

剑桥政治思想史原著系列（影印本）

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

关于佛罗伦萨政府 的 对 话

Dialogue on the Government of Florence

Guicciardini 奎恰迪尼

Edited by

ALISON

BROWN

中国政法大学出版社

奎恰迪尼
GUICCIARDINI

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*Dialogue on the
Government of
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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

关于佛罗伦萨政府的对话/(意)奎恰迪尼著. —北京:中国政法大学出版社,2003.5

剑桥政治思想史原著系列(影印本)

ISBN 7-5620-2398-0

I. 关... II. 奎... III. 政治思想史—意大利—中世纪—英文

IV. D095.463

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2003)第 052792 号

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|-------|---|
| 书 名 | 《关于佛罗伦萨政府的对话》 |
| 出 版 人 | 李传敢 |
| 经 销 | 全国各地新华书店 |
| 出版发行 | 中国政法大学出版社 |
| 承 印 | 清华大学印刷厂 |
| 开 本 | 880 × 1230mm 1/32 |
| 印 张 | 8.25 |
| 版 本 | 2003 年 7 月第 1 版 2003 年 7 月第 1 次印刷 |
| 书 号 | ISBN 7-5620-2398-0/D·2358 |
| 印 数 | 0 001-2 000 |
| 定 价 | 18.00 元 |
| 社 址 | 北京市海淀区西土城路 25 号 邮政编码 100088 |
| 电 话 | (010)62229563 (010)62229278 (010)62229803 |
| 电子信箱 | z5620@263.net |
| 网 址 | http://www.cupl.edu.cn/cbs/index.htm |

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原书由剑桥大学出版社于 1994 年出版,此
影印本的出版获得剑桥大学出版社财团(英国
剑桥)的许可。

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Cambridge University Press 1994

剑桥政治思想史原著系列

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在政治理论领域，“剑桥政治思想史原著系列”作为主要的学生教科丛书，如今已牢固确立了其地位。本丛书旨在使学生能够获得从古希腊到 20 世纪初期西方政治思想史方面所有最为重要的原著。它囊括了所有著名的经典原著，但与此同时，它又扩展了传统的评价尺度，以便能够纳入范围广泛、不那么出名的作品。而在此之前，这些作品中有许多从未有过现代英文版本可资利用。只要可能，所选原著都会以完整而不删节的形式出版，其中的译作则是专门为本丛书的目的而安排。每一本书都有一个评论性的导言，加上历史年表、生平梗概、进一步阅读指南，以及必要的词汇表和原文注解。本丛书的最终目的是，为西方政治思想的整个发展脉络提供一个清晰的轮廓。

本丛书已出版著作的书目，请查阅书末。

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the help and advice of many friends. I would particularly like to express my gratitude to Maurizio Viroli, who has read the whole text and made valuable suggestions for improving the translation and saving me from mistakes. For any that remain, I am of course entirely responsible: I have resisted only his understandable wish to substitute 'revolution' with 'change of regime' (*mutazione*) for reasons I explain in the glossary. I owe special thanks to Quentin Skinner for supporting this project and for the generous help he has given me in reading parts of the text and discussing political terms. Among the many people who have helped me with advice about the meaning of words and problems of translation, I would like to thank Riccardo Fubini, John Hale, John Najemy, Giovanni Silvano and Nicolai Rubinstein, and especially my Special Subject class of 1991 in London University, who were the book's first readers and its liveliest critics. But for them, I would never have embarked on this translation or completed it. I would also like to thank Hilary Gaskin at the Cambridge University Press for her helpful and careful copy-editing. Above all, I am indebted to Patrick Chorley, whose understanding of Guicciardini's thought and language has helped to make it in some ways a shared project; I affectionately dedicate this book to him.

Introduction

Francesco Guicciardini was born on 6 March 1483 into one of the leading merchant families of Florence. His names reflect the influence of family tradition as well as the tradition of lay piety in Florence, since he was named Francesco after a great-grandfather Francesco de' Nerli, and Tommaso after the saint on whose feast-day he was born, Thomas Aquinas. So his 'special advocates and patrons', as he calls them, Francis and Thomas, associated him with the leading Mendicant Orders in Florence (*Ricordanze*, p. 53; for details of this and other works see Bibliographical note, p. xxxii). The choice of Marsilio Ficino, 'the leading Platonic philosopher in the world at the time' (*ibid.*), was less traditional, however. Francesco's father Piero had been a pupil of Ficino's and was the first member of his family to have a humanist education. Piero ensured that his son, too, studied the humanities as a boy, learning a little Greek as well as Latin, which would have prepared him for an ecclesiastical career. However, despite the possibility of following in the lucrative footsteps of his uncle, Bishop of Cortona, Francesco was discouraged from doing so by his father, who preferred to sacrifice the immediate profit this career would have offered his son for the sake of his conscience (*Ricordanze*, p. 56). Instead he studied law, initially in Florence, then in Ferrara and Padua, before returning to Florence. There he received a doctorate in civil law in 1505 (rather than the more prestigious doctorate 'of both kinds', canon as well as civil law, which would have cost another twelve-and-a-half ducats, his education having in all cost his father more than 500 gold ducats, *Ricordanze*, pp. 56-7). He started work at once as a teacher in the university and as an

advocate, acting for communes, private clients and for institutions like the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova in Florence.

Francesco's writing career began in 1508, the year of his marriage to Maria, daughter of Alamanno Salviati. Thanks to his patrician status and his wealth, his family relationships and his 'infinite number of friends', Alamanno was, in Francesco's eyes, 'incomparably the first man in the city' when he died in 1510 (*Ricordanze*, pp. 58, 66-7). However, he was unpopular with Francesco's own father for political as well as financial reasons: in addition to enjoying too grandiose a life-style for the dowry he offered, Alamanno was an enemy of the head of the government, Piero Soderini. But having deferred to his father's scruples once in renouncing an ecclesiastical career, Francesco was determined not to forgo this opportunity of advancing his career by marrying into the powerful Salviati family. His eventual marriage to Maria in May 1508, after an eighteen-month secret betrothal (unwillingly accepted by his father), is an early sign of Francesco's ambition. The secrecy and deception that it involved also indicate the political dangers and rivalries in Florence that would make his *Dialogue* both dangerous to write and difficult to interpret.

Following the stock-taking practice of newly-wed Florentines, Francesco marked his rite of passage with a series of writings: his autobiographical *Memoirs* or *Ricordanze*, began in April 1508 just before his marriage, his *Family Memoirs*, and shortly afterwards his *History of Florence*. To this triptych of writings about himself, his family and his city, he added in 1509 a ledger of business accounts, recording some 920 legal briefs and fees from a wide range of clients, public and private, over eleven years. This recently-edited ledger illustrates how closely Francesco's legal activities were related to politics during this period, and how much they must have contributed to his later political insights.

The year 1509 also marks Francesco's initiation into the life of politics, when he was summoned for the first time to a consultative meeting of citizens, or *pratica* (see Glossary). In 1511, aged only 28, he was elected Florentine ambassador to Spain, and it was there, at Logroño, that he wrote the *Discourse* which anticipates in many respects his reform scheme in Book II of the *Dialogue*. It offers a blueprint for the reform of the republican regime headed by Piero Soderini, completed (if we are to believe its date, '27 August 1512') just before the collapse of this regime at the hands of the Spanish at

the end of August, and several weeks before he would have heard about it. The same period of relative leisure also inspired the first of three versions of reflective *Ricordi* or *Maxims*, which he twice revised during similar periods of enforced leisure, in 1528 and 1530. Kept well-informed by his family of the new situation in Florence, and of 'who stood highest in Medici favour', he was allowed to return home in January 1514.

Far from being disadvantaged by the fall of the republican regime and restoration of the Medici, Francesco found himself on his return favoured by a series of offices, initially in Florence and later in the Papal States. He was happy to accede to Lorenzo di Piero de' Medici's wish that he, rather than his elder brother, should take his father's place as one of the Seventeen Reformers in 1514. The following year he was appointed a member of the Eight of Ward and then a member of the Signoria, and in December that year he was appointed a consistorial advocate by the Medici pope Leo X. These interim years of office in Florence produced two more political writings on Florentine government, *On the Government of Florence after the Medici Restoration in 1512* and *On How the Medici Family Should Secure Power for Themselves*. Both realistically accept that, since self-preservation is the objective of government, the Medici will have to protect themselves against popular opposition by building up a group of partisans who will have more to lose than gain by a change of regime: 'so that utility, indeed necessity, and not just love' will ensure their support (*Del governo*, p. 266). The second piece, written in 1516, shows early traces of the influence of Machiavelli's *Prince* – as Gennaro Sasso has pointed out¹ – in its 'digression' about the problem of ruling new states and reference to Cesare Borgia and Francesco Sforza. Accepting that the Medici are now 'bosses' (*padroni*) of Florence, it suggests that they could avoid the problems experienced by Lorenzo il Magnifico by feeding their friends in Rome, not Florence, 'now that they have the pontificate in their hands' (*Del modo*, pp. 273, 279): prescient advice in view of the reward he himself received from them later that year.

Francesco's first papal appointment marked another turning-point in his life, as he may himself have recognised at the time. For this

¹ G. Sasso, 'Machiavelli and Guicciardini', in *Per Francesco Guicciardini. Quattro studi*, Rome, 1984, pp. 94–5.

was the moment when he apparently had his first horoscope written, anticipating by some months his appointment as papal Governor of Modena in the summer of 1516, when it said he began to enjoy 'wealth and office in a very alarming and difficult position'. The following year he was appointed Governor of Reggio as well as Modena, in 1521 papal Commissary General in the war against the French, in 1524 President of the Romagna under the new Medici pope Clement VII (the year in which he possibly had a second horoscope prepared), and in 1526 papal Lieutenant General of the War of the League of Cognac.

It was during this period of his life, more precisely between August–November 1521 and, at the earliest, April 1524, that Francesco wrote the *Dialogue on the Government of Florence*. It is dated in its second preface (B; see p. xxv below), which states that it was begun 'at the time of Leo, when I found myself in the position of his Commissary General in the imperial and papal army in the war against the French', and was finished 'now that I have been appointed by Clement Governor of all the cities in the Romagna, which are extremely disturbed and full of infinite difficulties because of the uprisings that followed Leo's death'. So it belongs to the period when Florentines were optimistic about a return to a more republican government. After the death in May 1519 of Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, Florence's Captain General and the last legitimate descendant (with Leo X) of Lorenzo the Magnificent, the Florentines had been consulted by the well-liked cardinal Giulio de' Medici about how their city should be governed. Since Giulio was popular in Florence and known to be fond of the city, they were evidently confident that he would treat their suggestions seriously and introduce constitutional reform. So it seems likely, as Giovanni Silvano has suggested,² that – far from being written after the moment for a republican restoration had 'gone forever', in Pocock's words – Guicciardini's *Dialogue* shared the same very practical purpose as Machiavelli's *Discourse on the Government of Florence after the Death of Lorenzo de' Medici* and other blueprints proposed at this time.

² 'Gli uomini da bene di F.G: coscienza aristocratica e repubblica a Firenze nel primo '500', *Archivio storico italiano* 148 (1990), pp. 856–60; J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, Princeton, 1975, p. 221.

The situation was transformed in a paradoxical way by two events. The first was the abortive plot to kill Giulio de' Medici in 1522, which alienated Giulio and, instead of reducing Medici power in Florence, increased it. The second was Giulio's elevation to the papacy as Clement VII in November 1523. By initially strengthening the Medici's position in Florence, these events must have increased the fear Guicciardini had already expressed (in prefaces A and B, pp. 2, 5, nn. 4 and 19) of alienating his patrons through his republicanism. Yet, at the same time, the growing and openly-discussed possibility of revolution in Florence, now governed by the unpopular cardinal Silvio Passerini and the young Medici bastard Ippolito, raised a worse spectre for Guicciardini of being victimised by the republican regime as a Medicean – and possibly suffering the same fate as Bernardo del Nero, his *alter ego*, who was executed for his Medici sympathies. So whereas the first preface (A) expressed the hope of publishing the *Dialogue*, 'before I grow old', despite the danger of doing so with Florence 'under the shadow of the Medici government' (in A and B), its final preface (C) disclaims any political relevance or intention to publish (p. 4 and nn. 4, 14). The final preface also adds a flattering reference to Piero Soderini's republican government. Instead of suggesting that he might be thought ungrateful to the Medici in writing the *Dialogue*, he now alludes to Xenophon and Aristotle in order to suggest his political detachment (since Xenophon's loyalty to Athens was evidently not compromised by his biography of Cyrus, nor Aristotle's loyalty to Alexander the Great by his *Politics* (p. 4)); and at the same time he removes names from the text to modify his earlier more trenchant comments on both regimes. Far from being detached, however, these cosmetic adjustments to the text and its convoluted preface suggest that the *Dialogue* was both relevant and potentially dangerous in the later 1520s.

In May 1527, a year after Guicciardini was appointed Lieutenant General of the papal army, Rome was sacked by imperial troops and the Medici regime in Florence fell. Losing his position, Guicciardini retired to his villa outside Florence, where he wrote two imaginary orations which accurately forecast what was to happen two years later, the *Accusatoria*, in which he accuses himself of crimes against the state before a session of the Court of Forty, and the *Defensoria*, in which he defends himself. Increasingly isolated as the republican government in Florence became more extreme, he began his second

history of Florence, the *Cose fiorentine*, as well as a third version of his *Maxims*. The Treaty of Barcelona between Clement and Charles V in June 1529 obliged the Emperor to restore the Medici to Florence. Threatened with imprisonment and banishment by the republican government, Guicciardini fled from Florentine territory; despite acting as mediator between Florence and the Pope, however, he was accused of contumacy and banished as a rebel. His *Considerations on the 'Discourses' of Machiavelli* was written as he travelled as an exile to Rome, whence he returned as papal emissary to restore order in Florence after its final capitulation in August 1530. Rewarded with the Governorship of Bologna – but not the Romagna, as he had hoped – Guicciardini finally retired to Florence after the death of Clement VII in September 1534. Before then, however, he had been responsible for helping to establish Alessandro, the illegitimate last descendant of the elder Medici line, as Duke of Florence in 1532. In January that year he had repeated to the Pope the advice he had given Leo X in 1516: that the Medici should not establish a principate but strengthen their partisans in the city, among whom he now openly included himself (*Discourse* of 30 January 1532, p. 455). A *balia* was created (as he had recommended) and in April 1532 it appointed him one of the Twelve Reformers who made Alessandro Duke of Florence. Later he became one of Alessandro's closest advisers and was principally responsible for defending him against the exiles' charges of tyranny in 1535–6, asserting not only that Alessandro's ducal title was legitimate, since it had been granted by the delegated authority of a Florentine *parlamento* with imperial consent, but that his behaviour was 'most holy and his government free and pious'.³

The equivocation of Guicciardini's political stance is reflected in the *Dialogue on the Government of Florence*, whose republican idealism seems equally at odds with its political pragmatism and *realpolitik*. The problems Guicciardini faced in the 1520s in writing what Sasso calls 'this brief but complex' work⁴ make it, as we have seen, deliberately ambiguous and difficult to decode. For if we adopt a republican reading and identify Guicciardini with the idealism of Book II, we would interpret del Nero's defence of Medici tyranny in Book I as Guicciardini's safeguard against the danger of alienating his papal

³ J. Nardi, *Istorie di Firenze*, Florence 1858, II, pp. 335–74 at p. 350; G. B. Busini, letter to B. Varchi (30 May 1550), in *Lettere*, ed. G. Milanese, Florence, 1860, p. 220.

⁴ *Per Francesco Guicciardini*, p. 183; cf. Silvano, 'Gli uomini da bene', p. 861.

employers; whereas if we identify Guicciardini with del Nero's position in Book I, we would read Book II as his protection against a possible republican restoration. Revisions to the first draft suggest that he modified criticism both of the Medici and of the republican regimes. After 1527, however, the republican restoration and his banishment as a rebel in 1529 made the parallel between his position and del Nero's very evident. Perhaps, as Sasso has suggested,⁵ it was already in Guicciardini's mind when he was writing the *Dialogue*.

It purports to represent a discussion held in the villa of Bernardo del Nero just after the revolution of November 1494, which replaced the 'narrow' regime headed by Piero de' Medici with a more 'open' regime, under the control of a Great Council of some three-and-a-half thousand members. Bernardo del Nero, the former Medici supporter beheaded in 1497 for failing to reveal a pro-Medicean conspiracy, defends the Medici regime against the charges of the other younger participants, who in varying degrees all represent republican opposition to the Medici. Piero Capponi, a key figure in the downfall of the Medici and in the new regime, is a representative of the old mercantile aristocracy of Florence, the so-called *ottimati*, or optimates, who had governed Florence since the 1380s; Pagolantonio Soderini and Piero Guicciardini (the author's father) participate as citizens who played an influential role in consultative discussions after 1494, Pagolantonio as a leading Savonarolan and Piero Guicciardini as a more cautious supporter of the Savonarolan regime and also, as Ficino's pupil, the 'academic' voice in the *Dialogue*.

Ever since Cosimo de' Medici's return from exile in 1434, the Medici party had been narrowing the basis of power in Florence. It was gradually undermining the authority of the old-established councils of the People and Commune by replacing them with other, smaller councils, or by using special legislative powers, or *bafia*, to bypass them altogether. At the same time it controlled elections to offices through the use of select scrutineers, or *accoppiatori*. This regime was overthrown in November 1494, as a reaction against the Medici's growing autocracy and the incompetence of Piero de' Medici when faced with the French invasion. It was replaced initially by a government controlled by twenty optimates (among them, Piero Capponi); and then, after the intervention of the Dominican monk

⁵ *Per Francesco Guicciardini*, pp. 189-94; cf. pp. 172-9.

Savonarola, by a more open regime drawn from members of an enlarged Great Council of major office-holders over four generations, which became a potent symbol of the new republican regime. The *Dialogue* thus claims to represent a discussion about the rival merits of liberty, or open government, and restricted, or narrow government, based on 'the actual conversation' once held by its participants. Yet in approaching it, we must remember that del Nero, 'almost like an oracle' (p. 3), is allowed to enjoy the benefit of foresight in predicting the outcome of the 1494 revolution some 30 years after the events he describes. And since the argument for liberty is presented by members of the oligarchy which had replaced the guild regime in 1382 and had collaborated closely with the Medici after 1434, the issues are inevitably less clear-cut – and more interesting – than the antilogical form of the *Dialogue* initially suggests.

The *Dialogue* opens with a general discussion about the nature of revolutions and how to judge them. Whereas del Nero as a Medicean argues that such political upheavals always do more harm than good to a city, Soderini defends the 1494 revolution by distinguishing it from other types of political change, which he condemns for their factionalism. What he condemns are changes or *alterazioni* like those of 1433 and 1434 (when Cosimo de' Medici was exiled and restored to power), or those of 1466 and 1478 (following the Pitti and Pazzi Conspiracies), which simply transferred power within the ruling elite or increased its political control. Quite different, he argues, are revolutions or *mutazioni* that transform 'one species of government into another' (p. 7), such as the 1494 overthrow of the Medici regime, which restored liberty to the people. Although historians still argue about the extent to which the 1494 revolution in Florence differed from earlier changes, we can all today readily understand the issue at stake: the merits and demerits of overturning restrictive or 'narrow' governments in the name of popular freedom.

Soderini's suggestion that del Nero is also secretly pleased by the restoration of liberty in Florence encourages del Nero to define his position and social status. Unlike the other speakers, he does not belong to one of the old optimate families, 'not being of noble birth nor surrounded by relatives' as they are, nor is he well-educated. Instead, he is a self-made man who has become their political equal through his own efforts and through the patronage and friendship of the Medici. This serves to alert us to the fact that his approach to politics is going to be far from traditional. We should not be misled

by the fact that it is he who first introduces the traditional scholastic argument that, of the three types of government – of the one, the few and the many – government of one man when good is the best. For he does so only to undermine it by insisting, against the scholar Piero Guicciardini, that in fact governments must be judged by results, not by principles.

Judging only by results, del Nero is able to argue that there is no difference between legitimate and illegitimate regimes *ex titulo* (one of Bartolus of Sassoferrato's two types of tyranny) since their claim to power is irrelevant to their ability to rule. In this way he destroys one of the time-honoured definitions of tyranny as the worst of the six types of government according to the scholastic typology. He then proceeds to replace this old typology with new simplified terms that can easily be understood 'by the man in the street' (p. 12; they are discussed more fully on pp. xxv–xxvi below). But his distinction between what he colloquially calls 'broad' and 'narrow' government is not only easily comprehensible to all levels of Florentine society. It also enables him usefully to gloss over the old distinction between optimum government 'of the few' and Medici one-man government. According to his classification, instead of being different types altogether, the difference is simply one of degree.

Equally novel is his attack on Capponi's argument, based on Florence's long history and reputation as a free commune, that free and open government is the city's natural form of rule and therefore the best for it. On the contrary, del Nero responds, free communes were not introduced 'to allow everyone to participate in government', but simply 'to safeguard the laws and the common good', which is best achieved by one man, if he is good (p. 17). And far from being natural to the city, he continues, Capponi's much-vaunted freedom and equality is in fact no more than a slogan, used as a means of social advancement by the outs to get into power, and then discarded by them once they have achieved their objective (pp. 36–7). By distinguishing between civil and political liberty, and then by reductively defining liberty and equality as techniques for social advancement, del Nero offers a radical attack on the republican myth, which he then uses to undermine Capponi's patriotic defence of communal 'freedom' and noble virtue.

After this innovative introduction, which marks del Nero's importance in the *Dialogue*, the remainder of the first book is devoted to a discussion of the pros and cons of Medici government according to