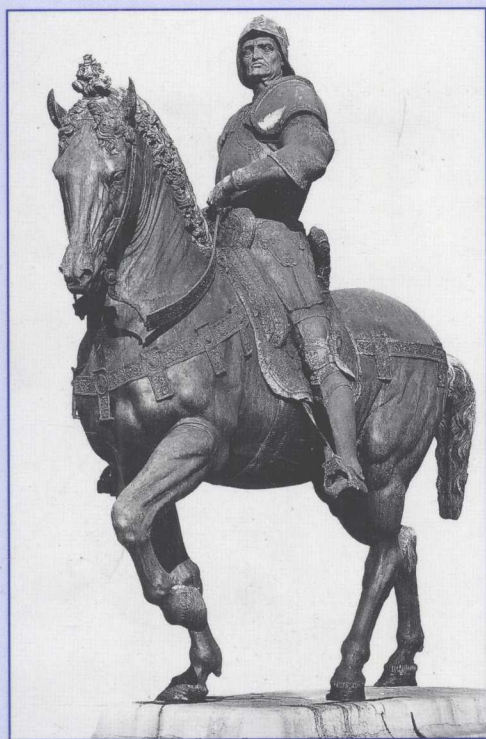


THE PRINCE

NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI



TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY
ROBERT M. ADAMS

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION
SECOND EDITION

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Niccolò Machiavelli
THE PRINCE

A REVISED TRANSLATION
BACKGROUNDS
INTERPRETATIONS
MARGINALIA

SECOND EDITION

Translated and Edited by

ROBERT M. ADAMS

LATE OF UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES

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Historical Introduction

For as long as rulers have been ruling, they have been receiving—from laymen and clergy, from nobles and commons, from their predecessors and those who would like to be their replacements, masters, or successors—advice on how to do their jobs. Most of these manuals for statesmen and handbooks for sovereigns, since they simply rephrase, codify, and make applications of the common wisdom of the day, enjoy only an ephemeral existence. Rulers rarely read them, and even more rarely make use of their precepts; the typical manual for rulers seems to be chiefly of interest to other writers of manuals, and after a while only to students of manual writing. The major exception to all these cynicisms is a little booklet written, but not published, by Niccolò Machiavelli, citizen of Florence, in 1513. *The Prince* is not far from its five hundredth birthday, and it continues as vital, as much discussed, as influential, as any book only a tenth of its age.

Many of the reasons for this exceptional vitality are apparent to the most casual reader of Machiavelli's text. They are literary, dramatic, and moral qualities that stand out boldly on the page. They are implicit in the personality and voice of Machiavelli himself. But Machiavelli and his book were very much the product of their times, and it may be useful for the reader to have in mind a minimal outline sketch of the historical circumstances that formed both.

Machiavelli was born in 1469 and died in 1527; he was a Florentine. The city of Florence, straddling the Arno in northwest Italy, was in those days both a commercial center of European importance and the politico-military capital of the surrounding district, known as Tuscany. The Tuscans are a story all by themselves: they think themselves, and probably are, smarter than most other Italians. They tend to be ironic if not cynical, and rather proud of the fact that nobody likes them—which they take to be evident proof of their superior intelligence. Dante's is a characteristically Tuscan imagination—dry, clear, proud, and severely logical in its poetry. Machiavelli's mind has many of the same traits.

During the Renaissance, the Florentines exercised direct or indirect power over a great many other Tuscan cities, such as Prato, Pistoia, Pisa, Lucca, San Gimignano, and Siena. Like it or not, and many did

not, these cities, and many of the country folk in the surrounding countryside, were ruled by the smart, quick Florentines. The city proper had been a republic as far back as historical records reached (before the year A.D. 1000), though with occasional intervals when a particular family or individual gained enough power to set up, uneasily and temporarily, as ruler. Thus the struggle between rich and poor, between centralized authoritarian rule and more popular, participatory forms of government, was a constant feature of Florentine history. During Machiavelli's lifetime, the chief family menacing the republican institutions of Florence was the Medici. Relevant portions of their family tree are outlined in the genealogical table on page x.

Cosimo, Piero, and Lorenzo, three successive generations of the Medici, ruled over Florence through the greater part of the fifteenth century, without altogether abolishing representative government, yet while clearly dominating it. They did so through a combination of force, persuasion, leniency, deception, and social astuteness. But the skills required to manage, without actual dictatorship, so restive and independent a city were exceptional, and without them even a Medici was helpless. When Lorenzo died in 1492, his son Pietro proved quite incapable, and within two years he and his supporters were forced into exile. A republican government replaced him. Machiavelli was then just twenty-three years old, and for the next eighteen years, until just before the writing of *The Prince*, it was a republican government under which he lived and for which he worked.

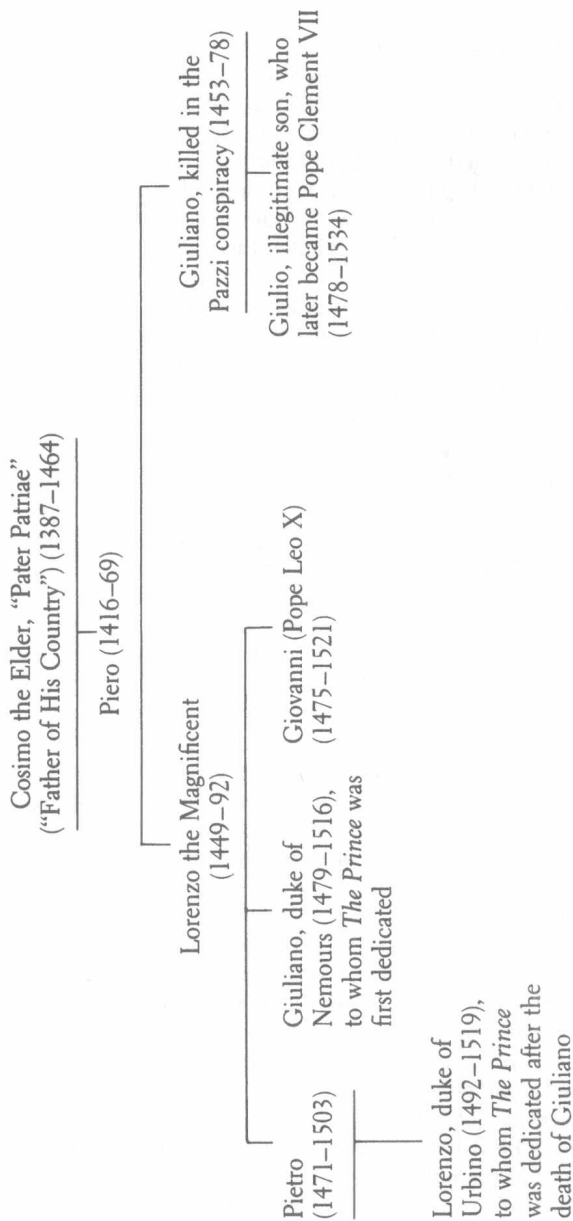
This is no place to describe the detailed machinery of Florentine city government and politics; a vivid impression of its working will be found in N. Rubenstein, *The Government of Florence under the Medici 1434-94* (Oxford, 1966); or Jean Lucas-Dubreton, *Daily Life in Florence in the Time of the Medici*, chapter 2. What cannot fail to amaze a modern reader is the extraordinary intensity of political life in this moderately sized city of one hundred thousand or so inhabitants. Even under the Medici, and to a much greater degree under the republic, Florence was like a swarm of political bees. Because they feared that administrations long in power would become entrenched and tyrannical, the Florentines limited most of their officials to short terms in office: a man might be elected to some major bodies for a term as brief as two months. As a result, the city was constantly involved in election campaigns, and politics was a constant preoccupation of every citizen. There were parties based upon ancient though nebulous principles, like the old Guelphs, who were tolerant of papal power and anti-German; they opposed the Ghibellines, who tended to favor the Holy Roman emperor, a German, and to distrust the pope. There were religious reformers, notably the Dominican monk Savonarola, who preached up a storm during the years 1494-98, till Alexander VI caused him to be burned in the public square. These were massive public events. But down among the grass

roots—or at least in the narrow, cobblestoned alleys of the walled city—Florence was in constant ferment. The various wards and districts were in political conflict with one another; the rich and poor were often at each other's throats; the various families gathered and broke up into factions; the guilds and trades were politically active; and because they were all crowded together in a tight little town behind walls, the Florentines were subject to gusty rumors and surges of passion that sent them raging through the streets to howl or hammer at the high towers and massive palazzi within which lay hidden their heroes or hated enemies of the moment.

The systematic chaos here described was modified, however, by some stabilizing institutions. In 1502 a widely respected and constitutionally moderate man named Piero Soderini was elected for life to the highest office of the republic (gonfalonier); it was a deliberate effort to confer stability on the regime. On another level entirely, the family structures were strong forces making for stability. Young men were trained in politics by the elders of their family and party; only after a long period of initiation and trial in minor offices did men become eligible to run for major ones. And in areas where experience and continuity were essential, as in foreign policy, there was an ongoing bureaucracy of trained civil servants. At the age of twenty-nine in the year 1498, Machiavelli joined this staff, and he remained a valued servant in the diplomatic corps till the events of 1512 brought about the downfall of the republic as a whole, and the return of the Medici. Sometimes he served in the home office, transmitting instructions to, and receiving messages from, ambassadors abroad; on several occasions of no slight importance he was himself dispatched to represent the republic at the court of some foreign power. This work constituted his training to write *The Prince*, and we provide, in the Backgrounds section (pp. 75–88), a sampling of the reports he wrote on these missions. He knew his business well; his reports were much admired, and he himself rose in the service to be a valued agent of Piero Soderini.

The chief interest of Machiavelli's professional life was foreign policy, and not surprisingly the subject bulks large in *The Prince*. It behooves us therefore to know something of the world within which he and his employers had to operate. Florence, the city from which he saw everything, and in whose interests he always wrote, was neither large nor warlike; it was not protected by the sea, like Venice, nor was it an international center of religious authority, like Rome. To a great extent it depended on the skill of its craftsmen, the shrewdness of its merchants and bankers, and the political astuteness of its leaders. Until the death of Lorenzo in 1492, it survived and competed successfully in the little world of Italian power politics. Partly this was because of its strong points, noted above, and partly it was because the world of Italian politics was indeed a fairly autonomous world. There were five chief power units

Medici Family Tree—A Rough Diagram



on the peninsula, consisting, in addition to Florence, of Milan, Venice, the Papal States (an unruly district of semi-autonomous chieftains under the theoretical dominion of the pope in Rome), and the kingdom of Naples, also known sometimes as the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, or just the Kingdom. Because they had fairly well defined areas of interest, because no one of them was ever strong enough to dominate the other four, and because their wars were fought largely by professional soldiers who had no great interest in making things tough on one another, these five units managed to maintain, throughout the fifteenth century, an uneasy balance of power, tempered by frequent squabbles but never seriously shaken. They were not, after all, very much like modern nations. Ethnically, they were very similar; they all called themselves Italians. In religion, they were all Catholics, who accepted at least nominally the authority of the pope. They all spoke dialects of the same language. Socially, they were not too different. The kingdom of Naples was a royal state of sorts, though its dynastic affairs were an incredible tangle, with the French, the Spanish, and the papacy all laying claim to the royal power via various pretexts. The doge of Venice and the pope in Rome were elected to their offices, though by very different procedures. Milan was for many years under the command of the Visconti, local tyrants; they were replaced in 1450 by their former employee, Francesco Sforza, who was a professional soldier by trade, and the son of another professional soldier, who began life as a peasant. All these rulers were, for Machiavelli and his contemporaries, "princes"; it was a catchall term. But not one of them was the head of a nation in the modern sense.

Such nations did exist, however, and just two years after the death of Lorenzo, they began to intrude into Italy's little world of small-power political balances and neighborly squabbles. All through the fifteenth century, the kings of France had been consolidating their territories, taking over independent duchies like Burgundy and Brittany, and reducing their feudal lords to the service of a centralized monarchy. Much the same thing happened in Spain, though by a different process. The marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon with Isabella of Castile in 1469 led directly to the final expulsion of the Moors from Spain and a whole series of foreign adventures in Europe and the New World, to which the formidably centralized bureaucracy of Spain contributed support on an unprecedented scale. To put it with Machiavelli's bluntness, Ferdinand was always ready to start a new military adventure because he had a ruthlessly efficient system of tax collection. In Germany, centralization of power did not take the same form or proceed quite as far as in France and Spain; but under the Holy Roman emperor Maximilian I, the Germans were able to muster from their vast territories armies of tough professional soldiers (*Landsknechte*), before which the small Italian armies were ultimately helpless.

The influx of foreign armies into Italy was triggered by Ludovico Sforza of Milan. He invited the French, under Charles VIII, to invade Italy in order to assert their claim to the kingdom of Naples. This they in fact did (1494), and though they were forced to withdraw almost at once (by a coalition that included the treacherous Sforza himself), the ease with which they advanced the length of the peninsula alerted the other European powers to the fact that Italy was a plum for the picking. In 1499 the French were back again, this time under Louis XII—first to seize Milan from their old friend Sforza, then to assert their claim to Naples. And this time it was the Venetians who half encouraged the French invasion, as a way of getting back at their old enemies the Milanese; but the pope helped too, because he wanted French troops to support his bid for temporal power. Seeing Naples on the point of falling to the French, the Spanish moved in to cut them off; by the Treaty of Granada (1500) they got a share of Naples, and three years later they grabbed the whole thing. And thus the various Italian states began struggling to get themselves powerful foreign allies, and to protect themselves by hiring more and more foreign mercenaries—Swiss, Germans, Albanians, Gascons, Croatsians, any bloodthirsty thugs whatever. Everybody deplored the arrival of these brutal freebooters, but the fact was that they won battles. In the last chapter of *The Prince*, Machiavelli recites a mournful litany of battles lost by Italian armies to invading foreigners; over a period of twenty years, he lists seven major battles lost or cities destroyed, and could have doubled or tripled the list without difficulty.

For Florence—rich, without natural protection, lying on the main road south, and without either a big army or a strong military tradition—things were particularly difficult. In the very first French invasion, Florence lost control of Pisa, which guarded the mouth of the Arno and thus was vital to Florentine trade. The struggle to get Pisa back was infinitely painful, expensive, and frustrating. Meanwhile, every gang of soldiers that appeared before the city gates meant a new levy on the citizens. Florence had to pay so many powerful “friends” to protect it, and powerful “enemies” not to attack it, that the difference between friends and enemies evaporated altogether. In the end, the Florentine republic suffered more as a result of its traditional loyalty to the French than from its traditional enemies. With blind obstinacy, and despite Machiavelli’s repeated objections, the republic insisted on reaffirming its loyalty to its French allies, at the very moment when they were on the point of packing up and leaving Italy altogether. Their departure, in 1512, left the Florentines at the mercy of a hostile pope who was under the influence of the exiled Medici and allied with the tremendous power of Spain. For years Machiavelli had been calling for a citizen’s army or militia, which would make the city independent of the hated and treacherous mercenaries. He had actually recruited and begun train-

ing this body. But in 1512, they came up prematurely against some veteran Spanish infantry, who smashed them with contemptuous ease. The republic fell, and Machiavelli with it; the Medici returned; and Machiavelli, after an uncomfortable interval during which he was tortured in connection with a suspected plot, was allowed to retire to the country, where he composed *The Prince*. His retirement from active politics did not of course stop the terrible process of decay and disintegration against which he had protested. Mercenaries continued to pour into Italy, the city states continued to fight one another instead of the invaders, and the climactic act of the whole squalid drama came in 1527, the year of Machiavelli's death. This was the infamous Sack of Rome, when a huge, disorderly mob of mercenary soldiers, mostly German and many Lutheran, but completely out of control by their officers or anybody else, surrounded, besieged, captured and for an entire summer looted, raped, murdered, burned, smashed, and vandalized the Holy City. Pope Clement VII was forced to seek shelter in the Castel San Angelo and pay a giant ransom to regain his liberty. The humiliation of Italy was complete.

In this entire story, one institution peculiar to the Italian scene played a constant part, which calls for a bit of extra explanation: this was of course the papacy. *The Prince* weaves the story of the various popes so deftly into the texture of its argument, and alludes to them so lightly, that it may be useful to have here a list of them, covering the period of Machiavelli's life:

Sixtus IV (Francesco della Rovere), pope from 1471 to 1484
 Innocent VIII (Giovanni Battista Cibo), pope from 1484 to 1492

Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia), pope from 1492 to 1503
 Pius III (Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini), pope for eight weeks in 1503

Julius II (Giuliano della Rovere, nephew of Sixtus IV, above), pope from 1503 to 1513

Leo X (Giovanni de' Medici), pope from 1513 to 1521

Adrian VI (Adrian Dedel), pope from 1522 to 1523

Clement VII (Giulio de' Medici, cousin of Leo X above), pope from 1523 to 1534

All these popes were alike in combining enormous spiritual power with a certain measure of temporal power. It is customary to date the beginning of the Lutheran revolt from 1517; before that the spiritual power of the popes was largely unquestioned; and even after that, in most of the Latin countries, it remained supreme as a practical matter. On the other hand, the temporal power of the popes varied enormously, depending on Italian circumstances; and its application varied enormously,

depending on the pope who occupied the seat of Peter, and his concerns. Machiavelli estimates the average life span of a sitting pope at about ten years, and as will be seen from the dates above, that figure is high. So changes of policy were inevitable and very frequent. Three strong, ambitious popes among the first five listed above embroiled the papacy deeply in the Italian political process that Machiavelli was trying to teach his prince to master. But as they took very different lines, and each policy was cut short in mid-career by the death of its maker, the papacy had an erratic, inconsistent influence on Italian politics that Machiavelli bitterly deplores.

Sixtus IV, the first of the three restless and ambitious popes, came to the office with little diplomatic or ecclesiastical experience, because he was the newest of the cardinals when they elected him pope. He began by arranging large international adventures, like an expedition against the Turks and a reconciliation with the Russian Church, but turned to Italian politics as more feasible, and involved his Papal States in successive wars against the Florentines and the Venetians. To finance his military campaigns, his building programs (including the Sistine Chapel, made famous later by Michelangelo), and a whole flock of hungry relatives, he began the process of milking the church's power to extract money from believers by the sale of indulgences, and the promulgation of new taxes, direct and indirect, on the faithful.

Alexander VI, the second of the activist popes, calls for more specific discussion. Like his predecessor Sixtus, he strained the moneygathering powers of the church to their absolute limits and beyond; like his predecessor Sixtus, he was a lavish and shameless nepotist, pouring money on his relatives. But those relatives were not just nieces and nephews; they were his own illegitimate children. And one of them, Cesare Borgia, duke of Valentino, is of central importance to Machiavelli's book.

Cesare seems originally to have been destined for the Church; through his father's influence, he was made an archbishop and a cardinal at the age of seventeen. But after only five years he gave up these offices "for the good of his soul," as he said; in fact, he was a reckless, violent man, with a deep streak of personal cruelty. Whether or not all the stories of incest, fratricide, poisoning, and so on that are told about the domestic life of the Borgias are true, we need not decide here. That Cesare Borgia was a formidable fellow in an age of very hard cases indeed is apparent from the record. And from the first he was the agent of his father's political schemes. These can be roughly outlined as follows. In October 1498, Cesare went to France as legate (agent) for his father; he brought with him a papal bull entitling Louis XII to set aside his first wife and marry Anne of Brittany, thereby completing the unification of France. Louis also got papal permission, if not encouragement, to assert his claim to the dukedom of Milan at the expense of Ludovico Sforza. In exchange, Cesare got the dukedom of Valentinois in France (hence the

Italians always called him Duke Valentino), and a promise of French assistance in his own military affairs in Italy. These affairs called first of all for the unification and strengthening of the Papal States; and then, though Louis was not told this, and would not have liked it had he guessed, for the unification of all Italy under the leadership of Cesare Borgia.

The Papal States comprised a large group of semi-feudal domains and semi-independent cities across the middle of the Italian peninsula. In two campaigns that are carefully described in *The Prince* (they took place in 1499 and 1500–1501), Cesare subdued this area, known as the Romagna. In 1502 a conspiracy was raised against him, by the petty war lords of the district and the powerful Roman family of the Orsini, who saw too late that he was threatening their independent survival. But he put down the conspiracy, trapped its leaders in the little town of Sinigaglia, and on the last day of December 1502, had the two most dangerous of them strangled in their dungeon. As spring turned to summer of 1503, Cesare and his father Alexander stood on the verge of success in their bold and venturesome scheme. One more campaign in northern Italy would enable Cesare to dictate terms to the Italian states, and then to deal on more or less equal terms between France and Spain. But at that crucial moment, Alexander unexpectedly died, just at the time when Cesare himself was deathly ill. Everything depended on the choice of Alexander's successor; and though Cesare was able to manipulate one stopgap pope into office, the wretched man did not live a month; and in the next election, Julius II was named without opposition. He was an old and inveterate enemy of all the Borgias; without support in the Vatican, Cesare was doomed, and he faded away, to die a few years later in an obscure scuffle in Spain.

Meanwhile, though Julius, the third activist pope, retained many of the same general objectives as his predecessor, he pursued them in an entirely different way. Headstrong and volatile, he bullied the Florentines and made war on the Venetians in order to persuade them to join with him in driving the French out of Italy. In many of his projects he was successful, partly because nobody expected to see a graybearded Vicar of Christ campaigning at the head of his army through winter mud and snow. But because he was committed to a wholly new set of feuds and loyalties, Julius built his policies at complete cross-purposes with those of the Borgias. Where they had tried to use the French against the Spanish, he tried to use the Spanish against the French, and enlisted the Swiss against both; where they had tried to crush the Orsini family and the magnates of the Romagna, Julius raised many of them up. And as he was sixty years old when he became pope, it was apparent to one and all that his policies would almost certainly be soon reversed by a successor. Hence the fatal conclusion described above, the total prostration of Italy, less than fifteen years after his death.

This, then, in bare outline, is the school in which Machiavelli learned his trade. His was a lean, acute mind to begin with; years of struggle against complex and dangerous circumstances honed it to razor sharpness. Two other influences on it should perhaps be cited. Machiavelli was a learned man; he read widely in the classical authors, especially the historians of the republics, reading Greek authors in Latin translations and Latin authors in the original. He was proud of his learning, and often used it, after the manner of his day, to buttress a contemporary argument. At the same time, he was an instinctive dramatist, and one of the dramatic effects he most enjoyed producing was shock and outrage. Even when writing in private to his friends, he often chose to depict himself in more villainous colors than he could have used, and professed more desperate opinions than he really held. Like a great many Tuscans, he had a horror of being taken for a dupe, and to avoid that appearance did not mind sometimes being considered a monster. Readers who have carefully studied *The Prince* will be able to make their own estimates of Machiavelli's character; but when they have studied the *Discorsi* and the other writings as well, they will be able to make better ones.

ROBERT M. ADAMS

Translator's Note

Readers of *The Prince* who study it in Italian after first becoming acquainted with it in English translation are likely to be a little surprised at the complex and various quality of Machiavelli's prose. It is not of a piece throughout, as translations make it seem. There are indeed epigrams and aphorisms with the brief, cruel point of a stiletto; there are also, and more characteristically, complex sentences overburdened by modifiers, laden with subordinate clauses, and serpentine in their length. Machiavelli likes to balance concepts and phrases, to build the structure of his thought out of elegantly juxtaposed contrasts, and to draw out the tenor of his thought through a long, linked, circumstantial sentence. By contrast with the Ciceronianisms of his humanist contemporaries, Machiavelli's periods may have seemed brutally swift and abrupt; but standards have changed, and I have not thought it improper to render, on occasion, one of my author's poised yet labyrinthine periods, by four or five separate English sentences. Given a choice between the lucid poise of Machiavelli's ideas, and their close syntactical knotting, I have generally opted for the former. It is, after all, partly a matter of convention; in some ways, Machiavelli used the full stop as we use the paragraph (which was not at his disposal), and the only way to preserve his main intention is to alter the convention by which he punctuated. Besides, a modest advantage really does attach, in translation, to readability. So I have sinned like most of my predecessors, and surrendered one of my author's many qualities in the hope of making the others shine forth more cleanly.

For a couple of crucial words in *II Principe*, modern English has no true equivalent. The pair *principe-principato* is of course perfectly easy to translate as "prince-principality"; but neither equivalent is very accurate. Machiavelli's prince is not our prince by a long shot—he may, for example, be what we would call a king or he may be a mercenary soldier; he may be elected, like a doge, or be a churchman like a pope. A "principality" in English doesn't include a kingdom or a baronial fief, as "*principato*" does in Italian; but its worst defect is that it is a learned, cautious word, a kind of neutral word in English. A "principality" is what a "prince" governs, and he is defined chiefly as not a king, not a duke, not a president, not a pope, not a condottiere—not even a prince,

really, because in English usage a prince (like the Prince of Wales) doesn't govern, and that is one thing that Machiavelli's *principe* emphatically does. "Prince" and "principality" are chiefly defined in English by negatives, whereas for Machiavelli they are nothing if not positive and inclusive. I have generally translated *principe* as "prince," simply for lack of a better term, though I have turned occasionally to "ruler" or "governor"; and *principato* has become a variety of words, depending on circumstances—"principate," "princedom," "princely state," or just plain "state" when the context has permitted. Further dilemmas arise in translating the words *stato*, *dominio*, *paese*, *provincia*, *regno*, *città* and *patria* (but never *nazione*), which I have had to adjudicate with nothing more decisive than tact. A last, long-standing problem in translating Machiavelli is posed by the word *virtù*, which can mean anything from "strength," "ability," "courage," "manliness," or "ingenuity" to "character," "wisdom," or even (last resort) "virtue." I have translated it in all of these senses and several others; but to preserve an awareness that it is really the same original word behind all these manifestations, I have retained it (in brackets, in the original Italian) next to each different translation.

This diphthong effect (which must be exaggerated if it is to be caught at all) suggests another special stylistic quality of Machiavelli's prose, which is bound to cost a translator a few extra twinges. This is his trick of using adjectives or nouns in carefully distanced pairs, so that one undercuts as well as complements the other. Cesare Borgia, for instance, was gifted with "tanta ferocità e tanta virtù" that with a little luck he might have survived the catastrophe of his father's death. The débacle of Louis in Lombardy is described as no miracle, but "molto ordinario e ragionevole"—where both adjectives imply, though from different points of view, a wonderfully remote and serene perspective. A virtuoso performance on the double adjective is that which begins with the description of Remirro de Orco's murder as having left the people both "satisfatti e stupidi"; the phrase is picked up, in intricate counterpoint, twelve chapters later, when Septimius Severus is said to have rendered the soldiers "attoniti e stupidi," while leaving the people "reverenti e satisfatti." One translates here for a finely mingled concord and discord: the words are isometric, so to speak.

Another oddity in the original, which there is no reason to do more than mention in passing, is Machiavelli's habit of titling his chapters in Latin and using occasional Latin words in his text, above all when defining logical relationships. *Praeterea*, *in exemplis*, *tamen*, *quodam modo*, and so forth—they give the treatise a slightly dry and schoolmasterish tonality. At the same time, Machiavelli is not above slang and popular metaphors, as when Charles took Italy "with chalk" (*col gesso*); and he is capable of extended passages of rather broad irony, as in his description of the felicity of ecclesiastical states. Among other pleasures

of the translator's task is the swift dexterity with which Machiavelli can sketch a story like that of Oliverotto da Fermo, in chapter VIII, with its magnificently climactic last word, *strangolato*; or slash an argument down to the dimensions he has chosen for it:

E perchè e' non può essere buone legge dove non sono buone arme, e dove sono buone arme conviene sieno buone legge, io lascerò indietro il ragionare delle legge e parlerò delle arme.

("And since there can't be good laws where there aren't good soldiers, and where there are good soldiers there are bound to be good laws, I shall set aside the topic of laws and talk about soldiers.")

Since the question of laws would never have come up if Machiavelli himself hadn't raised it, the ruthless speed with which he here disposes of it suggests a certain impatience with pedagogic formulae that is itself profoundly pedagogic. A prince must learn to look under the surface of antithetical constructs (such as Machiavelli himself has used freely in the first chapters of his book) in order to distinguish the mere formula (the either-or for its own sake) from genuine alternatives. In addition to practical precepts, Machiavelli's language offers the prince a severe model of the lean Tuscan style.

But these are pleasures to be appreciated in the text itself. A book so lucid and taut in its phrasings offers relatively few problems to the translator who has opted for a plain style. The book has been many times rendered, and while some versions are better than others, the spectrum of their variation is not particularly wide, as it generally is in translations of lyric poetry. The problems of Machiavelli's text lie less in its verbal complexities than in its practical implications and applications.

R. M. A.

Contents

Historical Introduction	vii
Translator's Note	xvii
The Text of <i>The Prince</i>	1
Backgrounds	
<i>Map: North Central Italy in Machiavelli's Time</i>	74
MACHIAVELLI THE WORKING DIPLOMAT	
Niccolò Machiavelli • [The Legation to Cesare Borgia]	75
MACHIAVELLI THE DEMOCRAT	
Niccolò Machiavelli • From <i>Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius</i>	89
MACHIAVELLI THE MORALIST	
Niccolò Machiavelli • The Exhortation to Penitence	119
MACHIAVELLI THE CORRESPONDENT	
Niccolò Machiavelli • From His Private Letters	123
MACHIAVELLI THE POET	
Niccolò Machiavelli • From <i>Carnival Songs</i>	132
• On Occasion	134
• The Death of Piero Soderini	135
Interpretations	
J. R. Hale • The Setting of <i>The Prince</i> : 1513–1514	139
Felix Gilbert • [Fortune, Necessity, <i>Virtù</i>]	150
Ernst Cassirer • Implications of the New Theory of the State	155
Sheldon S. Wolin • [The Economy of Violence]	169
Federico Chabod • Machiavelli's Method and Style	178
J. H. Whitfield • [Big Words, Exact Meanings]	193
Isaiah Berlin • The Question of Machiavelli	206