of Medici than
one from any other house, nevertheless, if it is a decision
between an official and an unofficial director, the official
director would always be more pleasing—no matter where
taken from—than the unofficial director.

Some hold the opinion that you cannot lose control of
the government without an attack from outside, and believe
you will always have time enough to make a friendly arrange-
ment with any invader. In this they deceive themselves
seriously, because, usually, alliance is not made with the
strongest power but with the power which just then has the
best opportunity for injuring you or which your spirit and
your fancy most dispose you to love. Your ally may chance
to be defeated (and if defeated he is left in the power of
the victor) and his conqueror may not decide on a treaty
with you, either because you are too late in asking for it
or because he has grown to hate you as a result of your
connection with his enemies. For example, Lodovico the Duke
of Milan would, if he could, have made a treaty with King
Louis XII of France. King Frederick would have made a
treaty with the same ruler if he could have secured one.
Both of these princes lost their states through not being
able to make treaties; at such times a thousand accidents
spring up to hold you back. Hence, everything considered,
we cannot call a government modeled on Cosimo's either safe
or firm, since it has so many causes for lack of firmness.
Therefore, it should not be acceptable to Your Holiness and
your friends.

As to those who prefer a government more inclusive than
Cosimo's, I say that unless it is inclusive in such a way
that it will become a well-ordered republic, its inclusive-
ness is likely to make it fall more rapidly. And if they
will explicitly tell how they would like it organized, I
shall give an explicit answer, but since they continue in
generals, I am not able to answer other than generally.
I believe the following answer alone is enough; so to con-
trive the government of Cosimo, I say this: No firm govern-
ment can be devised if it is not either a true princedom or
a true republic, because all the constitutions between these

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11. An official director would be one constitutionally
chosen, as opposed to Cosimo de' Medici as a prince without
legal recognition.

12. King Frederick of the Kingdom of Southern Italy.
two are defective. The reason is entirely evident, because
the princedom has just one path to dissolution, that is, to
descend toward the republic. And similarly the republic has
just one path toward being dissolved, that is, to rise
toward the princedom. Governments of a middle sort have two
ways: they can rise toward the princedom and descend toward
the republic. From this comes their lack of firmness. It
is therefore not possible, Your Holiness, if you wish to
give Florence a firm government for your own glory and the
security of your friends, to set up there other than a true
princedom or a republic having its distinctive parts. Any
other form would be useless and short-lived.

Now as to the princedom, I shall not discuss it in
detail, both because of the difficulty of establishing one
here and because there are no facilities for doing it.
Moreover Your Holiness needs to understand that in all
cities where the citizens are accustomed to equality, a
princedom cannot be set up except with the utmost difficul-
ty, and in those cities where the citizens are accustomed to
inequality, a republic cannot be set up except with the
utmost difficulty. In order to form a republic in Milan,
where inequality among the citizens is great, necessarily
all the nobility must be destroyed and brought to an equali-
ty with the others, because among them are men so above all
rules that the laws are not enough to hold them down, but
there must be a living voice and a kingly power to hold them
down. On the contrary, in order to have a princedom in
Florence, where equality is great, the establishment of
inequality would be necessary; noble lords of walled towns
and boroughs would have to be set up, who in support of the
prince would with their arms and their followers stifle the
city and the whole province. A prince alone, lacking a
nobility, cannot support the weight of a princedom; for that
reason it is necessary that between him and the generality
of the people there should be a middle group that will help
him support it. This can be seen in all the states with a
prince, and especially in the kingdom of France, where the
gentlemen rule the people, the princes the gentlemen, and
the king the princes.

But because to form a princedom where a republic would
go well is a difficult thing and, through being difficult,
inhumane and unworthy of whoever hopes to be considered
merciful and good, I shall pass over any further treatment
of the princedom and speak of the republic, both because
Florence is a subject very suitable for taking this form and
because I know that Your Holiness is much inclined toward
one; and I believe that you defer establishing it because
you hope to find an arrangement by which your power in
Florence may continue great and your friends may live in
security. Since I believe I have discovered one, I hope
Your Highness will give attention to my discovery, so that if
there is anything good in it, you can make use of it and also learn from it how great is my wish to serve you. And you will see that in this republic of mine your power is not only preserved but is increased, your friends continue to be honored and safe, and the whole body of citizens has evident reasons for being satisfied. With the utmost respect, I beg Your Holiness not to condemn and not to praise this discourse of mine without first reading it through. And likewise I beg you not to be disturbed by some changes in the magistrates, because when things are not well organized, the less there is left of the old, the less there is left of the bad.

Those who organize a republic ought to provide for the three different sorts of men who exist in all cities, namely, the most important, those in the middle, and the lowest. And though in Florence the citizens possess the equality mentioned above, nonetheless some of her citizens have ambitious spirits and think they deserve to outrank the others; these must be satisfied in organizing a republic; the last government, indeed, fell for no other cause than that such a group was not satisfied. To men of this sort it is not possible to give satisfaction unless dignity is given to the highest offices in the republic—which dignity is to be maintained in their persons.

By no possibility can this dignity be given to the highest offices in the government of Florence if the Signoria and the members of the College remain in the same condition as in the past. On account of the way in which these groups are chosen—since important and influential men now sit in them only rarely—either this governmental dignity must be lowered and be put in unsuitable places (which is contrary to all political order), or must be abandoned to private individuals. Therefore this method is necessarily to be corrected, and in its correction the loftiest ambition in the city is to be satisfied. This is the way to correct it. Abolish the Signoria, the Eight of Practica, and the Twelve Good Men; and in exchange for them, in order to give dignity to the government, ordain sixty-five citizens of forty-five years and more, fifty-three for the major guilds and twelve for the minor guilds, who should remain for life in the government, in the following manner: Choose from the said number a Gonfalonier of Justice for two or three years,

13. To allow the government to be controlled by political bosses, not in office, as in Cosimo's time.

14. The Eight of Pratica dealt with foreign and military affairs; the Twelve Good Men with finance and trade.
if it should not seem proper to set him up for life; the sixty-four citizens who are left are to be divided into two groups, thirty-two for each. One group is to govern along with the Gonfalonier for one year, the other group the next year; and so in succession they are to exchange, keeping the arrangement indicated below. All together are to be called the Signoria.

The Thirty-two are to be divided into four groups, eight to a group; and each group is to reside with the Gonfalonier three months in the Palace, and to assume the magistracy with the ceremonies that are customary, and to carry on all the business that the Signoria alone carries on today. And after that, with its other companions of the thirty-two, it should have all the authority and carry on all the business that today the Signoria, the Eight of Practica, and the members of the College carry on; these are abolished above. So this, as I have said, would be the chief head and chief arm of the government. This arrangement, if it is carefully considered, will be recognized as giving dignity and influence to the head of the government, for, evidently, weighty men, who have prestige, will always occupy the highest places. It will not be necessary to consult private individuals—which I said above is pernicious in a republic—because the thirty-two who are not that year in the magistracy can serve for advice and consultation. It will also be possible for your Holiness to put in this first selection, as I shall explain below, all your friends and trusted followers. But let us come to the second rank in the government.

I believe it is necessary, since there are three sorts of men, as I said above, that there be also three ranks in a republic, and not more. Therefore I believe it good to get rid of the jumble of councils that have existed for some time in your city. These have been formed not because they were necessary to good government but to feed through them the vanity of more of the citizens, and to feed it with a thing that in truth is of no consequence for the well-being of the city, because all of these councils can by means of parties be demoralized.

If I am trying, then, to design a republic with three components, it seems to me necessary to abolish the Seventy, the Hundred, and the Council of the People and of the Community; and in exchange for all these to set up a Council of Two Hundred, composed of men at least forty years old, forty of them chosen from the minor guilds and a hundred and sixty from the major guilds; not one of them would be permitted to belong to the Sixty-five. They should hold office for life and be called the Council of the Selected. This Council, along with the Sixty-five named, should do all the things and have all the power that today is held by the above mentioned councils abolished to make way for it. And this
would be the second rank in the government; all of its members would be chosen by Your Holiness. In order to make these changes and to support and regulate the above-mentioned groups and those that will be described below, and for greater security to Your Holiness' authority and friends, Your Holiness and the Most Honorable Cardinal of the Medici must have, by means of the Balia, as much authority during the lives of both as is held by the entire people of Florence. The magistracy of the Eight of Defence and Balia is to be appointed by the authority of Your Holiness, from time to time. Also, for greater security of the government and of Your Holiness' friends, the levy of infantry is to be divided into two brigades, to which Your Holiness, on your own authority, should provide annually two commissioners, one commissioner for each brigade.

We see that by the things mentioned above we satisfy two sorts of men, and give firmness to your authority in the city and to that of your friends, since you have the military and criminal justice in your hand, the laws in your bosom, and all the heads of the government as your supporters.

It is now left to satisfy the third and final class of men, which is the whole general body of citizens, who will never be satisfied (and he who believes differently is not wise) if their power is not restored or if they do not have a promise that it will be restored. And because to restore it all at one time would not be for the security of your friends, nor for the upholding of the power of Your Holiness, it is necessary in part to restore it and in part to promise to restore it in such a way that they will be altogether certain of having it again. And therefore I judge that you are under the necessity of reopening the Hall of the Council of One Thousand, or at least of the Six Hundred Citizens, who would allot, just as they formerly did, all the offices and magistracies except the aforenamed Sixty-five, the Two Hundred, and the Eight of Balia; all of these during the life of Your Holiness and of the Cardinal you would appoint. Moreover, in order that your friends may be certain, when there is a choice in the Council, that they have been put in the pouches, Your Holiness is to select eight couplers, who, remaining in secrecy, can declare

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15. Balia means, in general, power. Specifically, here and usually in Machiavelli, it is a committee with arbitrary power to remodel the Florentine government.
elected whom they wish, and can deny election to anybody.\textsuperscript{16} And in order that the citizens generally may believe that the names of those elected were taken from the pouches,\textsuperscript{17} the Council must be permitted to send in security two citizens chosen by it to witness the pouching.

Without satisfying the generality of the citizens, to set up a stable government is always impossible. Never will the generality of the Florentine citizens be satisfied if the Hall is not reopened.\textsuperscript{18} Therefore, if one is to set up a republic in Florence, this Hall must be reopened and this allotment made to the generality of the citizens. Your Holiness should realize that whoever plans to take the government from you will plan before everything else on reopening it; therefore it is a good scheme to open it with conditions and methods that are secure, and to take away from anybody who may be your enemy opportunity for reopening it to your indignation and with the destruction and ruin of your fiends. If once the government were so arranged, it would not be necessary, if Your Holiness and the Most Reverend Monsignor\textsuperscript{19} were going to live forever, to provide for anything else, but you must cease to be, and you wish to leave behind a perfect republic made strong with all needed parts, which everybody will see and realize needs to be just as it is. Therefore, in order that the generality of the people (both because of what is given to them and of what is promised to them) may be contented, it is necessary, in addition, to arrange as follows: The sixteen Gonfaloniers of the Companies of the People are to be chosen in the way and for the time for which they have been chosen up to now; they may be appointed on the authority of Your Holiness or chosen by the Council, as you please; you would merely make a second term less usual, so that the office will be dis-

\textsuperscript{16} Texts read: "will not be able to deny election," but considering that the function of the couplers was to see that the right men held office, I assume that the negative should be omitted.

\textsuperscript{17} The word for be elected, gain the office, is singular but its meaning seems plural.

\textsuperscript{18} The Hall of the Grand Council, now called the Hall of the Five Hundred, in the Palace of the Signory (Palazzo Vecchio). The Grand Council was part of Savonarola's government formed in 1495.

\textsuperscript{19} Cardinal Giuliano de' Medici, later Pope Clement VII.
tributed more widely through the city; and it should be specified that none of them could be taken from the Sixty-five. When they have been selected, four Provosts should be among them by lot, to hold office a month; hence at the end of their term all will have been Provosts. Among these four, one should be chosen, to reside a week in the Palace with the nine Signors in residence, so that at the end of the month all four of them will have been in residence. The said Signors resident in the Palace are not to do anything in a Provost's absence; he would not have to give his vote, but merely be a witness of their proceedings. He could indeed veto their decision in a case, and appeal it to all the Thirty-two in a body. So in the same way the Thirty-two could not decide anything without the presence of two of the said Provosts; yet the two would not have there other authority than to delay a decision considered among the Thirty-two and appeal it to the Council of the Selected. Neither could the Council of the Two Hundred decide anything, if there were not present at least six of the sixteen with two Provosts; yet the latter could not do anything other than take a case away from the Council and appeal it to the Grand Council, when three of them were in agreement to do it. It would not be possible to assemble the Great Council without twelve of the said Gonfaloniers, among them at least three Provosts; there they would be allowed to give a vote like the other citizens.

The establishment of such colleges is necessary after the lifetime of Your Holiness and of the Most Reverend Monsignor for two reasons. One is that if the Signoria or one of the councils does not decide a matter as the result of discord, or does things opposed to the common good through wickedness, somebody may be at hand to take from them that power and appeal their decision to another body, because it is not good that one kind of magistrate or council should be able to retard public business without someone's being there who can arrange for action. It is also not good that office-holders should not have somebody to observe them and make them abstain from actions that are not good. The other reason is that on taking from the generality of the citizens (by removing the present Signoria) the possibility of becoming a Signor, it is necessary to restore to them an office resembling that taken away, and this

20. What follows makes this evident as the meaning, though the text does not warrant it.

21. This meaning is required by what follows but is not derived from either of the usual readings.
provostship is greater, more useful to the republic, and more honorable than the earlier office. For the present, it would be well to choose these Gonfaloniers, in order to get the city into proper procedures, but not to allow them to exercise their powers without the permission of Your Holiness; and you might make use of them to get a review of the actions of those groups with respect to your authority and your government.

Besides this, in order to give perfection to the republic after the lifetime of Your Holiness and of the Most Reverend Monsignor, in order that it may not want any part, it is necessary to arrange for a Court of Appeal from the Eight of Defence and Balìa, made up of thirty citizens, to be taken from the pouches of the Two Hundred and of the Sixty together. This Court of Appeal would be able to summon the accuser and the accused within a certain time. This appeal, during your lifetime, you would not allow to be used without your permission. This appeal is essential in a republic because a few citizens do not have the courage to punish important men, and therefore it is necessary that for such a result many citizens should join, that their judgment may be secret, and since it is secret, each man may excuse himself. Such an appeal will also be useful during your lifetime in causing the Eight to expedite cases and do justice, because, for fear lest you permit the appeal, they will judge more justly. To keep everything from being appealed, appeal can be forbidden in cases of fraud that do not involve at least fifty ducats, and in cases of violence in which there has been neither breaking of bones nor shedding of blood, unless the damage rises to the sum of fifty ducats.

I believe, considering all this organization as a republic, and without your authority, that it lacks nothing necessary to a free government according to what is above debated and presented at length. But if it is considered while Your Holiness and the Most Reverence Monsignor are still living, it is a monarchy, because you have authority over the armed forces, you have authority over the criminal judges, you keep the laws in your bosom. I do not know anything more to be wished for in a city. Also there is nothing that your friends, such as are good men and intend to live on their own property, need to fear, since Your Holiness has so much power and they sit in the highest seats of the government. We do not see also how the generality of the citizens can be other than satisfied, seeing that part of the allotments have already been made and the others seem as though little by little they would fall into their hands. Because Your Holiness could now and then let the Council choose one of the Sixty-five who is lacking, and also one of the Two Hundred; and some of them you yourself would choose according to the times. And I am certain that in a short
time, by means of the power of Your Holiness, who will steer everything, this present government will change in such a way into the other one, and the other into this, that they will become one and the same, and all one body, with peace for the city and everlasting fame for Your Holiness, because always your power can take care of such defects as arise.

I believe the greatest honor possible for men to have is that willingly given them by their native cities; I believe the greatest good to be done and the most pleasing to God is that which one does to one’s native city. Besides this, no man is so much exalted by any act of his as are those men who have with laws and institutions remodeled republics and kingdoms; these are, after those who have been gods, the first to be praised. And because they have been few who have had opportunity to do it, and very few those who have understood how to do it, small is the number who have done it. And so much has this glory been esteemed by men seeking for nothing other than glory that when unable to form a republic in reality, they have done it in writing, as Aristotle, Plato, and many others, who have wished to show the world that if they have not founded a free government, as did Solon and Lycurgus, they have failed not through their ignorance but through their impotence for putting it into practice.

No greater gift, then, does Heaven give to a man, nor can Heaven show him a more glorious road than this. So of all the many blessings God has given to your house and to Your Holiness in person, this is the greatest; that of giving you power and material for making yourself immortal, and for surpassing by far in this way your father’s and your grandfather’s glory. Consider, then, Your Holiness, first of all, that by holding the city of Florence under these present conditions you risk, on the coming of accidents, a thousand dangers; and before they come, Your Holiness has to endure a thousand vexations unbearable by any man. (Of these vexations you will be assured by the Most Reverend Lord Cardinal, since he has been for these past months in Florence.) They come partly from many citizens who in asking are arrogant and unbearable; partly from many who—since they believe that at present they do not live in security—do nothing else than declare that order should be brought into the government; one says it should be extended and one that it should be retracted, and nobody comes to particulars about the way for retracting or extending, because they are all confused. Though they suspect they are not secure in their present way of life, they do not know

22. Including Pope Leo’s great-grandfather, Cosimo.

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how they would like to adjust it; any man who might know
how, they do not trust. Thus with their confusion they are
enough to upset the most orderly brain.

If you wish, then, to escape these vexations, there are
but two ways: either be more sparing with audiences and do
not give the people courage to ask, even in an ordinary way,
or to speak when they are not asked, as did the Duke of
illustrious memory; or organize the government in such a way
that it will administer itself and that Your Holiness will
need only to keep half an eye turned on it. Of these meth-
ods, this last frees you from dangers and from vexations;
the first frees you from vexations only.

But to return to the dangers you run if affairs remain
as they are, I wish to make a prediction. I say that if an
emergency comes when the city is not at all reorganized, one
of two things will be done, or both of them at once; either
in riot and haste a head will be set up who with arms and
violence will defend the government; or one party will run
to open the Hall of the Council and plunder the other party.
And whichever of these two things comes about (which God
forbid), Your Holiness can image how many deaths, how many
exiles, how many acts of extortion will result, enough to
make the cruelest man—much more Your Holiness, who is most
merciful—die of sorrow. There is no other way for escaping
these ills than to give the city institutions that can by
themselves stand firm. And they will always stand firm when
everybody has a hand in them, and when everybody knows what
he needs to do and in whom he can trust, and no class of
citizen, either through fear for itself or through ambition,
will need to desire revolution. Gilbert (1965)

V.1 pp. 101-115.
ENDNOTES

Introduction

1. The Prince will hereafter be abbreviated to the Prince.


3. Berlin 149.


7. Berlin 158.

8. Jensen ix-x.


13. Jensen x.


15. Jensen x.


18. Cloulas 338.


22. Jensen xi.


24. Jensen xi.


27. Jensen xiii.


29. Jensen xiii.


32. Hulliung 241-46.

33. Hulliung 245.


35. Mattingly (1960) 102-03.


I. Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici


2. Ridolfi 163.


4. Ridolfi 163.

5. Schevill 471.


7. Ridolfi 141.

8. Ridolfi 164.


11. Schevill 474.


13. Ridolfi 176.


15. Ridolfi 163.


17. Hibbert 223.


19. Schevill 476.
II. Machiavelli and the Republic of Florence

2. Ridolfi 118.
3. Ridolfi 126.
4. Hibbert 214.
5. Hibbert 213.
6. Hibbert 213.
7. Ridolfi 129.
8. Hibbert 214; "Soderini is called upon to resign August 31. His Deposition is officially proclaimed September 1. Giuliano de' Medici enters Florence September 1." Machiavelli (1891) 144.
9. Schevill 471.
10. Schevill 471-72.
11. Schevill 471.


22. Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Discourses* Bernard Crick, ed. (New York, [rp] 1983) 254. In future references to this work, the book will be designated by a Roman numeral, followed by chapter and page numbers, in parenthesis, within the body of the paper. The *Discourses* is divided into three books; Machiavelli would not have agreed that Florence was built during the Roman republic. Rather, it was his understanding that it was "built under the Roman empire." (I. 1, 102). Nevertheless, his preference for a republican form of government was rooted in the Roman republic, which he touted in the *Discourses* as a model for Florence.

29. Mattingly (1960) 100.

Walter B. Scaife, in *Florentine Life* (Baltimore, 1893) describes the Signoria as "the practical directors of the affairs of Florence... at first known as Priori, or priors... the chief men" who later "received the title of Signori, or lords. In 1458 it was changed to Priori di Liberta, Priors of Liberty, at a time when Florentine liberty was fast disappearing under the subtle innovations of the Medici." (p. 24) "At first the priors were equal among themselves, and the representatives of the highest dignity
as well as of the highest power in the state. However, in
the year 1293 they were given a chief, with the title Gon-
faloniere di giustizia or Banneret of Justice." (p. 26) In
1502, Piero Soderini was elected gonfaloniere for life, and
served in that position until the fall of the republic in
1512; in his History of Florence (hereafter referred to as
the History), Machiavelli refers to the change in name of
the Signori to Priors of Liberty;" ...Priors of the Guilds
should thereafter, in order to have the name at least of the
possession they had lost, he called Priors of Liberty." ALLAN GILBERT, trans. "The History of Florence" in
Machiavelli: The Chief Works and Others (Durham, North
Carolina, 1965) V3, 1340.


31. Mattingly (1960) 100.

32. Gilbert V.3, 1340. The History.

33. Cecil Roth, The Last Florentine Republic (New
York, 1968) 261.

34. Reinhold Schumann, Italy in the Last Fifteen Hun-
dred Years (Lanham, Maryland, 1986) 171.

35. Ridolfi 15-20. The office of the second chancery
was "not comparable in dignity and authority with that of
first Chancellor of the Republic." (p. 15) "originally, the
first [Chancery] dealt with foreign affairs and correspon-
dence, the second with home affairs and war, but as time
went on and their business changed and overlapped, part of
their functions were handed over to the secretariat of the
Ten when there was one, and with this office the second
chancery was eventually combined or confused... the two
Chanceries between them managed all home affairs, foreign
affairs, and war... they alone held the threads of affairs
in their hands." (p. 20) Machiavelli became secretary of
the Ten, while maintaining his former position as Secretary
of the Second Chancery.


37. Nicolai Rubenstein, "Machiavelli and Florentine
Politics." MYRON P. GILMORE, ed. Studies On Machiavelli
(Firenze, 1972) 5-6.

38. Schevill 439.

39. Schevill 442,
III. Machiavelli: Honest and Good

1. Ridolfi 133.
2. Ridolfi 40.
3. Ridolfi 59.
6. Ridolfi 134.
7. Ridolfi 134.
9. Ridolfi 130.
12. Machiavelli (1891) 146.
14. Ridolfi 84.
15. Ridolfi 56.


17. Ridolfi 135.


19. Ridolfi 136. Ridolfi does not elaborate on the nature of the jibes. Perhaps they resembled the manner in which Machiavelli ridiculed Lorenzo de' Medici much earlier, in a letter to Luigi Guicciardini (brother of Francesco Giucciardini, noted historian and friend of Machiavelli), December 9, 1509. In this notorious letter, Machiavelli describes a prostitute he encountered. Lured into a dark house by his laundress, to see some "beautiful shirts... I believed her--innocent prick that I am," he finds, instead, the prostitute whom he describes in lurid detail, as well as the events that follow. His description of the grotesque woman is appalling, surely the product of his fertile imagination, and includes an unflattering reference to Lorenzo: "... the top of her head was bald, which allowed you to
observe a number of lice taking a stroll... her mouth looked like Lorenzo de' Medici's, but it was twisted to one side and drooled a bit since she had no teeth to keep the saliva in her mouth." Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Portable Machiavelli*. Peter Bondanella and Mark Muza, ed. and trans. (New York, 1979) 58-60. Lorenzo the Magnificent is described by Christopher Hibbert as follows: "his heavy jaw jutted forward so that his lower lip almost enclosed the upper... quite strikingly ugly." Hibbert 113.

21. Machiavelli (1891) 146.
22. Ridolfi 136.
27. Hibbert 232-33. The problem of Giulio's legitimacy (important to the future of the Medici as Giulio was the sole heir to the Medici fortune after the death of Pope Leo), was resolved by Leo who arranged for a commission to find, "as they dutifully did," that Giulio's father "had been secretly married to Simonietta Gorini and that Giulio was their legitimate son."

28. Ridolfi 201.
33. Ridolfi 202-03.
34. Ridolfi 203.
35. Ridolfi 203.
Although Machiavelli notes that "the times will be more liberal and not so suspicious" in this letter, and a month later remarks that if he isn't employed in Florence, he might be employed "in behalf of Rome and of the papacy, in respect to which I ought to be less suspected," if his "affair is handled with some skill," (pp. 106-7) (a highly questionable remark with the elder Medici installed as pope in Rome), he nevertheless admits, by December, 1513, that should he come to Rome to be with Vettori (because the Soderini are also in Rome whom he would be obliged to see), he would "fear that on my return I could not hope to dismount at my house but should dismount at the prison, because though this government has mighty foundations and great security, yet it is new and therefore suspicious." (p. 143).

38. Schevill 474.
44. Gilbert V.2, 1013. The Stench of Roncesvalles refers to an area "between the Arno and the western part of the wall of Florence, where dead horses and asses are skinned." (p. 1013)
45. Radcliff-Umstead 117.
46. Sices 3-4.
47. Sices 3-4. Ragionamento refers to reasoned arguments; to persuade by argument. Mario Hazen, Grande Dizionario (Milano, 1961) 1777.
48. Radcliff-Umstead 117.
49. Ridolfi 138.

50. Gilbert V.2, 1014. Two Sonnets to Giuliano, Son of Lorenzo de' Medici.


52. Gilbert V.2, 1015. In reference to line five.

53. Gilbert V.2, 1015.

54. Johnson 79.


57. Ridolfi 13. From a "self-portrait which he sketched in an eight-line stanza."


59. Elizabeth Hazelton Haight, The Roman Use of Anecdotes (New York, 1940) 143.


61. Schevill 474.


IV. The Dedicatorv Letter

1. Sices 229. The Canzone from the close of act three, of Machiavelli’s play, Mandragola.

2. Niccolò Machiavelli, The Prince, Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., trans. and intro. (Chicago and London, 1985) 3-4. As Mansfield’s text is my primary reference for the Prince in this paper, I will refer to it in the body of the text by Chapter and page number, in parenthesis. All references in the endnotes to ‘Machiavelli (1985)’ will indicate this work, for extended commentary or notes.


9. Machiavelli (1983) 400. Machiavelli also refers to Nabis as "the prince of the Spartans" (Ch. 9, 41); in the *Discourses*, however, Machiavelli calls Nabis the "Spartan tyrant." (III. 6, 408).


11. Ridolfi 133.


15. Sices 19.

16. Chief among the twentieth-century justifications for the *Prince* is the notion of reason of state; "State necessity dictates all actions which are 'political' in any proper sense." Parry 115.


19. An example from the *Discourses* is Machiavelli's rather lengthy discourse on the rise of Appius to power, through the Decemvirate. (I. 40, 210–16).

20. The generally accepted interpretation that attempts to eradicate this difficulty is that of Machiavelli understood in the role of objective scientist or technician, a
dispassionate observer, "ethically and politically uncommitted, an objective analyst of politics, a morally neutral scientist," represented in the views of "Cassirer, Renaudet, Oschki, and Sir Keith Hancock." Berlin 153.

23. Machiavelli (1983) 98. Preface to Book One of the Discourses. If one compares this statement with a similar remark made in his dedication of the Prince, "For I wanted it either not to be honored for anything, or to please solely for the variety of the matter and the gravity of the subject," (p. 4) it is apparent that he did not have the common benefit in mind when he wrote the Prince; rather, it was his desire to 'please' the Medici.
31. Cloulas 333.

As Garrett Mattingly observed, Machiavelli "made his
distaste for the Borgia clear enough" in this work. Mattingly (1960) 105.

33. Hulliung 94-5.

34. Cloulas 183.

35. Ridolfi 57.

36. There are two references to Cesare Borgia in the Discourses. The first pertains to Cesare's request to pass through Tuscany, which Machiavelli suggests that the Florentines should have granted, having insufficient forces to prevent it: "Hence it would have accorded better with their honour to have seemed to allow his passage of their own accord, rather than be forced to it." (I. 38, 205-6). The second reference concerns the "occupation of Arezzo, Val di Tevere, and the Val di Chiana." (III. 27, 480).


38. Machiavelli mentions the invasion of Florentine dominions by the Spanish Army, in 1512, "with a view to restoring the Medici," to make the point that because the Florentines were "too proud" to accept terms, the state was ruined. If Machiavelli so favored the Medici, he would hardly attribute ruin of the state to their restoration. "For what the Spanish army wanted was to change the form of government in Florence," and "its attachment to France; and to levy tribute. If of these three things the Spaniards had gained the last two, and the people of Florence had gained the first, that is the retention of their form of government, each would have acquired a certain honour and a certain satisfaction." (II. 27, 365-6); There are two references to the Pazzi conspiracy against the Medici. (III. 6, 400 and 405) Cosimo de' Medici is mentioned in the context of his power and how one thwarts "the ambition of any citizen" in gaining "authority" in a corrupt republic. (I. 52, 235-6); In another reference to Cosimo, Machiavelli explains how the Medici became great, by "favors gained by his own prudence and through the ignorance of the citizens," arousing "alarm for the security of the government." Having been driven out of Florence, his own faction recalled him, and "made him the 'prince' of that republic," the result of open opposition to his power. (I. 33, 191-2). The actions of Pope Leo are cited to demonstrate why one should not remain neutral, in order to pounce on the victor." (II. 22, 344-45). There is no tone of praise for the Medici in the Discourses, as one finds in the Prince.

I have not been able to determine when the dedication of the Discourses was written. As Machiavelli is quite forthright in his criticism of those in power, which reflects adversely on the Prince—a work that praises the moderns generally (with the exception of warfare)—he may perhaps have written the dedication as late as the fifteen-twenties, after the death of Pope Leo, at least in its present form.

Ridolfi 248. The Piagnoni was a party "with ties" to the "memory of Savonarola," whose influence was "still strong" during the revolutionary activity of the last republic, 1527-1529. Roth 60.

Mattingly (1960) 108.

Buondelmonte was a member of the "republican audience of the Oricellari Gardens" for whom the Discourses "were written." Hullung 95.


Gilbert V.3, 1028. The History.

Gilbert V.3, 1028. Allan Gilbert offers an example from the History, Book Four, Chapter Twenty-eight. In the original draft, Rinaldo degli Albizzi criticizes the
government of Cosimo, accusing him of bribing the people so that "he can do what he wants" in the councils and magisteries; of making the soldiers his "partisans"; of lacking "nothing of being prince but the title." (p. 1028); In the final draft, he is not so specific, but still accuses Cosimo of using his "influence resulting from his enormous riches," and "that he had been brought so high that, unless something were done about it, he would become their prince." (p. 1222) In both drafts, Albizzi issues a call to the people to "apply a remedy," and warns against Cosimo's increasing status. (pp. 1028 and 1222). Gilbert makes the point that it is "astonishing" that even a weakened form of this stood in the manuscript put in the hands of Giulio de' Medici, Pope Clement VII. (p. 1028).

56. Haight 110.

57. Ramage 5.

58. Machiavelli (1983) 136. Cataline failed in his attempt to "seize the consulship by conspiracy." Caesar is more disliked by Machiavelli simply because he succeeded in destroying the republic and its liberties; he was, in a word, a tyrant, and therefore detestable and traditionally the proper object of assassination." 530, n.9.

59. Hibbert 228.

60. Machiavelli (1961) 143. By this remark, Machiavelli likely meant that if he did not present the Prince to Giuliano, Ardinghelli would steal his ideas from it and present them as his own, (143, n.9) implying that the manuscript would soon be circulated in any case, whether or not it was ever presented to Giuliano.

61. Machiavelli mentions these discussions in his letter to Francesco Vettori, January, 1515, a letter of highly questionable content as will be discussed in its place. Machiavelli (1961) 183-6.

62. Ridolfi 162.

63. Ridolfi 162.


66. Sices 159. From the Prologue to Mandragola.

Spatz 29. In reference to Aristophanes, Spatz makes the point that a "joke is much funnier... to those who recognize the exact lines being parodied, understand the subtleties of meter and diction, and know the thinkers as well as their thought." The subtleties of satire are more readily perceived when enhanced by familiarity with the author and the events and people being portrayed as well.

Mattingly (1960) 103.

Haight 102.

Ashley Brown and John L. Kimmey, *Satire* (Columbus, Ohio, 1968) 6.


Haight 103-4.

McKay 149-50.

Johnson 25.


Gilbert V.3, 1177. The History.

Johnson 322. From Henry Fielding’s *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great*.

Pollard 29-30.

Machiavelli (1985) xxvi.

Gilbert V.3, 1028. The History.

Although Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., includes the word 'magnificent' or 'magnificence' seven times in his
translation, as I have indicated: L. Arthur Burd's text of the Prince (Il Principe), in Italian, indicates the word "magnifico," "magnifiche," and "Magnificenza" used six times (in its variations) rather than seven; it appears twice rather than three times in the third paragraph. Machiavelli (1891) 169-174.


86. Whitfield 45-6.
87. Whitfield 45.
88. Whitfield 48.
89. Gilbert V.3, 1057. The History.

90. Mattingly (1960) 106: Machiavelli did not praise the ability of the people to govern in the Prince, as he did in the Discourses, for the obvious reason that, as the oppressed, they had no authority or opportunity to govern under the new prince. He did have great confidence in the ability of the people to govern, however, which one would expect of a republican devoted to democratic principles; "Government by the populace is better than government by princes. Nor do I care whether to this opinion of mine all that our historian has said in the aforesaid passage [Livy] or what others have said, be objected; because if account be taken of all the disorders due to populaces and of all those due to princes, and of all the glories won by populaces and all those won by princes, it will be found that alike in goodness and in glory the populace is far superior. (I. 58, 256).

93. Johnson 79.

V. Comic Writer


5. Mansfield 381.


16. Mansfield, Jr. 381.


18. Ridolfi 60.

19. Jensen 1X.

20. Fliesher 267.


22. Pollard 70. From "Epistle to a Lady" by Jonathan Swift.
VI. Kinds of Principalities

1. Cloulas 333; L. Arthur Burd notes that "de prince-patibus" was the original title, and cites a letter from Buonaccorsi as proof of his claim. Machiavelli (1891) 175.

2. Machiavelli (1891) 175.

3. Cloulas 333.


5. Machiavelli (1983) 516: The Discourses were begun in 1513, and the earliest possible date for completion of that work is 1517. Gilbert VI, 186-87. From Allan Gilbert’s introduction to the Discourses.

6. Machiavelli (1891) 175.


8. Ridolfi 178.


13. Schumann 158.


15. Mattingly (1960) 102-03.

16. Strauss 15. Strauss maintains that the movement toward the "anti-traditional character of The Prince becomes explicit after the middle of the book," which peaks "in the center." (p. 14)

17. Gilbert (B) 453.

18. Gilbert (B) 460.
26. Gilbert V.3, 1220. The History. These remarks were framed in a set speech attributed to Niccolò Uzanno, an opponent of Cosimo. As I mentioned above, Donnato Giannotti stated that Machiavelli remarked, what he "was not willing to say as coming from myself, I shall have his [Cosimo] opponents say." (p. 1028). The History.

This letter marks the end of Machiavelli's correspondence with Vettori, which did not resume until the 1520's, by all accounts that I have seen.

Allan Gilbert, trans. "Familiar Letters" from Machiavelli: The Chief Works and Others (Durham, North Carolina, 1965) V2, 960, 886. John M. Najamey notes that only four autographed letters of Machiavelli have been discovered, pertaining to the years 1513-1515. Najamey 10-
11, n.15. The letter in question is not among them. Further, Najamey asserts that "most of the known letters, and many of Vettori's letters to Machiavelli were preserved by Giuliano de' Ricci, Machiavelli's grandson, who copied the originals [Vettori's] together with Machiavelli's letters and texts," collected in a single volume known as the "Apolo­grafa Ricci," presently found in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence. In Najamey's opinion, Ricci could only have copied Machiavelli's letters to Vettori if Machiavelli himself kept copies of them. "At one point in the corre­ spondence, Vettori remarks that he was not in the habit of keeping copies of letters he wrote to Machiavelli, whereas there are indications that Machiavelli did copy and keep at least some of his own to Vettori." (pp. 10-12); As I men­ tioned above, Ricci failed to copy Machiavelli's play, The Masks, based on Aristophane's The Clouds, because he found the subject matter objectionable.

39. As John H. geerken observes, "After long lapses of time, he occasionally recopied manuscripts... mixing in his notebooks old passages with new ones, thus making it impos­ sible to assign work to a given period of composition. Usually with literary or official writings, he polished and retouched his work; but on one occasion, while in exile, he entirely rewrote... one of his old chancery reports... clearly the state of the texts presages problems first in chronology, then in interpretation and conceptualization." Geerken 356-67.

40. Ramage 6. Horace's Epistles "are in essence the philosophic extension of the Satires... it is clear from references that Horace makes in the Epistles that this was intentional... this repetition appears as the need for moral improvement. But there is a difference. In the Epistles it serves as the reason for and the justification of the posi­ tive philosophical recommendations that Horace wishes to present."

42. Machiavelli (1961) 185.
43. Machiavelli (1961) 186.
44. Cloulas 233. From Machiavelli's dispatches.
45. Mattingly (1960) 104.
46. Cloulas 218.
47. Cloulas 233.
48. Cloulas 234.
49. Machiavelli (1985) 72, n.3.
50. Feinberg 179.
52. Schevill 458.
54. "Alexander VI never did anything, nor ever thought of anything, but how to deceive and he always found a subject to whom he could do it." (Ch. 18, 70).
55. Cloulas 153.
56. Cloulas 152.
57. Cloulas 154.
58. Cloulas 155.
59. Cloulas 161.
60. Pollard 67-8.
61. Gilbert V.3, 1124. The History.
62. Schumann 147.
63. Hibbert 189.
64. Hibbert 190.
65. Gilbert V.3, 1080.
66. Pollard 68.
67. Mattingly (1960 104.
68. Feinberg 131.
70. Schumann 152.
71. Machiavelli's statement, "Yet if [Louis] had lived" suggests that the Prince was not complete in December, 1513, the date usually given for its completion. Louis died in 1515.

72. Machiavelli praises the laws and institutions of France in the Discourses (III. 1, 389-90).


VII. Slavery and Freedom

1. Machiavelli (1891) 200.


11. McKay 7.

12. McKay 7-8.

VIII. Virtue and One's Own Arms


An account of Moses can be found in the Old Testament. The Book of Exodus deals with the return of Moses to Egypt and the journey of the Israelites to Mt. Sinai where God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. The Book of Numbers relates the journey from Mt. Sinai to Canaan, although the Israelites were made to wander in the wilderness for forty years before entering Canaan, because of their sin. The Book of Deuteronomy tells of Moses' last days.

Cloulas 176.

Haight 175.


Plutarch 6.

Plutarch 15.

Future reference to the Discourse on Remodeling the Government of Florence will be abbreviated to Remodeling in the text.

Gilbert V.1, 114. *A Discourse on Remodeling the Government of Florence*.

Gilbert V.1, 109-10. *A Discourse on Remodeling the Government of Florence*.

Hulliung 94.

The New Encyclopedia Britannica. V.3, 831. "Cyrus II."

Hibbert 233.

Ridolfi 202. Alessandro became Duke of the Republic of Florence (1531-37), and was murdered by his cousin in 1537. Whelpton 116; Ippolito became a cardinal. Both Ippolito and Alessandro were thought "reprehensible" by Francesco Guicciardini and the Florentines. Hibbert 248; At the time Machiavelli wrote the *Prince*, they were still very young children.
18. Peter E. Bondenella, "Castruccio Castracani: Machiavelli's Archetypal Prince." Italica 49 (1972) 304. Castracani was given mythical origins by Machiavelli.


23. Allan Gilbert makes the point in his introduction to the History, that the idea "that government exists for the common good" is "chief" among "Machiavelli's observations on man as a political animal." Gilbert V.3, 1027; In the Discourses, Machiavelli states that he is writing "for the common benefit of all." Machiavelli (1983) Preface I, 97.

24. Ramage 182.


27. Feinberg 185-6.

28. Berlin 188.

29. Berlin 159.

30. Hulliung 245.


33. Gilbert V.3, 1222. The History.

34. Gilbert V.3, 1123-25. Machiavelli refers to the Duke of Athens who "gave himself a greater appearance of religion and of kindness" by choosing to live "in the convent of the Minor Friars of Santa Croce," who sought [the duke] to "make a slave of a city that had always lived
free." Machiavelli makes strong arguments for liberty in his appraisal of the duke and the threat he posed to the city of Florence.

35. Gilbert V.1, 9. From Allan Gilbert's introduction to The Prince.


IX. Fortune and The Arms of Others: Cesare Borgia


2. In his introduction to the History of Florence, Allan Gilbert explicates the set speeches that punctuate that work; "Avowedly fictitious are the frequent orations in the Thucydian manner of the Florentine historians before Machiavelli. These are developed beyond dramatic requirements into expositions of social and political truths suggested by Florentine events." Gilbert V.3, 1027.


7. Ridolfi 71.


10. Sereno 164.

11. Cloulas 218.


15. Sereno 162.
20. Schevill 448.
22. Cloulas 129.
23. Cloulas 135.
28. Cloulas 334.
32. Cloulas 242.
34. Mattingly (1960) 104.
35. Cloulas 244.
36. Cloulas 243-44. As I can offer no evidence that Machiavelli attributed the death of Alexander to poison, the issue is (although compelling) purely speculative.
38. Cloulas 251.
41. The Encyclopedia of the Renaissance 275-76; Baldassare Castiglione served at the court of Guidobaldo da Montefeltro for several years. The Courtier was published in 1528. (p. 85-6).

42. The Encyclopedia of the Renaissance 403.

43. Cloulas 215-16.

44. Mattingly (1960) 105; Guidobaldo de Montefeltro "demanded an indemnity of 200,000 ducats..." Cesare "promised to give back everything except for the tapestries of the history of Troy, which he had given to the Cardinal of Rouen." Cloulas 256-57.

45. Allan Gilbert, trans. "The Legations" from Machiavelli: The Chief Works and Others (Durham, North Carolina, 1965) V1, 145. In a second reference, Machiavelli remarks that Cesare "is busy getting together men-at-arms... he has sent somebody to Lombardy to enlist infantry." (p. 147).

46. Mattingly (1960) 104.

47. Allan Gilbert, trans. "The Art of War" from Machiavelli: The Chief Works and Others (Durham, North Carolina, 1965) V2, 706. Machiavelli mentions Cesare's attack on the castle of Forli to demonstrate why subdivisions within a castle offer poor defense against attack; In a second reference, with regard to Urbino, betrayal, fear, and the element of surprise won the day rather than actual combat, in which one could praise the forces of Cesare. Rather, Cesare enjoyed victory in Urbino as the result of the threat of arms. (p. 712) References to Cesare Borgia in the Discourses have already been discussed.

48. To cite but one example from numerous instances of papal support, as late as March, 1503, Alexander seized the fortune of Cardinal Giovanni Michieli, "150,000 ducats... as well as some priceless articles," which contributed to the "state of readiness" of Cesare's forces. The death was "deemed suspicious," and ambassador Giustiniani observed, "the pope has the habit of fattening his cardinals before poisoning them, the better to inherit their wealth" Cloulas 240.
X. Acquiring Through Crimes: Ancient and Modern


4. Beaumont 39. While there is no parentheses in the Italian text of The Prince, translators frequently do use parenthesis with this remark, indicating that it is useful in conveying the tone that Machiavelli intended which, in its effect, sets the remark 'aside' in the same manner as that used by Swift.


8. Villari 17.


XI. Civil Principality: The Medici


2. (Ch. 20, 85); Machiavelli's advice has strong parallels with the enmity between Lorenzo the Magnificent and Pope Sixtus IV, following the Pazzi conspiracy, in which the pope was involved. That Lorenzo used it to his own
advantage can be determined from his speech to the leading citizens of Florence: "... in his high-pitched, nasal voice [he] dramatically assured them that he was himself the cause of the pope's campaign against Florence [and] he was willing to sacrifice himself and even his family if they thought the exile or death of a Medici would prove the salvation of the city," to which he received assurances, a "guard of twelve men," and was elected "one of the Ten of War," (Hibbert 150-51) all of which contributed to his rising status and reputation in the city. When the matter was settled as a result of Lorenzo's trip to Naples, "his position in Florence was virtually unassailable. And he made the most of his opportunity to strengthen it." (Hibbert 156) Machiavelli likely intended that his advice reflect on the actions of Lorenzo, to bring discredit to the family.

3. Machiavelli (1985) 77, n.16. Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. notes that Septimius Severus "is called a criminal" in the Discourses.


5. Gilbert V.3, 1218. The History.


7. Gilbert V.3, 1220. The History. From a set speech given by Niccolo da Uzanno, who opposed the means used by Cosimo, but urged that direct confrontation was unwise.

8. William Ebenstein, Great Political Thinkers (1953) 94.

9. (Ch. 9, 41). The examples of Gracchi and Giorgio Scali are both prejudicial to liberty, while the qualities of the prince are generally presented as positive; In the Discourses, Machiavelli states that in the time of the Gracchi, the "controversies" that arose between the people and the senate (the Gracchi represented the interests of the plebs) "became the causes that led to the destruction of liberty." (I. 6, 118); Although Giorgio Scali was deserted by the people, it was because of the "hatred" the people had for him due to his "haughtiness," "insolence," and his part in government that Machiavelli says "seemed tyrannical and violent" to the people. Gilbert V.3, 1222 and 1172. The History.

XII. Weak Princes and Ecclesiastical Principality

1. (Ch. 13, 57). Machiavelli is consistent in this opinion throughout his works, and he attempted to put it into practice in forming a militia while serving the government of the Republic of Florence; To offer but one example, Machiavelli states in the Discourses that "Present day princes and modern republics which have not their own troops for offense and defense ought to be ashamed of themselves." (I. 21, 168-69); He could not stray very far from this principle in the Prince, and maintain the facade of credibility. Therefore, he praised Cesare Borgia for arms he never really had—which other who read the Prince knew he never really had—and thus ridiculed him with false acclaim.

2. Gilbert V.2, 703. The Art of War.
5. Gilbert V.2, 712. The Art of War.
10. Whelpton 124.
11. Cloulas 54.
13. Hibbert 162. Lorenzo was thought to be "rash and short sighted, taking great risks for trivial gains."
15. Whelpton 125.
17. Ridolfi 225.
18. Schumann 150.
19. Whelpton 120.
22. Ridolfi 135.
25. Cloulas 156.
27. Johnson 36.
28. (Ch. 11, 45); J.H. Whitfield makes the point that Savonarola used the phrase, "nevertheless," in the same manner as does Machiavelli. Savonarola "sweeps the theory [of Monarchy] on one side with a Machiavellian nevertheless." Whitfield 48; Although Machiavelli uses such phrases in all of his works as part of his writing style, in the Prince, he employs it as a device to separate what ought to be from what is, the ideal and the reality. His description of Caracalla offers another example of his use of "nonetheless," to move the argument in a similar manner. (Ch. 19, 79).
29. Cloulas 49.
32. Plutarch 32.
XIII. No Art But the Art of War.


5. Ridolfi 80.


17. Machiavelli (1891) 275.

18. To mention but a few, Moses is represented in Chapters Six and Twenty-six in the Prince, and in the Discourses (II. 8, 296 and III. 30, 486). David is also mentioned in the Discourses (I. 26, 176 and I. 19, 166).

19. Feinberg 216.


22. Feinberg 198.


27. Janson 84.


29. Janson, plates 33a: 33b.


31. Mattingly (1941) 184-85.

32. Geerken 361.

33. Berlin 168.

34. Hibbert 216.

35. Cloulas 183.


XIV. Effectual Truth: The Vices of Princes

5. Gilbert V3, 1233. The History.
7. Geerken 364. John H. Geerken notes that, unlike Francesco Guicciardini's works, "Machiavelli's history was never severed from politics."
17. Cloulas 337.
18. Haight 175.
20. Whelpton 112-13. Whelpton gives Giovanni's age as fourteen at the time he was made a cardinal.
23. Machiavelli (1983) I. 34, 194-95. Bernard Crick notes that Machiavelli is "right to insist that the Roman dictatorship was a constitutional office and that some such institution is needed in all republics." (p. 533, n.25).

24. Machiavelli (1983) I. 12, 145-46. The Swiss were involved in a long struggle for their independence and, therefore, offer a historical parallel with Italy in regard to those Italians, like Machiavelli, who desired independence and liberty in their own fatherland, particularly as the Swiss recognized the importance of having their own arms which Machiavelli admired as a general principle.


27. Jensen 1x.


29. Sices 2.


32. Hulliung 245.

33. Johnson 8.

34. Johnson 8.

35. Machiavelli (1961) 44.


37. Holy Bible, Isaiah 5:20, 821.


40. Arrowsmith 153.

41. Spatz 55.

42. Spatz 55.


44. Spatz 54.

45. Arrowsmith 154.

46. Arrowsmith 153.

47. Radcliff-Umstead 117.

48. Gilbert (B) 462-63.


51. Sahakian 36.

52. Sahakian 36.

53. Schevill 462.

54. Gilbert V1, 60. n.1. The Prince.

55. (Ch. 12, 53); In Allan Gilbert's translation of the Prince, Louis XII is charged with the "plunder of Italy." Gilbert V1, 50.

56. (Ch. 18, 71) Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. notes that Machiavelli "apparently" means "Ferdinand the Catholic." (Ch. 18, 71, n.6).

57. Guicciardini 5-6.


60. Gilbert V3, 1233. The History.

61. Gooch 88.
62. Feinberg 179.

63. Mattingly (1960) 104.

64. Schevill 459.


66. Cloulas 214.

67. Cloulas 219; Varano was found strangled, his sons "clapped into prison at the Fortress of Cattolica. Two of his sons were later strangled. Cloulas 239.

68. Cloulas 177-80.

69. Cloulas 135-36.

70. Cloulas 129.


72. Ebenstein 282.

73. Mattingly (1960) 104.

74. Schevill 459.


76. Skinner xvii-xviii.


78. Colish 89-90.

79. Gentillet 2.

80. Skinner xviii.


82. (Ch. 17, 67); Aristotle introduced the warning that hatred results from "Confiscating the property of their
subjects or violating the honor of their womenfolk," in his "Politics (1311z-b)." Skinner xxi.

83. Cloulas 257
85. Cloulas 172-73.
86. Cloulas 191.
87. Skinner xvii.
88. Colish 89.

89. Machiavelli (1985) Ch. 18, 69; Machiavelli also omitted discussion of law in Chapter Twelve, in which he stated, "I shall leave out reasoning on laws and shall speak of arms." (Ch. 12, 48).

90. Edith Hamilton, Mythology (Boston, 1942) 430.
91. Hamilton 414.
92. Hamilton 430.
93. Hamilton 92-3.
94. Skinner xix.
95. Hulliung 212.
96. Hulliung 212-13. From Dante's Inferno XI.
97. Hulliung 214.
98. Radcliff-Umstead 121.


100. Colish 89.
103. Cloulas 219.
XV. The Courts of Princes: How States are Lost: Fortune


2. Cloulas 333.


5. Ridolfi 99.

6. Machiavelli (1985) Ch. 19, 72, n.3.


13. Gilbert V3, 1396-98. The History. Machiavelli’s voice clearly resonates in the words of Lorenzo, a critical voice, that exposes Lorenzo as a dissembler and one who "knows how to get around men’s brains with their astuteness" (Ch. 18, 69) as he advised the new prince to accommodate himself.


18. Gilbert V3, 1374-75. The History.
26. Hibbert 220; So prominent and numerous were the Medici festivals that Anthony M. Cummings prepared a book on the subject, The Politicized Muse: Music for Medici Festivals, 1512-1537, which does not even include those given during the period of Cosimo I to Lorenzo the Magnificent.
27. Hibbert 180-81.
29. Colish 92.
30. Colish 92.
31. Skinner xxii.
35. Machiavelli (1961) 142-43. To Francesco Vettori, December 10, 1513. As Vettori was Florentine Ambassador to the Vatican in Rome, Machiavelli's letters were always in danger of being read by hostile eyes. For that reason, his statements seem guarded, but his reference to "fantasies," that it should not "displease" a "new prince," and the fact that he leaves it to Filippo Cassavecchia to explain the
details, all suggest that he is hinting at things regarding content that he is not willing to say openly.


38. Gilbert V2, 724. The Art of War.


40. Schevill 435.

41. Schumann 169.

42. Gilbert V3, 1408. The History.

43. Whelpton, 113.

44. Schevill 435.

45. Schevill 458.

46. Gilbert V2, 726. The Art of War.

47. Skinner xix.


49. Machiavelli (1983) III. 29, 483-84. Machiavelli gives the example of the princes that held the Romagna before "Pope Alexander VI got rid of the lords who ruled it." Cesare Borgia, however, robbed them in turn—a wonderful irony that Machiavelli suggests by mentioning the pope, without drawing conclusions regarding the Borgia rule.

50. Fleisher 374.

XVI. The Exhortation

1. God and fortune are treated as a singular entity in the Prince (Ch. 25, 98), and in the History. Gilbert V3, 1433.

2. Cloulas 291.

3. Ridolfi 149.

5. Gilbert V3, 1242. The History.
6. Bartlett 75. From Plato's The Republic.
13. Schumann 150.
17. Strauss 24-5.
21. Whelpton 130.
22. Schweitzer 378.
26. Gilbert V1, 170. Allan Gilbert is of the opinion that Machiavelli may have written this oration in response to a "brief" issued by "Pope Clement VII in 1523," a Medici, to the "Company of Charity" in Florence, based on its content and the occasion.
27. Gilbert VI, 170. An Exhortation to Penitence.
30. Benedetto Croce referred to the Exhortation to Penitence as a "frivolous joke." Mansfield, Jr., 375.
32. Geerken 356.
34. Cloulas 121.
37. Foulke 102-05. From Italia Mia.
38. Foulke 101.
40. Mattingly (1960) 108; "Quite recently a beautiful manuscript of the play [Clizia] was found in England. It is surmised that this was a presentation copy, perhaps arranged for by Machiavelli himself, intended as a gift for Lorenzo Ridolfi on the occasion of his betrothal to Maria di Felippo Strozzi in 1526." Sices 23; In another "recent finding... a manuscript copy of the play [Mandragola]" was found "in the Laurentian Library Rediano Codex 129, hidden along with copies of works done by Lorenzo il Magnifico," dated "1519 and mentions the author's name." Radcliff-Umstead, 118, n.113; The History of Florence was presented to the Medici pope, Clement VII, in 1525, having been commissioned by Pope Leo X in 1520. Gilbert V3, 1027.
42. Schevill 479.

Gilbert VI, 110. A Discourse On Remodeling the Government of Florence. Because the importance of this discourse is reflected in the extensive thought Machiavelli has given to the details of government organization as well as the general tone and in the reflection of those principles that are inimical to the advice he gives in the Prince, I have appended the work in its entirety. (See Appendix A).

Gilbert VI, 114, A Discourse On Remodeling the Government of Florence.

Parekh 7-11.

Parekh 8.

Johnson 8.

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