



Machiavelli: The Republican Citizen and the Author of 'the Prince'

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*Machiavelli: the Republican Citizen and
the Author of 'The Prince'*

FEW subjects exist which humble and caution the historical student so much as does the history of the interpretation of Machiavelli's works. It would be complacent to judge that our understanding has simply been increasing. The truth is that there have been losses as well as gains; as some facets caught the light, others passed into darkness. To Florentines still near to Machiavelli personally, his life and work had seemed to have two faces. According to Giovanni Battista Busini, an anti-Medici republican, writing about the middle of the sixteenth century, Machiavelli 'was a most extraordinary lover of liberty', but wrote the *Prince* to teach Duke Lorenzo de' Medici how to rob the rich of their wealth and the ordinary citizens of their freedom, and later in his life accepted a pension from the head of the Medici family, Pope Clement VII, for writing his *Florentine History*. So here already, in the language of the party passions of Machiavelli's time, appears the puzzle of his later readers: how could the faithful secretary of the Florentine republic, the author of the *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livy*, also be the author of the *Prince*?¹

¹ Some of the investigations on which the answer proposed in the present paper relies, were first published in 1956 under the title 'The *Principe* and the Puzzle of the Date of the *Discorsi*', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, xviii (1956), 405-28. A number of objections were raised by G. Sasso in *Giornale Stor. della Lett. Italiana*, cxxxiv (1957), esp. 500 ff., cxxxv (1958), 251 f., and by J. H. Whitfield, in *Italian Studies*, xiii (1958), esp. 38 ff. Whitfield, subsequently, in *Le Parole e le Idee*, i (1959), 81 ff., indicated strong disagreement with Sasso's arguments while seemingly assenting to the chronology proposed in my paper of 1956. The reader of the present paper who consults those controversies will find that none of the doubts of my critics, even if any were accepted, would destroy the substance of the proposed theory. In restating it here on a much enlarged basis and adding a glimpse of its consequences for the appraisal of Machiavelli, I have considered Sasso's and Whitfield's objections implicitly, making few direct or polemical references. The chief objective of the present paper (read before the American Historical Association in Chicago, 29 Dec. 1959, in a somewhat shorter form) is to concentrate on the vital points. In doing so, I have this time avoided reliance on the studies of the genesis of the *Discourses* by Felix Gilbert ('The Composition and Structure of Machiavelli's *Discorsi*', *Jour. Hist. Ideas*, xiv [1953], 136-56) and J. H. Hexter ('Seysssel, Machiavelli, and Polybius VI: the Mystery of the Missing Translation', *Studies in the Renaissance*, iii [1956], 75-96) which in my article of 1956 were used as platforms from which to start. Since Gilbert's and Hexter's theories have been shown by critics to be not fully demonstrable and partly incorrect, while my own different thesis is independent of the validity of their conclusions and can perfectly stand on its own, I now use Gilbert's discussion only to draw one inference from his observations (see *infra*, p. 237), while keeping entirely aloof from Hexter's argument (see *infra*, p. 248, n. 3).

Until the end of the seventeenth century, the view that Machiavelli had worn two faces developed no further, overshadowed as it was by the deep impression made by the teachings of the *Prince*—to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a diabolical guide for princes, prescribing lies, treachery, and cruelty. The use that a few great intellects like Bacon and Bodin made of the *Discourses* did not change the fact that Machiavelli was usually known only as the author of the *Prince*. Awareness that he had also been a Florentine republican citizen became, however, general with the Enlightenment. This was an event of lasting significance, even though the arguments on which the eighteenth century relied are to us unacceptable. It was now reasoned that, since Machiavelli in the *Discourses* shows himself an adherent and great teacher of political freedom, and since he suffered loss of his position and punishment when the Medici rose to power, he cannot have wished to help the same Medici with the advice given in the *Prince*. The *Prince* must have been misunderstood by its readers. Either the pamphlet wished to expose the need for brutal ruthlessness on the part of an absolute prince in order to warn the people against tyrants; or Machiavelli wanted to tempt the Medici on to a career of crimes, foreseeing that this would recoil eventually on the malefactors.

We meet these arguments from the time of the first heralds of the Enlightenment, like Spinoza, to Rousseau and to the late eighteenth century when the introduction to Machiavelli's complete works published in Florence in 1782 stated that these reinterpretations of the author of the *Prince* from the perspective of the republican *Discourses* had dislodged the notion of the diabolical counsellor of despots.¹ Indeed, the author of the *Discourses* had for the first time come into his own. He was not merely celebrated as a virtuous republican by political doctrinaires, but in a writer like Montesquieu one notes that the politico-historical ideas of the *Discourses* were now exerting a genuine influence. From their echo in Montesquieu's *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains* one might reconstruct the key-ideas of the *Discourses*. One finds there all the tenets dear to the politico-historical philosopher of the *Discourses*, little modified by the Frenchman of the eighteenth century. For instance: while states must be founded by great individuals, it is the energy of the people, shown in their civic and military devotion to the commonwealth, that maintains them; this energy grows best in small states, and only where there is no feudal inequality between a few great lords and a dependent mass; and the Roman Republic flowered just as long as not only patricians but also plebeians, even at the cost of occasional civil strife, maintained their status in the

¹ The passage quoted from Busini is in his *Lettere a Benedetto Varchi* (Florence, 1861), pp. 84-5. For eighteenth century interpretations of Machiavelli, cf. A. Sorrentino, *Storia dell' Antimachiavellismo Europeo* (Naples, 1936), and Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (Yale Univ. Press, 1946), pp. 119 ff.

community, and as long as the expanse of the Empire had not become oppressive.¹

It is strange to think that after so much study and absorption of the ideas of the *Discourses*, the historical notion of Machiavelli could once again be reduced primarily to that of the author of the *Prince*. But this is what occurred at the turn of the eighteenth century. While to Montesquieu the Machiavellian teachings of the *Prince* had continued to be offensive, the tables were turned when about 1800 there arose a more relativistic historical attitude, which was prepared to base judgment on the specific circumstances of a past period. Now the *Prince* began to seem the most intelligible and even the most precious part of Machiavelli's works. This happened first in Germany. From Herder to Hegel, Fichte and Ranke the reasoning ran that the *Prince* was written at a moment when only power and cool 'reason of state' could save Italy from foreign domination; that the key to the work was the impassioned appeal, in the last chapter, for national liberation through the 'new prince'; and that the pamphlet was not intended to lay down rules valid for all ages, but to prescribe poison for the invigoration of a desperately sick body—setting a possible example for the Germany of about 1800, similarly divided into small states, invaded by foreigners, and waiting for a strong unifier. So, at least in Germany, Machiavelli again became the author of principally one book, the *Prince*, although now he was praised instead of cursed for the ruthless teachings given to a saviour-prince.² In Italy, the other country still waiting for national unification, there was the same shift of perspective and emphasis. Only here it took a considerably longer time—until the triumph of the *Risorgimento* at the middle of the nineteenth century—before the eighteenth-century inclination to look upon the author of the *Discourses* as a defender of freedom against tyranny finally faded out.³

In England, Macaulay protested against interest being exclusively fixed on the *Prince* as early as 1827. Yet his more balanced approach was almost as far removed from the Machiavelli of the eighteenth century as was the narrowing of the focus to the *Prince* in Germany and Italy. Macaulay, too, no longer attempted to detect a secret meaning in the pamphlet. From the perspective of the historical relativism of the new century he realized that the 'Machiavellian' traits stemmed from the conditions of Machiavelli's

¹ E. Levi-Malvano, *Montesquieu et Machiavelli* (Paris, 1912), esp. pp. 46, 51 ff., 63 f., 74ff.; F. Meinecke, *Die Entstehung des Historismus* (Munich, 1936), esp. i. 130 ff., 148, 155 f.

² A. Elkan, 'Die Entdeckung Machiavellis in Deutschland zu Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts', *Historische Zeitschrift*, cxix (1919), 427-58; F. Meinecke, *Die Idee der Staatsräson* (Munich, 1924), pp. 445 ff., 460 ff.; in the English trans. by D. Scott, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'État* (Yale Univ. Press, 1957), pp. 357 ff., 369 ff.

³ C. Curcio, *Machiavelli nel Risorgimento* (Milan, 1953).

age. The same traits, he pointed out, are also present in the *Discourses*, with the one difference that there they are applied not merely to the ambitions of an individual ruler but to the complex interests of a society. In neither work, says Macaulay, do the Machiavellian maxims, though great blemishes in many respects, prevent their author from revealing 'so pure and warm a zeal for the public good' as is rarely found in political writings. That the goals change—republican freedom in the *Discourses* and independence of the Italian states from the foreigners in the *Prince*—this need not astonish us, given the political situation in Machiavelli's time. 'The fact seems to have been that Machiavelli, despairing of the liberty of Florence, was inclined to support any government which might preserve her independence.'¹

The discovery and vindication of the national passion of the *Prince* had been the one great innovation in the interpretation of Machiavelli, but Macaulay's penetrating essay points forward to other major changes which were to happen to the memory of Machiavelli during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The 'Machiavellianism' of his teachings was to be better understood historically, and was soon to be traced in all his works, not only in the *Prince*; Machiavelli's conception of politics and of the relations between politics and ethical values was to be scrutinized without bias. But at the same time there would almost fade away the memory of what had been the strongest impression for eighteenth-century readers: that the *Discourses* were different in spirit from the *Prince* and, as an epitome of the political ideals and experiences in the Italian city-state republics, represented a precious Renaissance legacy in their own right. As the nineteenth century advanced, serious differences in political outlook and conviction between the *Prince* and the *Discourses* were more and more denied. In the light of the nineteenth-century ideal of the nation-state, it seemed most natural that Machiavelli, though brought up and sentimentally remaining a Florentine republican, should decide that national independence and monarchical unification of Italy were the goals of the hour. He was thought to have felt—like the Italian republicans of the early nineteenth century who accepted the final triumph of a unified Italian monarchy, or like the *Nationalliberalen* in Germany who submitted to Bismarck's solution of the German question—that in his own day republican nostalgia had to give way to princely *Realpolitik*. Machiavelli thus appeared as the father of a cool historical and scientific relativism, and in this seemed to lie his greatness and modernity.

The final definition of this presumed relativism came from Friedrich Meinecke when, during the nineteen-twenties, he recast the historical appraisal of the Machiavellian method from the viewpoint

¹ Macaulay, *Machiavelli*, in *Works* (London, 1879), esp. v. 48, 75 f.

of *Staatsräson*. According to Machiavelli (so Meinecke argued) all states are founded by the *virtù* of some lonely great individual, while the *virtù* of the citizens develops in the frame of institutions created by the original lawgiver, and after him slowly degenerates until a new lawgiver starts a fresh cycle. Machiavelli, therefore, must have looked upon the principate as a recurrent and indispensable phase in the life of states, and his descriptions of the cycle of forms of government in the *Discourses*, and of the task of the *principe nuovo* in the pamphlet, neatly interlock. 'Though a republican by ideal and inclination', Machiavelli was 'an adherent of monarchy by reason and resignation', and 'consequently the contrast between the monarchical attitude of the *Prince* and the republican inclination of the *Discourses* is merely a specious one (*ist nur scheinbar*)'. 'Only later centuries', Meinecke remarked, 'have evaluated the differences between forms of government in terms of a quarrel between basic truths, almost between *Weltanschauungen*'.¹ In Gerhard Ritter's well known continuation and modification of Meinecke's views, we are told still more pointedly that the once fashionable confrontation 'between the [republican] *Discourses* and the "absolutistic" *Prince* was caused by a wrong question'. 'It is the universally accepted result of all modern Machiavelli research that the *Discourses* and the *Prince* are derived from one uniform conception.' So little did Machiavelli's crucial ideas change, Ritter affirms, 'that one need not hesitate to elucidate the meaning of the *Discourses* through the *Prince* and *vice versa*'.²

The sincerity of Machiavelli's call, in the epilogue of the *Prince*, for a deliverer of Italy from foreign domination has remained a matter of debate until today. But most of those who have questioned the genuineness of Machiavelli's national passion in its odd company with the coldest, most 'Machiavellian' teachings in the guide-book for the prince, have been only the more inclined to believe in his personal disengagement and relativism. They have increasingly aimed at an analysis of Machiavelli's thought which fuses the teachings of all his works in a harmonious, static system. Seen through the eyes of the internationally best-known available synthesis of Machiavelli's ideas, the French *Machiavel* by A. Renaudet, Machiavelli worked alternately as *un théoricien de la République*

¹ Meinecke, *Idee*, pp. 40 f., 54 (English trans., pp. 32 f., 43); and his 'Einführung' to *Machiavelli: Der Fürst und kleinere Schriften. Übersetzt von E. Merian-Genast* ('Klassiker der Politik', viii; Berlin, 1923), pp. 14 f., 31 f.

² G. Ritter, *Die Dämonie der Macht* (6th edn., Munich, 1948), p. 186 (not in the English trans., *The Corrupting Influence of Power*, Hadleigh, 1952); 'Machiavelli und der Ursprung des modernen Nationalismus', in Ritter's *Vom sittlichen Problem der Macht* (Bern, 1948), pp. 40 ff., esp., 44, 55 f. ('Machiavelli's basic ideas', Ritter says here, p. 44, 'hardly changed any more after they had been first penned in 1512/13.') An authoritative, widely consulted summary actually composed, like a mosaic, of pieces taken indiscriminately from all writings of Machiavelli is Francesco Ercole's *La Politica di Machiavelli* (Roma, 1926).

and as *un théoricien de la Monarchie*, advancing easily from his work on the *Discourses* to that on the *Prince*, and again back to the *Discourses*; for the essential feature of his work was the creation of a *méthode strictement positive*, one equally applicable to either part of his *science de la politique*.¹ Thus, ever since the early nineteenth century it has been and still is the consensus of the majority of students that the choice between republican liberty and the principate of the Renaissance, whose fierce struggle formed the centre of Florentine and Italian history in Machiavelli's lifetime, was not among the fundamental inspirations and moulding forces of Machiavelli's thought, and must remain of secondary importance in its interpretation. Indeed, with few exceptions, for a century and more the study of Machiavelli's works has been rather narrowly directed to his views on the nature of political action, on the autonomy of politics, and on its conflicts with morality. Even in Italy, which for some decades has already seen the beginnings of a changed approach, today's most influential account of Machiavelli's ideas by a leading literary historian, Luigi Russo, still avers that 'Machiavelli was interested not in monarchy or republic, in liberty or authority, but merely in the technique of politics; he wants to be and always is *lo scienziato . . . dell' arte di governo*. . . . Liberty or authority, republic or principate are the *subject*, but not, in the Kantian sense, the *form* of Machiavelli's thinking'.²

It is at this point that the impression becomes inescapable that modern efforts to overcome eighteenth-century partisanship by a cool, objective appraisal of Machiavelli's method have in some respects exchanged one blind spot in our vision for another. When after so much plausible reconstruction of the alleged harmonious relationship between Machiavelli's two major political works we return to a reading of the *Discourses*, we still find ourselves face to face with the undisguised scale of values of a Florentine citizen, who is just as far as eighteenth-century readers had believed him to be from being indifferent to, or merely secondarily interested in, the political and historical role of freedom. Although it is true that the extension of the rules and maxims of the *Prince* to the life

¹ A. Renaudet, *Machiavel* (Paris 1942; Éd. revue et augmentée 1955), pp. 117 f.; cf. also 119 ff., 218 f., 289 ff. A number of other writers have also lately tried to give a more proportionate share to the *Discourses*; but, with the exception of the Swiss group referred to *infra*, p. 228, n. 2, and of G. Sasso in his recent book (see *infra*, p. 230), this has, as with Renaudet, in practice only meant that Machiavelli's 'Machiavellianism' was to be studied from the *Discourses* as well as from the *Prince*. A striking English example is Harold J. Laski, 'Machiavelli and the Present Time', *The Danger of Obedience and Other Essays* (New York, 1930), pp. 238-63.

² L. Russo, *Machiavelli* (3rd edn., Bari, 1949), p. 214. In the background of all Italian interpretations of this type is Benedetto Croce's influential thesis, propounded since the nineteen-twenties, that Machiavelli's had been the discovery of 'the necessity and autonomy of politics, of politics which are beyond good and evil'. Cf. A. P. D'Entrèves in his introduction (pp. xii f.) to Chabod's *Machiavelli and the Renaissance*, quoted *infra*, p. 229, n. 1.

of republics is one of the basic features of the *Discourses* (these are to deal with both republic and monarchy despite the fact that the republic attracts the major interest), it is a different world of values to which the teaching of 'Machiavellianism' is here applied—a world that often looks as though devised by another author. For instance, in the third book of the *Discourses*, we find in chapters 41–2 a direct reference to the eighteenth chapter of the *Prince* in which the *principe nuovo*, who must know human nature and cannot expect anybody to keep faith, is taught to be himself unfaithful, disguise his true character, and learn to be a master in feigning and dissembling. In the *Discourses*, the subject matter discussed under the chapter heading 'Promises exacted by force should not be kept' is the behaviour of the Roman consul Spurius Posthumius who during the defeat of his troops in the Caudine Forks showed himself ready to accept any condition in order to save the Roman army, but afterwards persuaded the Senate to break the faith and send him as the one responsible for the repudiated treaty back to the enemy in chains. On this occasion the author of the *Discourses* notes that here there was a model case to be remembered by every citizen because, where the common weal is at stake, 'no consideration of justice or injustice, of humanity or cruelty, of what brings praise or infamy should be allowed to prevail, but putting every other thought aside, that action should be taken which might save the *patria* and maintain her liberty'. Outside the area of the 'Machiavellian' teaching, the author of the *Discourses* boldly upholds the claim, in opposition to some of his favourite ancient writers, that a multitude of citizens, disciplined by good laws, has better judgment than a prince.¹ He thinks that republics are more reliable and grateful than princes and that the major forward strides of nations have been made in republics, as in Athens and Rome after the expulsion of their kings, while princes, in the long run, can only prolong the life of a stagnant society.² Once decadence has gone far, as it has in his own time, even the principate will hardly bring salvation because heredity on the throne does not make available the variety of talents required in different emergencies, nor does it produce the long succession of outstanding men needed to reform a degenerate people.³ Garrett Mattingly has recently said, not without good reasons, that instead

¹ *Disc.* I 58.

² *Disc.* I 29, I 58, I 59, II 2. Cf. also III 9: 'A republic has more vitality and enjoys good fortune for a longer time than a principate since, owing to the diversity found amongst its citizens, it is better able than a prince to adapt itself to varying circumstances'. Here, and throughout this paper, quotations in English from the *Discourses* follow as far as possible the translation by Leslie J. Walker, *The Discourses of Niccolò Machiavelli* (translated . . . with an introduction and notes. 2 vols., London and New Haven, 1950). I diverge from Walker's text, substituting a translation of my own, wherever this seems to be desirable for a more exact understanding of Machiavelli's thought or terminology. I am indebted also to Walker's not always exhaustive, but immensely helpful, commentary.

³ *Disc.* I 11, I 20, III 9.

of closing our eyes to the profound differences between such convictions and the counsels for a despotic ruler in the *Prince*, it would be better to return to the eighteenth-century suspicion that some of the prescriptions in the *Prince* were not meant seriously, but were intended to satirize the life of princes.¹

It seems to me that clearly definable differences can be found in the very area which is most basic to the thesis of a harmony between the *Prince* and the *Discourses*. The *Discourses* are a complex work. By choosing, in accord with Livy, the history of early republican Rome as an ideal centre, they have, from the first page, one major theme and standard: the moral health and political vigour of a free nation as the ultimate source of power. This standard is so basic to the book that the perspective on the period of the Roman kings as well as that on Caesar and the emperors is at all crucial points drawn from the needs of republican freedom. Yet the practical goal of the book—resuscitation of the wisdom of ancient politics for use in the present—is in the preface defined in the broader sense that everyone, kings as well as republican leaders, generals as well as individual citizens, should be able to find ancient examples to follow. The wisdom thus gained from antiquity suggests that the principles of ‘Machiavellianism’ apply to the policies of principates and republics alike and stimulates Machiavelli to provide special advice to all those types of political leaders—at times in evident conflict with the republican groundwork of the book. For instance, in the famous chapter on conspiracies (III 6), we find discussed how conspirators must behave in order to succeed, as well as how princes and other rulers must behave in order to successfully suppress conspirators. At several points the author says that if the reformer of a state, in spite of all that is put forward about the enduring need in monarchies as well as republics of loyal respect for institutions and laws, nevertheless wishes to establish autocratic and tyrannical rule, he must act in ways which, as here described, are virtually identical with those of the pamphlet on the *Prince*. But in the *Discourses* these are digressions, sometimes characterized as such, sometimes splitting up a continuing discussion.²

¹ G. Mattingly, ‘Machiavelli’s *Prince*: Political Science or Political Satire?’, *The American Scholar*, xxvii (1958), 489 ff.

² This is usually not sufficiently realized. I can illustrate this point here only with two examples, which will prove useful again later in our discussion. *Disc.* I 16 and I 17 deal with the difficulties that must be overcome by a newly founded republic replacing a former monarchy; this theme runs through both chapters, starting with a consideration of the regicide Brutus’s condemnation of his own sons to death when these became traitors of the young republic. Within this discussion on ‘the sons of Brutus’, we find (from the words ‘E chi prende a governare una moltitudine o per via di libertà or per via di principato’) an excursus teaching that neither a new republic nor a new principate can endure unless all political foes are destroyed in the beginning. Or rather, these ruthless teachings, most similar to those given in the 8th chapter of the *Prince*, are (after the initial statement that every new state, whether principate or republic, ought to heed them) actually applied only to the policy of a new prince.

We may speak of digressions, because the major line of the argument maintains that the founder or restorer of a state will become a political saviour only if he gives vigour to the institutions and laws that are the matrix of a people's political health and ethos; and thus there runs through the *Discourses* a continuous concern about how to prevent the rule of a reformer or 'new prince' from developing into absolutism and tyranny. While the founders of states with good institutions are praiseworthy (so we read in the first book, chapters 9 and 10), those of tyrannies are reprehensible: this applies in Roman history to Caesar, because he strove, and paved the way, for absolute power. The unique greatness of Romulus, on the other hand, rests on the fact that, in founding the Roman state, he reserved to himself only the command of the army and the right of convoking the Senate. As a consequence, since Rome's constitution (*ordini*) under her kings was to all intents and purposes a *vivere civile e libero* and in no respect an *assoluto e tirannico* regime, there was after the expulsion of her kings no need for any other change but that annual consuls replace the hereditary kings. Relying on the same criterion, the author of the *Discourses* sees in the French monarchy the happiest hereditary kingdom of his time

Thus they have nothing whatever to do with the theme with which chapter I 16 had started: the founding of a *republic*. This is noted by the author himself, who remarks: 'and although this argument does not fit the one discussed before, because we are now going to talk about a prince, whereas we had been talking about a republic [e benché questo discorso sia disforme dal soprascritto, parlando qui d'uno principe e quivi d'una republica], nevertheless I will say a few words about it, so as not to be compelled to return once more to this matter'. After the end of the 'Machiavellian' intermezzo, the subject of 'the sons of Brutus' is taken up again (from the words 'Sendo pertanto il popolo romano ancora . . .') and carried to completion.

As for the origin of this excursus, one might recall a somewhat obscure note in the same chapter VIII of the *Prince* which shows so much similarity with chapter 16 of *Disc. I*. In the *Prince*, Machiavelli says that the rise of a private citizen to the position of a prince could be discussed with more particulars 'in a context where one dealt with republics' ('dove si trattassi delle repubbliche'). This seems to suggest that Machiavelli at that time had in his desk materials or notes which did not fit the frame of his book on the *Prince* and were put aside for possible later use in connection with republics. They were eventually used in the 16th (perhaps also in the 26th) chapter of *Disc. I*, even though the treatment of the problem in the *Discourses* was so profoundly different that the integration did not succeed too well.

In *Disc. I* 25-7, there is a related discussion, based on the following argument: whoever in a republic (in *uno vivere politico*) wishes to introduce *uno vivere nuovo e libero*, whether in a republican or monarchical form (*o per via di republica o di regno*; for the terminology here used, cf. *infra* p. 226, n. 1), should preserve as many of the preceding institutions and traditions as possible. This discussion of chapter 25 is, in chapter 26, followed by one considering the exact opposite, namely that a 'new prince' who does not want to keep within the legal limits of a republic or a monarchy, 'but wants to set up an absolute power, also called by writers "tyranny"' ('vuole fare una potestà assoluta, la quale dagli autori è chiamata tirannide'), ought to act contrarily, namely change everything in the state, tolerate only new creatures dependent on himself, shrinking from no cruelty, but only from indecision and compromise. This alternative discussion is entirely out of tune with the often repeated condemnation in the *Discourses* of any *potestà assoluta*; cf. the examples in the next two notes.

The present paper is not the place for an historical appraisal of the complex structure of the *Discourses*, but some conclusions will be drawn *infra*, pp. 248-50.

because the kings (as he believes) had absolute power only in military and financial matters, but were otherwise pledged to observe the laws of the state. The great ability of the French monarchy to regenerate its internal strength is attributed to the right of the *Parlements*, especially the *Parlement* of Paris, not only to take action against princes, but even to condemn the king. To principates as well as republics it is 'equally essential to be regulated by laws. For a prince who knows no other control but his own will is like a madman. . . .' 'Princes should learn that they begin to lose their state the moment they begin to break the laws.' According to the *Art of War*, written soon after the completion of the *Discourses*, well-constituted monarchies 'do not grant absolute rule to their kings except for the command over the army'.¹

One way of taking the measure of the *Prince*, is to find out whether any similar concern appears in the advice given to the *principe nuovo*. There have been students who think it does; for does not the *Prince*, too, refer to Romulus as a noble example, while considering the establishment of *nuovi ordini* as a principal task of the new ruler, and does it not praise the role of *Parlement* for the French monarchy?² The author of the *Prince* does all this; but what in practice are the *ordini* for which, in the *Prince*, Romulus, along with Moses, Cyrus, and Theseus, stands as a patron-saint? The *principe nuovo* is asked to imitate 'the new institutions and forms of government which

¹ *Disc.* I 16, I 58, III 1, III 5; *Art of War*, in *Tutte le Opere*, ed. Mazzoni e Casella, p. 272. Machiavelli's constitutional terminology, to which usually little attention is paid, is still waiting for an exact examination. H. De Vries's dissertation, *Essai sur la terminologie constitutionnelle chez Machiavel* ('*Il Principe*'), Univ. d'Amsterdam, 1957, makes only a slight start, and that merely for the *Prince*; but one may take it for certain that as a rule (Machiavelli is never wholly consistent) *il vivere politico*—almost identical with *una repubblica*—means what we call a republic, while *il vivere libero*, *il vivere civile*, *la vita civile* may be found in monarchies as well as republics. If these terms apply to *un regno*, they mean that there exist laws and institutions preventing the ruler from arrogating *una potestà assoluta* or *tirannide*. Cf. the passages from *Disc.* I 25, quoted on the preceding page, as well as *Disc.* I 26 (If a *principe* in *una città* 'non si volga o per via di regno o di repubblica alla vita civile'); furthermore I 18 ('. . . E perché il riordinare una città al vivere politico presuppone uno uomo buono'); I 2 ('Perché Romolo e tutti gli altri Re fecero molte e buone leggi, conformi ancora al vivere libero; ma perché il fine loro fu fondare un regno e non una repubblica, quando quella città rimase libera vi mancavano molte cose che era necessario ordinare in favore della libertà. . .'); I 9 (on the other hand, under the kings, 'gli ordini' of Rome—as distinct from single laws—had been 'più conformi a uno vivere civile e libero che ad uno assoluto e tirannico', so that 'quando Roma divenne libera, . . . non fu innovato alcun ordine dello antico, se non che in luogo d'uno Re perpetuo fossero due Consoli annuali'); I 55 ('. . . quelle repubbliche dove si è mantenuto il vivere politico ed incorrotto, non sopportono che alcuno loro cittadino né sia né viva a uso di gentiluomo').

² This is what J. H. Whitfield maintains in his papers, 'On Machiavelli's use of *Ordini*', *Italian Studies*, x (1955), 33-9, and 'Machiavelli e il Problema del Principe', in *I Problemi della Pedagogia*, iv, no. 1 (1958). The same identification is found in the chapter on Machiavelli in R. von Albertini's *Das Florentinische Staatsbewusstsein im Übergang von der Republik zum Prinzipat* (Bern, 1955), where the hope that a *riordinatore* would establish a *vivere politico* and *libero* through 'restoration of the *ordini antichi*' is said to be the practical programme of the *Prince* and to find a 'theoretische Fundierung' in the *Discourses* (pp. 69 f.).

men [who like those legendary heroes rose to princely power by their *virtù*] have been forced to introduce in order to establish their regime and their security'.¹ Subsequently, the nature of the *ordini* giving 'security' is explained by more ordinary and palpable examples. Hiero, tyrant of Syracuse, after dissolving the old citizen army and creating new troops, changed all alliances of the city and made everything in the state depend only on himself. Other models of founders of new *ordini* are found in Francesco Sforza, the *condottiere* who destroyed the republic in Milan and made himself duke; in Cesare Borgia; and in a modern counterpart to the great malefactor Agathocles of Sicily, the tyrant Oliverotto da Fermo, who rose to power by murdering the leading citizens after he had invited them to a banquet. 'When in this fashion all had died who could offend him, Oliverotto da Fermo strengthened his position with *nuovi ordini civili e militari*', with the effect that within one year he had established security for his regime.² One wonders how anyone, hearing of these *nuovi ordini civili* for the rule of tyrants, can find in them a counterpart in spirit to the *ordini* of the nascent Roman commonwealth for which Romulus is praised in the *Discourses*.

The fact that there is a chapter on the *principatus civilis* in the *Prince* (chap. IX) does not mean that in this context we at last find a parallel to Romulus's *vivere civile e libero*. *Principatus civilis* here means one-man rule established with the consent of the citizens in a former republic, and the chapter presents a discussion not of the harmfulness, but of the suitable moment for the introduction, of absolute rule. There will be trouble (so we read) when a prince in such an environment wishes to advance from an *ordine civile* to *autorità assoluta* and tries to do so at a moment of emergency in order to fortify himself, instead of doing so at a time when every citizen is dependent on the new regime. And what about the reference to the *Parlement* of Paris? The author of the *Discourses* praises the French monarchy for the right of *Parlement* to condemn in its judgments even the king. The author of the *Prince* also praises the existence of 'countless good ordinances' in the kingdom of France, the first of which is the great authority of the *Parlement*. But *libertà e sicurezza*, as seen in the *Prince*, are promoted by *Parlement* not for the subjects but for the king. In any kingdom or principate, the great nobles must be restrained, the people befriended and both balanced against each other; so the wise lawgiver of France established *Parlement* as a judge and buffer 'to relieve the king of the dissatisfaction that he might incur among the nobles by favoring the people, and among the people by favoring the nobles'. This was the most prudent measure ever devised, teaching the lesson

¹ *Prince*, chap. VI ('... da' nuovi ordini e modi che sono forzati introdurre per fondare lo stato loro e la loro securtà').

² *Ibid.* chap. VI-VIII.

‘ that princes should let the carrying out of unpopular duties devolve on others, and bestow favors themselves ’.¹

The closer the comparison of the two works, the more absurd seems the idea that these should be two harmonious parts of one and the same political philosophy.² The author of the *Prince* does not care for restrictions on the ruler in the name of liberty; he does not think of the people as an active force nor of its future, which is the central concern of the author of the *Discourses* in discussing leadership. So the puzzle of the relationship between Machiavelli’s two works remains what it has been; and unless we are ready to return to the eighteenth-century suspicion that the *Prince* must hide a different meaning from what it seems to say, there is only one alternative: the conclusion that between the creation of two so deeply divergent views of the political world some crisis or development must have occurred in the author’s mind. It appears, therefore, that the tables must again be turned: instead of so many efforts to harmonize Machiavelli’s thought, we ought to face the obvious differences and explore whether their secret may, after all, yield to a genetic approach.

It is one of the most interesting features of present Machiavelli scholarship that this logically needed next step has already been

¹ *Disc.* II 1; *Prince*, chap. XIX.

² Perhaps this is being felt by a growing number of students. In addition to Garrett Mattingly (see *supra* p. 224, n. 1), one may refer to J. H. Hexter, whose paper ‘ *Il principe and lo stato* ’, *Studies in the Renaissance*, iv (1957), esp. 133 f., has drawn attention to an unnoticed difference in language and terminology between the two works: while the conception of the State as ‘ a political body transcending the individuals who compose it ’ is central to the *Discourses*, it does not exist in the *Prince*; terms that are frequent in the *Discourses*, like *il vivere civile* or *politico*, or like *il bene commune*, have no equivalent in the *Prince*. Again, Ernst Cassirer, in his *The Myth of the State*, pp. 145–8, has spoken of a ‘ bewildering ’ contrast in the political attitude of the two works; but Cassirer’s comment, that in Machiavelli’s opinion a chance for republican life had existed only in antiquity, but did not exist in his own time, is the old, perilous oversimplification of a much more complicated situation. Among Italian writers, helpful protests against the traditional tendency to harmonize the views of the *Discourses* and the *Prince* have come (besides from Chabod and his school, about whom we shall have more to say presently) from Carmelo Caristia: cf. his strongly polemical *Il Pensiero Politico di Niccolò Machiavelli* (2nd edn., Naples, 1951), pp. 57 ff. Similar protests have lately come from a group of Swiss scholars, who gave added significance to the noted difference by proposing that the true and lasting convictions of Machiavelli, the Florentine citizen, must be sought in the republican *Discourses*, his ‘ life-work ’, while the *Prince* had been ‘ written for a special occasion ’ (‘ *Gelegenheitsschriftchen* ’) and was the ‘ fruit of a few summer weeks ’: cf. W. Kaegi, *Historische Meditationen*, i. 107–9; a mere episode thrown in between the writing of the *Discourses*: cf. L. v. Muralt, *Machiavellis Staatsgedanke*, pp. 103 f., 162. Essentially the same arguments reappear in A. Renaudet’s *Machiavel*, where (pp. 175 f.) we read that, whereas ‘ les *Discours* . . . expriment la pensée qu’il a véritablement soutenu jusqu’à la mort ’, ‘ le *Prince* . . . ne représente que l’occupation de quelques mois, consacrés à l’étude d’une hypothèse illusoire ’. The contrast thus suggested does not stand the test, as we shall soon find out: the ideas of the *Prince* did have an incubation period of many years, and they were not preceded by any of the republican considerations found in the *Discourses*. But whatever the validity of the attempted solutions, the emergence of so many scattered dissents from the long established tendency to minimize or smooth over the apparent rifts in Machiavelli’s thought indicates the actuality of the problem.

taken in one school of studies. In Italy, where scholars have always been more inclined than in other countries to pay biographical attention to Machiavelli's relations to his Italian and Florentine environment, Federico Chabod wrote as early as 1926: 'At one time the Machiavelli of *The Prince* was placed in grotesque opposition to the Machiavelli of the *Discourses*. Today . . . critics are too often led to minimize the differences that arise from his varying emotional outlook.' 'Machiavelli was not an abstract theoretician who developed, first in one sense, then in another, a concept that had been completely assimilated from the start; he was a politician and a man of passion, who gradually unfolded and defined his ideas. . . .'¹

The heart of Chabod's thesis and that of a large Italian school under his leadership is the proposition that the *Discourses* should be used as a biographical document—like a diary that reflects successive changes in a writer's outlook and evaluations. In the first half of the first book, so Chabod argues, we meet a strong republican confidence, the conviction that a vigorous state must be built on collective action by all its citizens; here we find the theory of the healthy effects of the civil strife between patricians and plebeians in ancient Rome, evidence that every class was free and held its own in the Roman state. Going on, however, we encounter some chapters (I 16–18 and 26–7) where the interest in the people, who had been 'the animating spirit' in the previous discussions, is replaced by that in the personal success of a prince. We now read—we have already come upon these passages²—that if a 'new prince' should not wish to found a legally ordered state, but should aspire to the kind of *potestà assoluta* called 'tyranny', he must change every institution and authority in his new state, make the former rich, poor, and the former poor, rich, shrinking from no cruelty, because a new tyrant can hope for survival only when every subject, by patronage or out of fear, has become his creature. Chapters like these, according to Chabod, suggest that, while they were being written, the republican confidence of the preceding chapters gave way to the mood in which the *Prince* was composed.

It is possible, thought Chabod, to recognize the cause of this transition. After discussing Rome's foundation and the rise and fall of her civic energies, Machiavelli, when reaching the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters, remembers the conditions of his own day and states that in a phase of full corruption of civic virtue it would be very difficult, perhaps impossible, to 'maintain or restore' any republic. Whoever in such a phase wants to rebuild the state 'must by necessity resort to extraordinary methods, such as the use

¹ F. Chabod, *Machiavelli and the Renaissance* (London, 1958), pp. 41, 117; Ital. edn., *Del 'Principe' di Niccolò Machiavelli* ('Biblioteca della Nuova Rivista Storica', no. 8; Milan, 1926), pp. 8 f., 67.

² *Supra* p. 225.

of force and an appeal to arms; before he can achieve anything, he must become a prince in the state'. 'And so', Chabod comments, 'we have *The Prince*'; that is, at this point of his experience Machiavelli must have interrupted work on the *Discourses* and set out to write the *Prince*, until, frustrated and disillusioned, he later on returned to the *Discourses*, to complete them in accord with the original character of the work.¹

One might, perhaps, object to this ingenious construction by saying that Machiavelli in the eighteenth chapter eventually reaches the conclusion that, for many reasons, the founding of such a princely position would be an enterprise of the utmost difficulty, and perhaps impossible; but a recent book from Chabod's school, by Gennaro Sasso, has skilfully shown that the theory can be adapted to this objection: although the scepticism of the eighteenth chapter is not identical with the standpoint of the *Prince*, argues Sasso, it shows the writer in the immediately preceding phase; the chapter allows us a glimpse of the doubt and the despair which caused Machiavelli to excogitate the ruthless means which yet might make it possible for someone not shrinking back from crime to achieve the almost impossible.²

Do these speculations suggest more than plausible possibilities? That they were immediately accepted by a large number of Italian students³ and since then have found ever-widening assent also in other countries⁴ had, it seems, several reasons. Above all, here for the first time was an open acknowledgment of the deep difference in spirit between Machiavelli's two works and an effort to discover its cause in a change of the author's experiences and evaluations. This method was bound to appeal to those who were afraid that scholars were losing touch with Machiavelli as a man of politics with changing values and passions, and who could not close their eyes to the actual, shrill dissonances between the two treatises.

Furthermore, how could one question this argument since it seemed to be borne out by some incontestable textual observations. At the beginning of the second chapter of the *Prince*, there is a note saying that the author would omit the discussion of republics in this work 'since on another occasion I have reasoned about them at length'. ('... perchè altra volta ne ragionai a lungo'). We do

¹ Chabod, *op. cit.* pp. 21 and 36-41 (Ital. edn., pp. 4-9): 'The Republic yielded place to the Principate; . . . the vision of past glory—a vision clouded by nostalgic regret—was replaced by the theoretical prospect of Italy's political recovery'.

² G. Sasso, *Niccolò Machiavelli: Storia del suo pensiero politico* (Naples, 1958), pp. 213 ff., 357 ff., esp. 218 f.

³ Three representative examples: V. Branca, 'Rileggendo il *Principe* e i *Discorsi*', *La Nuova Italia*, viii (1937), 107 f.; G. Prezzolini, *Machiavelli Anticristo* (Rome, 1954), p. 171; R. Ridolfi, *Vita di Niccolò Machiavelli* (Rome, 1954), pp. 223 ff., 254.

⁴ According to Felix Gilbert's judgment in *Renaissance News*, xii (1959), 95, 'it will be very difficult to disprove the validity of the analysis by which Sasso shows the close connection of the first eighteen chapters of the *Discorsi* with the *Prince*'.

not know of any other work of Machiavelli's of which it could be said that he had there 'reasoned about republics at length' but the *Discourses*;¹ and this characterization would be particularly to the point when applied to the introductory part where types of republics are distinguished according to their origin and subsequently Roman liberty is traced from the times of the Roman kings. Since, on the other hand, in later parts of the *Discourses* (in the second and third book) we find three or four cross-references to the *Prince*,² we seem to have a situation of mathematical lucidity: whereas the second and third book must have followed the composition of the *Prince*, the first book, or at least its initial portion, must have been older than the *Prince* because it is referred to in the *Prince's* second chapter. And since Chabod could prove that the *Prince*, though not dedicated to Lorenzo di Piero de' Medici before 1515-16, was, as far as we can check its knowledge of the contemporary political scene, written and completed in the autumn of 1513, the outcome appears to be this: after having written a substantial section of the first book of the *Discourses* by the summer of 1513, Machiavelli composed the *Prince* during the autumn and, possibly, the winter, while, soon afterwards or a few years later, he continued the *Discourses*, eventually dedicating them to Cosimo Rucellai who died in 1519.

Most of the adherents of this theory have also been guided by a more profound reflection. The presumed development of Machiavelli seems to crown a widely accepted notion of the political course of Renaissance Italy. By the time of Machiavelli, so the argument runs, the city-state republic born of the Italian commune had been hopelessly outdated by the efficiency of princely absolutism. Is it not natural, and a testimony to Machiavelli's perspicacity, that his way led him from humanistic admiration of the Roman Republic to the insight that, under the conditions of his own age, rational expediency in politics, and perhaps national unification, were to come from the absolutism of princes? Even though Machiavelli's hope that a 'new prince' would restore Italy's national strength was Utopian on the level of practical politics, said Chabod, yet the

¹ Therefore the only way to escape from the conclusions which follow is to make the hypothesis that the reference to 'altra volta' had been aiming at a lost work, one of which no other trace or reference has survived. This is the thesis suggested, though hesitatingly, by Felix Gilbert in 1953, 'The Structure and Composition of Machiavelli's *Discorsi*', *Jour. Hist. Ideas*, xiv, 150 ff. But this conjecture, daring under all circumstances, could qualify for consideration only if we had information that Machiavelli, before or during 1513, was indeed occupied with the problems discussed in *Disc.* I 1-18. However, the opposite is the case: we can establish with assurance that Machiavelli did not occupy himself with those problems by 1513; see *infra*, p. 243. Furthermore, whatever we shall argue against the possibility of Machiavelli referring in 1513, in the *Prince*, to an unpublished fragment of the text of the *Discourses* (see *infra*, p. 241), will implicitly also disprove the assumption of Machiavelli referring to the draft of a hypothetical work unpublished and later lost.

² *Disc.* II 1, II 20 (indubitably referring to *Prince* chaps. XII and XIII, not to the *Art of War*), III 19, III 42.

notion that a 'vigorous unitarian policy' was to come from a government with 'absolute supremacy' represented the quintessence of the political experience of Renaissance Italy. It was 'unique good fortune' that Machiavelli's pamphlet, while Renaissance Italy suffered its tragic break-down, 'epitomized' the results of the Italian development, handing them down to the age of absolutism.¹

Here we see not only the ultimate reason for the long, unchallenged dominance of the approach ushered in by Chabod's essay of 1926, but also its vulnerable point: as soon as we begin to doubt the validity of an historical conception in which the political thought of the Italian Renaissance appears essentially as a contribution to absolutism, we shall be inclined to question and re-examine a reconstruction of Machiavelli's development so closely bound to one specific notion of the Renaissance. We will wonder especially about the plausibility of two major premises of this theory: whether the *Discourses*, in spite of the deeply divergent outlook of Machiavelli's two works, can really be thought to envisage the very solutions to some of Machiavelli's basic problems that are spelled out in the *Prince*; and whether we are indeed allowed to make the assumptions that the *Discourses*, chapter by chapter, originated in the order in which we have them, and that the author's work, after the 18th chapter or somewhat later, suffered an interruption of several years.

In order to determine if Machiavelli, when asking in the first book of the *Discourses* how the political health of a republic might be restored in a time of decadence, can have had in mind the monarchical solution offered in the *Prince*, we must pay attention to his subtle reasoning in the 18th chapter of *Discourses I*. There, to be sure, it is argued that in a period of corruption of the civic spirit any possible regeneration requires recourse to force and violence; a potential reformer, therefore, before anything else, would have to make himself a *principe* in his republic. Yet, the aim of the chapter is definitely not to present the rise of a usurper prince as a necessary and saving remedy in any phase of the history of a republic. The author of the 18th chapter of the *Discourses* is too deeply convinced that anyone who at such a moment is ready to make himself a prince will not be the man to act for his people's good. 'It presupposes a good man', he ponders, 'to reorganize the constitutional life of a republic; but to have recourse to violence, in order to make oneself prince in a republic, presupposes a bad man. Hence very rarely will there be found a good man ready to use bad methods in order to make himself prince though with a good end in view, nor yet a bad man who, having become a prince, . . . will use well that authority which he had acquired by bad means.' This, of course, is the very consideration never entered into in the pamphlet on the

¹ Chabod, *op. cit.* pp. 41, 98 ff., 104 f., 121 ff.

Prince, in which the *principe nuovo* is taught to 'use the beast' in man whenever it is needed.¹

For the author of the 18th chapter, the psychological doubt comes on top of the observation (made at the end of chapter 17) that the life of an individual, or of two of them if a ruler should be followed by an equally efficient successor, is too short to effect anything permanent after the *virtù* of a people has become corrupt. So the argument faces in a different direction from that of the replacement of a republic by a *principe nuovo*, and the 18th chapter ends with the counsel that those who in the face of all these almost unsurmountable difficulties 'are called upon to create or maintain a republic' in a period of corruption, should strengthen the authoritative-monarchical element within the constitution by modifying the existing laws 'in the direction of a regal rather than a democratic order',² so that citizens unrestrained by law might be 'curbed in some measure by an almost regal power' ('da una podestà quasi [!] regia'). 'To try to restore men to good conduct in any other way', adds Machiavelli, 'would be either a most cruel or an impossible undertaking.'³

This clearly repudiates a programme of salvation through the ruthless actions of a princely usurper in the manner recommended in the *Prince*. Resignation and relativism, but in a sense very

¹ '... è necessario venire allo straordinario, come è alla violenza ed all'armi, e diventare innanzi a ogni cosa principe di quella città e poterne disporre a suo modo. E perché il riordinare una città al vivere politico presuppone uno uomo buono, e il diventare per violenza principe di una republica presuppone uno uomo cattivo, per questo si troverà che radissime volte accaggia che uno buono, per vie cattive, ancora che il fine suo fusse buono, voglia diventare principe; e che uno reo, divenuto principe, voglia operare bene' (*Disc.* I 18). As for the striking formulation, that the reformer must 'diventare innanzi a ogni cosa principe' in his 'città', in order to be able to 'poterne disporre a suo modo', it would be quite erroneous to interpret this as meaning that he must destroy the republic and found a *principato*. It hardly means more than that he must make himself a dictator by force, and Machiavelli's problem is precisely whether a dictator who has used force will ever be ready to become a reformer of constitutional life, instead of an absolute prince. According to *Disc.* I 26, anyone who becomes a 'principe d'una città o d'uno stato' can follow three different paths: he can maintain 'quel principato' as a 'nuovo principe' by reversing every particle of the former order of the state, but he can also turn either 'per via di regno' or 'per via di republica' 'alla vita civile'. Here the term *principe* is applied to someone who might employ his power for establishing constitutional government in the form of a legally limited monarchy ('regno') or even a 'republica'. This use of the term must be borne in mind in any explanation of what Machiavelli, in I 18, wished and did not wish to say with the statement that it was necessary to 'diventare innanzi a ogni cosa principe di quella città'. For the terminology of *vivere politico* and *vita civile*, cf. *supra* p. 226, n. 1.

² This is the meaning of the advice, 'sarebbe necessario ridurla [*i.e.*, una republica] più verso lo stato regio, che verso lo stato popolare'.

³ 'Da tutte le soprascritte cose nasce la difficoltà o impossibilità, che è nelle città corrotte, a mantenervi una republica o a crearvela di nuovo. E quando pure la vi si avesse a creare o a mantenere, sarebbe necessario ridurla più verso lo stato regio che verso lo stato popolare, acciocché quegli uomini i quali dalle leggi per la loro insolenzia non possono essere corretti, fussero da una podestà quasi regia in qualche modo frenati. E a volergli fare per altre vie diventare buoni, sarebbe o crudelissima impresa o al tutto impossibile'. (*Disc.* I 18).

different from what Meinecke and his school have in mind, appears to be the gist of the 17th and 18th chapters: although theoretically a great monarch might rejuvenate a decadent state, given the nature of man one cannot hope for so much, but may learn from history that when things have come to such a pass, institution of a 'quasi-regal power' within a republic is relatively the best remedy. Nor can there be any doubt that this discussion applies to the conditions of Machiavelli's own age. In the 17th chapter (with which the 18th is formally interrelated),¹ after pointing out that Rome, when uncorrupted, had remained free after the expulsion of her kings, whereas corrupted Rome could not preserve her liberty after Caesar's murder, Machiavelli defines his understanding of 'corruption' and 'ineptitude for a free mode of life' with a view to modern Italy. The cause of such an ineptitude, chapter 17 suggests, lies in the 'inequality' produced by feudal conditions, as confirmed by the examples of present-day peoples ('popoli conosciuti ne' nostri tempi'). The peoples are those of Milan and Naples; nothing, we are told, could ever introduce a viable republic in countries like these. There is no mention of Florence here, but a reference points to a later chapter—*Discourses* I 55²—where the meaning of this omission becomes clear: the presence of *gentiluomini* ('gentlemen')—defined as lords who do not work, but 'live in idleness on the revenue derived from their estates' and own castles and subject people—makes any form of free political life impossible in Lombardy and Naples, throughout the Romagna, and in the Papal State. However in Tuscany, where feudal lords are only few and far between, Florence, Siena, and Lucca have always been republics, every small country town strives to be free, and here 'a wise man familiar with the ancient forms of civic government should easily be able to introduce a civic way of life'. But 'so great has been Tuscany's misfortune that up to the present nothing has been attempted by any man with the requisite ability and knowledge'.³

¹ Chapter 18 begins: 'Io credo che non sia fuora di proposito, né disforme dal soprascritto discorso [that is, chapter 17] considerare se in una città corrotta si può mantenere lo stato libero, sendovi; o quando e' non vi fusse, se vi si può ordinare.'

² The reference does not identify the chapter—'come in altro luogo più particolarmente si dirà'—but says that at that later point it would be shown that inequality can be changed into equality (the condition of republican freedom) only by such 'extraordinary devices as few would know how to employ, or would be ready to employ'. Precisely this is the object of *Disc.* I 55, where transformation of a country of equality into one of inequality, and *vice versa*, is said to be so difficult that there are 'but few who have had the ability to carry it through, . . . partly because men get terrified and partly owing to the obstacles encountered'; wherefore the fitness for monarchy of Naples, the Papal States, Romagna, and Lombardy, as well as the fitness for republican life of Tuscany and Venice, must be looked upon as practically unchangeable.

³ '. . . ma esservi [*i.e.* in Tuscany] tanta equalità che facilmente da uno uomo prudente, e che delle antiche civiltà avesse cognizione, vi s'introdurrebbe uno vivere civile. Ma lo infortunio suo è stato tanto grande che infino a questi tempi non si è abattuta a alcuno uomo che lo abbia possuto o saputo fare.' It might seem strange at first

Machiavelli, in writing the 17th, 18th, and 55th chapters of the *Discourses*, was focusing, as we can now see, not upon the founder of a new *principatus* in the anarchic region of the Papal State (as envisaged in the *Prince*), but on a lawgiver who would maintain or restore some republican or civil form of life in Tuscany. And indeed, shortly after the completion of the *Discourses*, he proved that he took this contention of the continuing fitness of Tuscany and Florence for republican institutions seriously. When Pope Leo and the Cardinal Medici (later Clement VII) in 1519–20 asked a number of Florentine citizens for counsel on Florence's government in the years to come, Machiavelli dared to propose, in his *Discorso delle cose fiorentine dopo la morte di Lorenzo*,¹ the vision of the first book of the *Discourses*. He then again argued, and this time as practical political advice, that, since Florentine society was free of *gentiluomini*, the only workable and far-seeing plan was to rebuild the Florentine constitution under the overlordship of those two high-placed members of the Medici family in such a way that after their deaths the Florentine republic would be able to resume her normal functions. And so the gulf between the philosopher of *uno vivere politico e civile* in the *Discourses*, and the analyst and advocate of absolute rule in the *Prince*, remains as wide as ever—too wide to admit the bridge between Machiavelli's two works so ingeniously constructed by Chabod and his school.²

sight to read that 'uno uomo prudente' should introduce, in Tuscany, 'uno vivere civile', and not 'uno vivere politico' as one would expect according to Machiavelli's normal usage (see *supra* p. 226, n. 1). This is particularly surprising in view of the fact that the problem, in the same chapter, had been previously stated in the normal fashion, namely that 'republiche dove si è mantenuto il vivere politico ed incorrotto' do not admit 'gentiluomini', whereas in those Italian regions that have feudal lords 'non è mai surta alcuna republica né alcuno vivere politico; perché tali generazioni di uomini sono al tutto inimici d'ogni civiltà', and that in order to restrain ('frenare') such lords 'vi bisogna ordinare . . . maggior forza, la quale è una mano regia che con la potenza assoluta ed eccessiva ponga freno alla eccessiva ambizione e corruttela de' potenti'. Although the phrases 'inimici d'ogni civiltà' and 'delle antiche civiltà' form a connecting link between the terminologies of the two parts of the chapter, the use of 'uno vivere civile' instead of 'uno vivere politico' in the application to the conditions of Tuscany remains an inconsistency, but is, perhaps, not impossible to explain. Only a few years later, in his *Discorso* of 1519–20 on the Florentine constitution, Machiavelli was to suggest for Florence for the time being a quasi-monarchical government under Pope Leo X and Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, with so many features of civic participation in the offices and city-councils—*i.e.* a 'vivere civile'—built in, that after the death of Leo and Giulio de' Medici Florence would automatically return to its republican way of life. Cf. text *supra*, on this page.

¹ Called 'Discorso sopra la riformare lo Stato di Firenze' until R. Ridolfi in his *Vita di Niccolò Machiavelli*, pp. 275, 450 f., adopted the above title from an early manuscript. There, pp. 450 f., also persuasive reasons for the date 1519–20.

² As for Chabod's related argument (see *supra*, p. 229), that in *Disc.* I 16–18 and 26–7 counsel for an absolute prince replaces the usual concern of the *Discourses* for a government built on the *virtù* and active participation of the people in the state, it has been shown (*supra* p. 225) that the pertinent sections of those chapters are deviations from the main argument and lack perfect fusion with the context. The phrases Chabod has in mind, therefore, may have been written and given their place in the text at practically any time; they need not necessarily have been part of the first draft of the chapters in which they occur.

We can show the extreme improbability also of the assumption that portions of the first book of the *Discourses* may have been written years ahead of the remainder of the work. Indeed, the more one tries to visualize the consequences of this hypothesis, the more one gets caught in a maize of contradictions. Two well informed contemporaries—Filippo de' Nerli and Jacopo Nardi—tell us that the *Discourses* were written at the request of the group of older and younger cultured citizens who met in the Oricellari Gardens;¹ but Machiavelli can hardly have been a visitor there before 1515, certainly not in 1513.² He himself, in the preface to the *Discourses*, thanks Zanobi Buondelmonti and Cosimo Rucellai, two principal members of that group, precisely 'for having impelled me to write down what I would never have written of my own accord'.³ To be sure, this does not make it inconceivable that a portion of the work composed for the Oricellari friends had been prepared at an earlier time. Still, Nerli and Nardi knew nothing of it; so Machiavelli must have made a secret of the fact—if it was a fact—that a weighty and essential part of his book had lain in his desk for a number of years. And why, in his preface, did he not thank Buondelmonti and Rucellai for having roused him to resume and save an interrupted work, instead of thanking them for the inducement to 'write' it?

More doubts arise when one realizes that Machiavelli in the synthetic chapters at the beginning of the *Discourses* displays a breadth and profoundness in historical vision and a penetration in the analysis of social forces that, in comparison, makes the mere interest in governmental action characteristic of the *Prince* look superficial and less mature. Chabod and other students of his group have felt this to be puzzling. In advancing from the *Discourses* to the *Prince*, Sasso has commented recently, one does not observe an expansion of Machiavelli's horizon but rather sees a process of 'impoverishment', by which 'the power of historical comprehension' found in the *Discourses* is 'reduced' to 'one isolated element'—attention paid to power built on indigenuous troops and the ruler's diplomacy. Thus Sasso feels compelled to speak of the 'lesser profundity of the *Prince* in comparison to the *Discourses*'; he says that the *Prince* 'remains without doubt considerably below the far-reaching analyses in the *Discourses*'.⁴ Those who adhere to the sequence: *Discourses-Prince*, account for this anomalous development by pointing to the need in the practical guide for princes to focus upon a few concrete and malleable factors.

¹ For particulars, I may refer to my discussion of the chronology of the *Discourses* in *Bib. d'Hum. et Ren.*, xviii, quoted *supra* p. 217, n. 1; *cf. esp.* pp. 420 f.

² See *infra*, pp. 239 f., n. 2.

³ '... che mi avete forzato a scrivere quello ch'io mai per me medesimo non arci scritto'.

⁴ Chabod, *op. cit.* pp. 79 f., 86, 96 f.; Sasso, *op. cit.* pp. 119, 223 f., 227, 303.

Still, where else have the changes in the minds of great political and historical thinkers from one major work to another amounted to a process of narrowing of interests and to a loss of profundity?

Even greater puzzles await us. In 1953, Felix Gilbert drew attention to the fact that, while the introductory parts of each of the three books of the *Discourses* have been worked up into a rounded treatise on politics (and into a rounded picture of ancient Rome, one should add), there follow sections in the latter parts of all three books that look like a simple commentary, with each chapter centred on the discussion of one or a few important passages from Livy. Here, the succession of the chapters is not according to the problems with which they deal, but parallels the sequence of the selected passages in Livy's narrative. It would be very hard to think of any other genesis of this unusual arrangement but that Machiavelli originally had worked out comments following Livy's order, and that he subsequently broke down this commentary into three books according to contents, expanding some—especially the introductory—chapters of each book into treatises no longer closely connected with Livy, while the unchanged, or little changed, pieces of the commentary were left together in subsequent portions of each book, often in their original order.

One need not see eye to eye with Gilbert regarding the boundaries between the transformed sections and the chapters still representing the initial commentary (perhaps the individual chapters were modified to different degrees); and one may disagree with him regarding most of his conclusions about the early history and the date of the completion of the *Discourses*. All this will matter little as long as we assume—as obviously we must—that Machiavelli's labours developed from a running commentary to a semi-systematic work. No doubt, he first had to acquire his knowledge of Rome's religion, constitution, military order, and foreign politics through a pedestrian study of Livy's history, before, thus prepared, he could eventually construct the great synthetic pictures at the beginnings of the three books.¹

If this was the course of Machiavelli's labours, the first eighteen chapters of the *Discourses* cannot possibly belong to an early phase of the work, and least of all can they have been the part of the

¹ Cf. Gilbert's 'Composition', *ubi supra*, esp. pp. 147 ff. It should be noted, however, that Gilbert did not admit the validity of the above conclusions for the all-important first eighteen chapters, but, instead, proposed what he called a 'speculative' theory, namely that Machiavelli, when breaking down and transforming his Livy commentary into the present three books, used in the composition of *Disc. I* 1-18 a lost work on republics which he had drafted before the composition of the *Prince* and, consequently, several years before the beginning of his labours on the Livy commentary (Gilbert, pp. 150, 152). For the fallacies inherent in this unacceptable hypothesis, cf. *supra* p. 231, n. 1, and *infra* pp. 241, 245. In Gilbert's eyes, therefore, *Disc. I* 1-18, far from representing Machiavelli's thought during a phase subsequent to the *Prince*, shows an 'approach' which—in contrast to the rest of the *Discourses*—'is very similar to that in the *Prince*' (p. 149).

Discourses first written. Therefore, the eighteen chapters could have existed in 1513 only if most of the labour on the *Discourses* had already been done by the autumn of 1513. This, however, would be so fantastic that nothing more has ever been suggested than that at best the first book was composed by the autumn of 1513. But if the *Discourses* started as a running commentary, this cannot have happened.

Are we approaching the point where we can recognize that the thesis of a development of Machiavelli from parts of the *Discourses* to the *Prince* has mocked us by leading us in a wrong direction? It would seem so were it not for the stumbling-block presented by the statement in the second chapter of the *Prince* that the author would not discuss republics, 'since on another occasion I have reasoned about them at length'.¹ Yet, is this passage really the documentary evidence which it has been supposed to be—definite proof that a part of the *Discourses* existed when the *Prince* was being written? If we had a manuscript of the *Prince* from the year 1513 and the text contained a cross-reference to a former work dealing with republics, this would, no doubt, be conclusive proof. But all extant early manuscripts of the *Prince* include the dedication to Lorenzo de' Medici,² which for compelling reasons must have been written between the autumn of 1515 and the autumn of 1516, most probably between March and October 1516.³ The lack of earlier manuscripts suggests that Machiavelli in 1513 had not allowed his work to be circulated, and so in 1515–16 he was still at liberty to adapt the text to changed conditions. Chabod's important demonstration that no political experiences or events later than 1513 have left their marks on the text of the *Prince* and that, consequently, from the angle of Machiavelli's development as a political thinker the *Prince* is basically a document of the year 1513,⁴ is not identical with the conclusion that nothing was changed in the wording of the text at the time when the preface to Lorenzo was added. On

¹ 'Io lascerò indietro el ragionare delle republiche, perché altra volta ne ragionai a lungo. Volterommi solo al principato. . .'

² A. Gerber, *Niccolò Machiavelli: Die Handschriften, Ausgaben und Übersetzungen* . . . (Gotha, 1912), i, 82.

³ Before 8 Oct., 1516, when Lorenzo was made duke of Urbino, because, as R. Ridolfi, *La Vita*, pp. 439 f., has pointed out conclusively, Machiavelli after that event would have addressed Lorenzo in his preface as 'magnificus' and *Duke*, and not as 'eccellenza'. As for the *terminus a quo*, Ridolfi argues that Machiavelli could hardly have put so much hope in Lorenzo before Lorenzo's election as Florentine *capitano generale* in Sept. 1515. While this, too, is convincing as far as it goes, one should also consider the following facts: that Machiavelli's original intention had been to dedicate the *Prince* to Giuliano de' Medici; that this plan cannot have remained secret after his letter to Vettori on 10 Dec., 1513; and that Giuliano died in Mar. 1516. So most likely the dedication of the *Prince* to Lorenzo was made after Giuliano had died and Lorenzo had taken Giuliano's place as Medicean pretender to a princely position in the Papal State—that is, during or after Mar. 1516.

⁴ Cf. Chabod's recent statement in *Machiavelli and the Renaissance*, p. 36, with a reference to the observations he had made in a paper in *Archivum Romanicum*, 1927

the contrary, from a textual viewpoint, the *Prince* as handed down to posterity is a publication of about 1516 in which no *visible* entries or changes of a later date than 1513 have been found, except for the preface, but many *invisible* changes may well have been made in 1514, 1515, and 1516. In fact, our greatest critical problem is not whether, in a publication of the year 1516, we may ascribe a passage fitting conditions of about 1516 to that very year, but whether in trying to reconstruct the mind of Machiavelli in 1513 from a text released about 1516, we do not unwittingly attribute some opinions or phrasings of the Machiavelli of 1516 to the Machiavelli of 1513.

The cross-reference in the *Prince* to 'another occasion' is made on the first page; it virtually belongs to the introductory matter, following the brief opening definition (chapter I) of 'how many kinds of principates exist and how they are acquired'. The context does not become incomplete—it rather becomes more logical—when the cross-reference is omitted.¹ It would be perfectly possible, therefore, that the author, before sending his book away with an added dedication, inserted also the note of reference in order to establish some kind of link with the very different kind of work in which he had become engaged by 1516. Neither can we exclude the possibility that there still was an opportunity for an insertion as late as 1517 or early in 1518. For after sending off the dedication copy to Lorenzo, Machiavelli may easily have waited for Lorenzo's reaction before allowing other copies to be made. By 1517/18 the *Discourses* had been finished, but even in the spring or summer of 1516 work on the *Discourses* was probably far advanced and Machiavelli's engagement in this task was sufficiently known to his friends, to permit a vague reference like 'on *another occasion* [*altra volta*] I have reasoned at length'.²

To be sure, all these observations do not give us any *certitude*,

¹ Cf. my detailed demonstration in *Bib. d'Hum. et Ren., ubi supra*, pp. 409 f.

² I think I was able to demonstrate these facts in the paper just cited, pp. 411–19. The following three comments should further help to clarify the crucial point that Machiavelli could very well have joined the Oricellari circle and have finished the major part of his work on the *Discourses* by the time the *Prince* was dedicated to Lorenzo. In the first place, the period in which the dedication occurred can almost certainly be shortened from Oct. 1515—Oct. 1516 to Mar. 1516—Oct. 1516, as pointed out, *supra* p. 238, n. 3. Secondly, Machiavelli's attendance at the Oricellari meetings early in 1516 is suggested by the conversation described in his *Art of War*. The debate there presented is supposed to have taken place in the Oricellari Gardens in Machiavelli's presence ('essendo con alcuni altri nostri amici stato presente', lib. I, beginning), and although the setting of a Renaissance dialogue can only in rare cases be used as a testimony to biographical facts, Machiavelli's *Art of War* seems to be among the exceptions. The conversation, which according to the preface shows Cosimo Rucellai's excellence in debate, is identified with an historical event: the visit of the *condottiere* Fabrizio Colonna to Florence and to Cosimo in the early part of 1516. The book—written four years later, after Cosimo's death—claims that it is meant to keep Cosimo's memory fresh among all those who had been eye-witnesses to that event, and to show his great qualities to others. This does not necessarily mean that a great deal of the conversation as presented must have had any counterpart in Cosimo's and Colonna's actual encounter, but it is very unlikely that Machiavelli would have written that he

they only prove the *possibility* that the reference in the *Prince* to the *Discourses* was written between late 1515 and early 1518 (most probably about the middle of 1516), instead of in 1513. But knowledge that the disturbing citation in the *Prince* is chronologically neutral and by itself cannot decide anything about the sequence of Machiavelli's two works, has almost the same effect as would the final identification of the date. For since this passage has long operated like a switch by which the attention of students was automatically turned away from ever examining the possibilities of the *Discourses* having been begun later than 1513, recognition of the *neutrality* of the passage means that, no longer bound by old prejudices, we can make a new start. We now may freely make up our minds as to whether the idea of a meandering journey from the first eighteen chapters (or a larger part) of the first book of the *Discourses* to the *Prince*, and back to the rest of the *Discourses*, preserves any appearance of plausibility once we are at liberty to consider, as an alternative, a natural succession from the one work to the other.

drew upon his own observations in making the event of 1516 a memorial for Cosimo had he not attended the meetings in the Gardens together with the 'altri nostri amici during Colonna's visit. This should allay Ridolfi's doubts (*Vita*, pp. 252, 441) regarding Machiavelli's presence in the Gardens before the summer of 1517.

Third and finally, in spite of Sasso's and Whitfield's scepticism, the seven or eight-visible hints to the year 1517 (or possibly 1518) in the text of the *Discourses* do reveal themselves as likely revisions of a text already written. To recognize this, we must remove from our examination three of them that do not really refer to 1517 events. In *Disc.* II 17 and III 27, two earlier events are said to have happened 15 and 24 years ago, which, it is true, takes us to 1517. But this does not mean that the passages in question were written in 1517; it would be quite natural that any notes in the text saying that certain events had happened so and so many years ago were brought up to date during a last revision before dedication and publication. A similar brief correction during that revision, one should think, was due in *Disc.* I 11 where we read that the Mameluk militia in Egypt could have served as a good example until its recent destruction by the Turks early in 1517. In these three cases, no textual analysis can reconstruct with certainty what changes the author actually made during the year 1517. But the remaining five examples testify to rather clumsy, and therefore detectable, insertions in an already finished and coherent text. Twice a somewhat incongruous supplement appears to have been added to an original triad of references, complete without the supplement. (In particular, in I 19 we find a comparison of three kings in Rome, in Israel, and among the Turks, and this comparison becomes complete with the sentence: 'Ma se il figliuolo suo Salì [Selim I], presente signore, fusse stato simile al padre e non all' avolo, quel regno rovinava'. Yet this 'but' sentence is supplemented by another one with 'but', appended, one would think, under the fresh impression of Selim's victory over the Mameluks early in 1517: 'Ma . . . rovinava; ma e' si vede costui essere per superare la gloria dell' avolo'. In II 10, on the other hand, we meet a sequence of one example taken from Greek history, one from Roman history, and one that had occurred 'ne' nostri tempi'; but this last is followed by one that happened 'a few days ago' ['pochi giorni sono'], which is clearly an oddly appended event also from 'ne' nostri tempi'). In the last three phrases indicative of 1517, the references occur in places where they do not fit logically, or where an argument, later continued, is suddenly split up. (This happens in II 17, II 22, and II 24. I believe the results of my detailed analyses in *Bib. d'Hum. et Ren.*, xviii, 415-19, are convincing on this score.) Even the most insistent sceptic could not contend on the basis of five such suspiciously phrased hints at 1517, quite possibly if not probably mere changes in the text, that Machiavelli's work *cannot* in substance have been composed before 1517.

We have already seen that the hypothesis that the initial portion of the *Discourses* was composed a few years ahead of the rest of the work is contradicted by direct and indirect information on its genesis. The contradictions multiply when, with this hypothesis in mind, we examine Machiavelli's literary occupations in 1513 and during the preceding years of his life. Indeed, the further we proceed the more do we run into a whole string of implausibilities. We must consider all of them before we can decide whether or not we may dare to close our eyes to the consequences of the belief in the composition of a part of the *Discourses* in 1513.

In the first place, the very phrasing of the reference to the *Discourses* in the *Prince* would give cause for wonder if it came from the year 1513. Provided that the initial eighteen chapters of the *Discourses* existed in that summer, they would at that moment not have been more than a draft hidden in the author's desk; a draft still far from the state in which a work nearing completion might have been known to his friends or even talked about in public. So if we insist on 1513 as the year of origin, we must be ready to believe that Machiavelli, when telling his readers not that he was to talk about republics elsewhere but that he had sufficiently reasoned about them 'on another occasion' and need not repeat himself, thought of a discontinued draft in his desk, known only to himself—unknown even to one of his most intimate friends as is apparent from his correspondence with Francesco Vettori.

In December 1513, after completion of the draft of the *Prince*, Machiavelli wrote a letter to Vettori, then Florentine ambassador in Rome, to tell him of his recent labours, their purpose, and their origin. The two friends had been in frequent correspondence about the international political situation during the month of August, but there had been a pause afterwards until late in November when Vettori sent a detailed report on his life during the interval. On 10 December, Machiavelli reciprocated with an equally full account on how he had spent his time since September ('dirvi in questa mia lettera . . . qual sia la vita mia'). He starts with the famous description of his miserable life among rude lumbermen and country people, neighbours on his tiny estate near S. Casciano—a life which is however changed at nightfall when, donning dignified clothes, he retires to his rural study where for four hours each night he forgets the misery of his life while inquiring into the teachings and deeds of the great men of antiquity 'who out of their humanity' receive him well and answer his inquisitive questions. In those hours of close spiritual intercourse with the ancient writers, he says, 'I completely give myself over to the ancients'. Then he adds: 'And because Dante says that there is no knowledge unless one retains what one has read, I have written down the profit I have gained from this conversation, and composed a little book *De*

Principatibus. . . . If ever any of my trifles can please you, this one should not displease you.’¹

This is a report on the genesis of the *Prince* and on Machiavelli’s life during the pause in his correspondence from September to November 1513. But we would be poor critics if we failed to make this clear and elaborate account throw some light upon a wider area of his occupations. From the report we may learn that the intimate friend who was more interested than any other in Machiavelli’s political ideas and writings knew at the time of the composition of the *Prince* nothing of the *Discourses*. For if Vettori had known that Machiavelli had been occupied with a work on republics earlier in the year, Machiavelli could not have told him, in December, of the composition of a work *De Principatibus* without any hint as to what had happened to the preparation of the work on republics which Vettori, in that case, must have expected to emerge from Machiavelli’s studies, instead of the *Prince*. Moreover, Machiavelli’s report excludes by implication the possibility that he had pursued studies of the sort he describes before the autumn. The purpose and the basic mood of his letter is the communication of something new and wonderful that had entered his life during the recent time of silence. If the spiritual communion with the great ancients, which necessarily must have preceded the *Discourses* as well as the *Prince*, had already been going on during the spring or summer and in September or October earlier experience was only renewed, the phrasing and intonation of the letter to Vettori would in all likelihood be very different. As for the autumn, one could hardly be more precise than Machiavelli in saying that ‘the little book *De Principatibus*’ was *the*—not *a*—record of his new experience. So the letter leads us much further than to a mere, inconclusive *argumentum ex silentio*;² its wording seems explicit enough to tell us that neither the writer nor the recipient of the letter can have known of the preparation of a work on republics during the autumn or the earlier part of 1513. We are hardly at liberty to neglect these implications of Machiavelli’s own report.

Also, if we were to adhere to the hypothesis of the composition of the first part of the *Discourses* in 1513, we should have to assume that Machiavelli wrote their republican-minded opening in the very phase of his life in which he was most eagerly craving for a career in the service of the Medici. As his letters show, he was (rightly or wrongly) convinced that he had owed his delivery from imprisonment and torture in February to Giuliano de’ Medici. After his

¹ ‘E perché Dante dice che non fa scienza senza ritener lo havere inteso, io ho notato quello di che per la loro conversazione ho fatto capitale, e composto uno opuscolo *De principatibus* [the oldest form of the title, also found in manuscripts], dove io mi profondo quanto io posso nelle cogitazioni di questo subietto, disputando che cosa è principato. . . .’ For this letter as an historical source, *cf.* also the article just referred to, pp. 424 ff.

² As G. Sasso, *Giornale Stor. della Lett. Ital.* cxxxiv (1957), 509, has charged.

dismissal from prison, through several months, we see him besieging all his friends to use their influence in his favour with Giuliano and Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici. In March, he celebrated the cardinal's elevation to the papal see as Leo X with a poem,¹ and in April he sighed, writing to Vettori: if only Leo would use him in some office, in Rome or in the Papal State, if not in Florence. In June he tried 'to think myself into the pope's place' and work out an analysis of Leo's political interests in Italy and in Europe.² About five months later, he decided to offer his services to Giuliano by dedicating the *Prince* to him. These anxious efforts clearly suggest Machiavelli's state of mind during the period in which the *Discourses* must have been conceived if started in 1513.³

Finally, we would have to believe that the *Discourses* originated not only when Machiavelli's faith in the cause of the Florentine Republic was lowest, but also at a time when, as far as we know, none of the basic ideas of the *Discourses* had yet been prepared. From his letters, political, and historical writings we know about his interests during the years 1498 to 1512.⁴ It would be a fair summary to say that these years had seen an uninterrupted exercise in the thought of which the *Prince* was to become an epitome; nowhere do we find the slightest anticipation of the attention paid by the *Discourses* to the forces that moulded the social and constitutional life of the *Respublica Romana* and of other republics. Indeed, students have noted with surprise that Machiavelli in the writings which accompanied the creation of a Florentine militia in 1506, did not yet give any thought to the conditions in the Roman Republic as a model or counterpart.⁵ Again, when as late as about the middle of 1512 he worked out the final versions of the *Portraits* (*Ritratti*) of Germany and France⁶ and noted, in contrast to conditions

¹ As R. Ridolfi, *Vita*, pp. 210, 431, has demonstrated.

² Letters to Vettori of 16 Apr. and 20 June, 1513.

³ Neither can one overlook the fact that the dominant note in all of Machiavelli's letters from Mar. to June 1513 is the utter personal despair of the writer; I have become useless to my friends, my family, myself, he laments again and again. The puzzle which must be faced by those who believe in the composition of parts of the *Discourses* during those months has been put aptly and honestly by Sasso, *Niccolò Machiavelli*, p. 196: 'It is indeed singular [è veramente singolare] that Machiavelli during the preparation . . . of his *magnum opus* . . . should have been able to express such limitless discouragement in his letters to Vettori and, above all, never hint at the great work in which he was engaged.'

⁴ Three excellent and comprehensive analyses allow us to judge this point with great assurance: Federico Chabod, *Niccolò Machiavelli, Parte I: Il segretario fiorentino* (Rome, 1933); Raffaello Ramat, 'Vigilia Machiavellica', *Studi Letterari: Miscellanea in onore di Emilio Santini* (Palermo, 1956), pp. 197-213; Gennaro Sasso, *op. cit.* pp. 7-181. Additional confirmation may now be found in J. R. Hale's *Machiavelli and Renaissance Italy* (London, 1961), pp. 28-140—the first biography of Machiavelli which, after tracing his experiences and writings during his youth, adopts the view that, while the *Prince* originated in 1513, no part of the *Discourses* was written until several years later.

⁵ Cf. F. Chabod, *Niccolò Machiavelli, Parte I*, pp. 154 f.

⁶ For the dates, see Ridolfi, *Vita*, pp. 420 f., and Sasso, *Giornale Stor. della Lett. al.*, cxxxiv (1957), 510.

in the German cities, the exclusion of the feudal nobility from the Swiss cities, he did not give any indication that he was already looking upon this sort of civic equality as a decisive element in the fabric of republican life.¹ And in portraying the French monarchy and mentioning the *Parlement* of Paris, he showed himself solely interested in the growing power of the Crown; he failed to give the slightest hint that he already paid attention to the institutions which guaranteed the rule of law over the king—the central point in the portraiture of the French kingdom in the *Discourses*.

Not that Machiavelli at that time was still unfamiliar with at least some of the ancient sources that were to play so decisive a part for the historical vision embodied in the *Discourses*. Livy at least appears to have been his frequent reading since, when he was seventeen, his father had compiled the index of the first printed edition of Livy in Florence and a copy, fetched by Niccolò from the binder, found its place in the family library. But this early occupation with Livy was no preparation for the views which were later to make the *Discourses* largely a treatise on republics. In the several places where Livy's influence is perceptible in Machiavelli's writings during the years of his secretaryship, the Livian narrative is used not as a guide to the spirit and to the constitutional fabric of the *Respublica Romana*, but as a stimulus for themes of Machiavellian politics that reappear in the *Prince* and in related 'Machiavellian' chapters of the *Discourses*. The first teaching drawn from Livy's history is encountered on the occasion of Machiavelli's first legation to France in 1500, when Florence attempted to restrain the French ally from compromises with Spain. France, in her north-Italian politics, was to 'follow the procedure of those who in the past had aimed at the possession of foreign provinces'. The Roman method had been, 'to humiliate all those who had power, fondle the subject people, give help to friends, and be wary of those who strive for equal authority in the same place'.² A warning against half-measures and indecision is also the theme on the next occasion where Machiavelli's preoccupation with Livy becomes manifest. After a brief defection of Arezzo in 1502, Machiavelli's advice in one of his best-known early writings was that Florence should respond either with deliberately cruel punishment or with such great clemency that she could expect to make friends. The Romans, he contended, had always judged the

¹ Sasso, *Niccolò Machiavelli*, pp. 169 f.

² '... che questa Maestà doveva... seguire l'ordine di coloro che hanno per lo addietro volsuto possedere una provincia esterna, che è diminuire e' potenti, vezeggiare li sudditi, mantenere li amici, e guardarsi de' compagni, cioè da coloro che vogliono in tale luogo avere eguale autorità'. From the letter of 21. XI. 1500, in Machiavelli's *Legazjoni*, to Cardinal d'Amboise. The same ideas on the treatment of a new province were later resumed in the *Prince* chap. III.

'middle way' injurious in their dealings with their subjects.¹ After the fall of the Florentine Republic in 1512, Machiavelli again had recourse to Livy when reflecting that the Gonfaloniere, Piero Soderini, honest and well-meaning statesman that he was, after having maintained himself and the republic through many years, perished and ruined his state when he refused—or was unable—to turn to cunning and cruelty in a time of emergency that demanded those qualities from the men in power. For the solution of this typically 'Machiavellian' problem inspiration was sought in Livy's account of how Hannibal and Scipio, the one by cruelty and perfidy, the other by compassion and faithfulness, through many years achieved equal success.²

Down to the year 1513, no political or historical viewpoints other than those connected with such 'Machiavellian' problems ever seem to appear. Perhaps one could not expect anything else in view of Machiavelli's occupations and experiences from the day of his entrance into the Florentine chancery to the fall of the republic. With hardly any pause his diplomatic missions had taken him, besides to France and Germany and to the Papal See, to the countless cities and small lords in the almost lawless region of the Romagna and the State of the Church, and back to missions within the Florentine territorial state: suppression of revolts, conflicts with neighbouring Tuscan city-states, difficult negotiations with treacherous mercenary *condottieri*, the institution of a Florentine militia in the territory. Thus he had watched the superior power of the large nation-states and their oppressive impact on weak Italy, as well as the efforts of tyrannical rulers in central Italy to build, by shrewdness, ruthlessness and crime, in a region of constant change, lacking any tradition, a 'new principate', from Alexander VI and his *nepote* Cesare Borgia, to Julius II and his *nepote* Francesco Maria della Rovere, to Leo X and his *nepote* Giuliano de' Medici. At home, he had been in close contact with the problems of Florence's military defence and her difficult rule over often unwilling subjects in her Tuscan territories. In brief, the Florentine secretary had served his republic through fourteen years, to the last shred of his immense devotion, almost without ever stepping, in action or thought, outside the endless stream of power politics.³

¹ 'Puossi per questa deliberazione considerare come i Romani nel giudicare di queste loro terre ribellate pensarono che bisognasse o guadagnare la fede loro con i benefizi o trattarli in modo che mai più ne potessero dubitare: e per questo giudicarono dannosa ogni altra via di mezzo che si pigliasse'. 'I Romani pensarono una volta che i popoli ribellati si debbano o beneficiare o spegnere e che ogni altra via sia pericolosissima'. From the pamphlet, *Del Modo di trattare i popoli della Valdichiana ribellati*, 1503.

² In the letter (so-called *Ghiribizzi scritti in Raugia*) to Piero Soderini, late 1512. The same comparison between Hannibal and Scipio was later resumed in *Disc.* III 21.

³ That Machiavelli, in addition to being 'second chancellor' of the chancery, also ranked as 'secretary' (the term we have been using throughout this paper) and in this capacity was used outside his chancery office, including as a member of missions to foreign powers, has been shown in N. Rubinstein's 'The Beginnings of Niccolò Machiavelli's Career in the Florentine Chancery', *Italian Studies*, xi (1956), 76, 78, 85.

Such was the only life Machiavelli had known before the winter of 1512-13, when suddenly he found himself condemned to live in solitude, leisure and penury. The letters of the year 1513 allow us to observe the influence of this change on the state of his mind. For several months, until in the autumn he discovered a new life in his studies of the ancients, his every thought was bent on regaining a place in the world of action, and his attention focused on the news about the rapid changes of the contemporary scene. Gradually, by application of his knowledge of the nature of the power struggle to the events before his eyes, the problems of the *Prince* emerged. As early as April, in discussing with Vettori the annexation of the Duchy of Milan by France or Spain, he talked of the 'ways by which new states are retained'; in mapping an unscrupulous course for the policy of the king of Spain, he remarked that 'good faith and obligations are not taken into consideration today'.¹ But even if the psychological and factual evidence from documents were lacking, it would be fantastic to conjecture that Machiavelli, almost immediately, between March and August, sat down to write a book centred in ideas and built on studies that lacked any contact with the former direction of his life and interests. Yet we would have to make this very assumption, in defiance of all rules of historical plausibility, if we were to cling to the hypothesis of the origin of the *Discourses* in 1513; and we would have to place this assumption on top of all those others, each of them an offence to probability: that Machiavelli, in 1513, in a work intended (according to the letter to Vettori) to be dedicated and therewith published, referred to a discussion which at that time could have existed only in an unfinished and unpublished draft in his desk; that his own report on his reading and writing in 1513 must be deemed gravely inaccurate and misleading; and that he wrote the republican-minded chapters of the first book of the *Discourses* in a time of daily efforts to reconcile himself with the overthrow of the Florentine Republic and win a place in the service of her new rulers. It seems to me that no critical reader will easily be persuaded to acquiesce in such improbable assumptions.

Moreover, we would have to disregard the fact that our examination of the structure and genesis of the *Discourses* has called in question the two major premises underlying the theory that parts

¹ 'Et uno de' modi con che li stati nuovi si tengono . . .'; ' . . . et della fede et delli obblighi non si tiene hoggi conto '. We are assured of the date of this letter—29 Apr. 1513—by manuscript findings already known to P. Villari, *Niccolò Machiavelli e i suoi tempi* [2nd edn., Milan 1897], iii. 416, and O. Tommasini, *La vita e gli scritti di Niccolò Machiavelli* (Rome, 1911), II. i. 86. The latter already called the interest shown by the letter in the 'modi' of preserving 'stati nuovi' a testimony 'that the substance of the pamphlet on the *Prince* was developing in Machiavelli's mind as early as at that time'. Sasso, *op. cit.* pp. 208-10, fully and interestingly discusses the appearance of basic ideas of the *Prince* early in 1513, but does so without drawing the proper consequences from his observations.

of the *Discourses* originated shortly before the *Prince* was written. As we have seen, it proves impossible to construct bridges between the ideal of a *principe nuovo*, saviour of the state, as pictured in the *Prince*, and the intentions of the 17th and 18th chapters of the *Discourses*; the latter (like Machiavelli's memorandum of 1519-20 on the Florentine constitution) take their orientation from the belief that Tuscany, a country without feudal lords, is suited only for the republican way of life. We have further been forced to conclude that the introductory chapters of the *Discourses* cannot have been composed in the same year as the *Prince* for the reason that they are certain to be the product of a late phase of Machiavelli's work on the *Discourses*. So all indications, without exception, point in one direction; all concur in establishing a very definite, though negative result: no part of the *Discourses* was written as early as 1513.

This, however, is actually all we need for solving the old riddle of the course of Machiavelli's labours. For since the composition of the *Prince* in the autumn of 1513 is a certainty, proof that work on the *Discourses* cannot have started as early as that year amounts to demonstration that the *Discourses* were written later than the *Prince* and, consequently, that the reference to the *Discourses* in the *Prince* was inserted after 1513. If this is a reliable conclusion—and there is no escape from it—the old, unhappy notion of the *Prince* and the *Discourses*, as indissolubly joined as a pair of Siamese twins, can be at last dismissed, to give way to the idea of a natural succession and a development of the author's mind from the one work to the other.

Instead of looking at the *Prince* and the *Discourses* as two complementary parts of one harmonious whole, we would, indeed, do better to reconsider what to earlier generations had seemed to be so manifest: that Machiavelli's two major works are in basic aspects different and that the *Discourses* have a message of their own. This, of course, does not suggest a return to the unhistorical judgments of the eighteenth century. The evolutionary understanding at which we seem to have arrived will, by necessity, remain very close to the genetic approach first proposed by Italian scholars since Chabod. Yet the long period in which awareness of the individual character of the *Discourses* was being dimmed may at last come to an end, now that we have proof that the *Prince* and the *Discourses* were composed in different phases of Machiavelli's life. What the changed picture will eventually be, is, to be sure, hardly yet foreseeable in detail, but along at least three new avenues we should be able to reach vantage-points from which fundamental aspects of the growth of Machiavelli's mind will present themselves in a fresh light.

In the first place, it becomes possible to reconstruct a more intelligible pattern of Machiavelli's personal development. Work on the *Prince*, we can now see, did not compel the author to swerve

from any path he had previously trodden; nor was the composition of the pamphlet a mere episode or fruit of a few summer weeks. Neither was it accompanied by a contraction of broader historical or philosophical horizons previously spanned.¹ What Machiavelli intended to offer to a Medici prince late in 1513 was a synthesis of his experiences and reflections during the fourteen years in which his world had been that of the power struggle for Italy and of the fight for survival of the weak Florentine dominion in northern Tuscany. In this sphere of diplomatic technique and administrative efficiency, whatever he had learned in the service of the republic could also help in building up the rule of a new prince. He used this expertness and knowledge when, after the frustration of his former loyalties, both his burning desire for a place of action in the world of politics and his wounded Italian feelings caused him to nurture a fresh hope for a powerful founder of a new state.

But though the views and counsels given in pamphlet form in the *Prince* were the fruit of many years of Machiavelli's life, they merely stand for its first phase. We could hardly imagine a greater contrast in a writer's life than that between Machiavelli's active existence prior to 1513 and the period roughly from 1515 to 1520 when for a long while he lived a life of literary leisure in a circle of educated citizens, the group meeting in the Oricellari Gardens. Here he must have formed closer contacts with the traditions of civic Humanism than he had ever been able to during the busy years of his absorption in political and military affairs.² These traditions included an historical outlook which for several generations of humanistic students had centred in the admiration of antiquity as an era of city-states and institutions built on the life of a free society. Even though Machiavelli had previously studied Livy and other Latin and Greek authors (the latter in translation), it is clear that in the changed climate of his intellectual interests the ancient world was now to reveal to him a different dimension.³

¹ See the assumptions mentioned *supra* p. 228, n.2 and pp. 229 f., 236.

² On the re-emergence in the Oricellari circle of some of the central concerns of civic Humanism (although the answers given to the old problems after a hundred years were, of course, not always identical), cf. D. Cantimori, 'Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism', *Jour. of the Warburg Institute*, i (1937-8), esp. 94 ff., and R. von Albertini, *Das Florentinische Staatsbewusstsein*, passim, esp. pp. 76 ff.

³ If J. H. Hexter's reasoning in his study on 'Seysssel, Machiavelli, and Polybius VI: the Mystery of the Missing Translation', *Studies in the Renaissance*, iii (1956), 75-96, is correct, we may even assume that one of the chief inspirations for the introductory part of the *Discourses*—the fragments of the sixth book of Polybius—did not become available to Machiavelli in Latin until the time of his contacts with the circle in the Oricellari Gardens. In that case his inability to read Polybius VI before 1515 because of his ignorance of Greek would give us a further weighty argument against the composition of *Disc. I* 1-18 before 1515. However, Sasso (*Giornale Stor. della Letteratura Ital.*, cxxxv. 242 ff.) and Whitfield (*Italian Studies*, xiii. 31 ff.) have suggested that there had been chances for Machiavelli to procure a Latin version of Polybius VI other than that by Janus Lascaris (to which Hexter has pointed) as early as 1513 or even earlier, although we do not know whether Machiavelli took advantage of these opportunities.

This is not to suggest that the *Discourses* could or should be appraised one-sidedly on the strength of their relations to a republican-minded Humanism. In many chapters, as noted, this work intends to apply to republics the methods and conceptions of 'Machiavellianism', and, on that basis, to deal with both principates and republics. Yet the *Discourses* as we know them developed only because the comments on the rule of republics already planned at the time of the *Prince*¹ were subsequently joined by a politico-historical philosophy firmly based on a new vision of the life of nations and the rise and fall of their freedom and vigour—the legacy of fifteenth-century Humanism. Although the central problem for Machiavelli remained that of the winning and defence of political power, the sources were no longer sought in diplomatic craftsmanship exclusively, but in the first place in a social and constitutional fabric that allowed the civic energies and a spirit of political devotion and sacrifice to develop in all classes of a people. A revived and strengthened republicanism was helping Machiavelli to arrive at a more profound answer to the question which he had been so passionately asking since his early years.

Not that Machiavelli ever became a steadfast republican with regard to the practical problems of Florence's future. He always remained wavering between his awareness of the need, under the Tuscan conditions of civic equality, for a republic and his lingering hope that some new *principatus* in the provinces of the Papal State might create a power nucleus strong enough to make possible successful Italian resistance to the foreign invaders of the peninsula. When after Giuliano de' Medici's death Lorenzo de' Medici seemed to be on the threshold of erecting in the tyrant-prone territory of the Papal State the principality vainly aspired to by the *nepoti* of Alexander VI and Julius II, we see Machiavelli in the midst of his preparations for the *Discourses* take from his desk his old guide for the prince and dedicate it to Lorenzo. When this hope, too, had failed, he inscribed his *Discourses*, a few years later, to Buondelmonti and Rucellai, two Florentine citizens from the circle of the Oricellari Gardens, thereby, as he said, 'departing from the usual practice of authors . . . to dedicate their works to some prince, and . . . to praise him for all his virtuous qualities when they ought to have blamed him for all manner of shameless deeds'. In 1519–20, he dared to recommend to Leo X as practical advice the teaching of the *Discourses* that only republican forms of life could have duration in

As a consequence, we had better not try to use Hexter's discovery of a plausible late channel of Machiavelli's knowledge of Polybius VI as *proof* of a late composition of *Disc. I 1–18* (as I did in 1956, *Bib. d'Hum. et Ren.*, xviii. 408). On the other hand, since the present paper establishes by other means that the section of the *Discourses* which depends on knowledge of Polybius VI was not written before 1516, the probability that Polybius VI did not become known to Machiavelli until 1515 is now increasing.

¹ This seems to follow from the phrase 'dove si trattassero delle repubbliche' at the beginning of chap. VIII of the *Prince*, discussed *supra* p. 225.

Florence under the Tuscan conditions of civic equality. Yet afterwards his restless mind began to explore still another approach to the past and present. During the fifteen-twenties, in his *Florentine History*, there appeared a third Machiavelli—the earliest Florentine writer to see Florence's development in the melancholy light in which it was to appear as the sixteenth century advanced, and to judge that, throughout Florentine history, the energies of freedom had continually consumed themselves until the end could only be extinction of all party passion and the establishment of a stable order under the Medici.

From the viewpoint of Florentine republicanism, therefore, Machiavelli was certainly, despite his great love and inspiring teaching of civic liberty, not a good and faithful citizen—as we have heard Giovanni Battista Busini say. The story of his life will always have to be presented as a delicate texture of sometimes contrasting motivations, not simply as a neat succession of a few, clean phases. Yet for all these fluctuations, the history of the growth and of the moulding forces of Machiavelli's thought looks profoundly different once we have recognized that on the way from the *Prince* to the *Discourses* new experiences entered his life—that the horizon of his mind *expanded* with the years, as that of every great, creative thinker.

Moreover—and here the second new avenue opens up—since this expansion, from another point of view, was a development from realistic positivism to humanistic classicism, the problems of Machiavelli's 'Realism' and 'Humanism', hotly debated in recent years,¹ can now also be viewed from a fresh perspective. If we accept that all three books of the *Discourses* were subsequent to the *Prince*, the political realism of the pamphlet, far from being the second step or even the climax in Machiavelli's development, actually represents an earlier phase. On the other hand, what followed was by no means merely a return to classicist belief in the imitation of antiquity but included the *historical* 'realism' of which we find the most mature expression in the synthetic chapters introducing the three books of the *Discourses*.

These introductions, continuing a line started by Leonardo Bruni and Flavio Biondo a century before, stress the point that the ancient world had been full of independent states, most of them freedom-loving city-states, before Rome's conquest of the world extinguished

¹ According to Chabod, *Machiavelli and the Renaissance*, pp. 37 f., 'the ancient world was gradually obliged [that is, during Machiavelli's presumed development from the first book of the *Discourses* to the *Prince*] to retreat before the modern world'; 'the classical examples are replaced by men and events taken from contemporary history', and Machiavelli's 'receptivity and imagination, having been moulded and developed by the civilization of the Ancients, were being applied once more to present-day life . . .'. According to F. Gilbert (*Jour. Hist. Ideas*, xiv. 148 f., 153 ff., 156) and G. Sasso (*Niccolò Machiavelli*, pp. 374 ff., 401 f., 410 ff.), the *Prince* and the opening part of the *Discourses* had been 'realistic', but Machiavelli's alleged subsequent return to the last two books of the *Discourses* reveals to a degree a backward trend, a return to 'a traditional literary genre' and to classicist bias and imitation of antiquity.

much of the early vitality. The Roman Empire is no longer viewed as a divine foundation, destined to last to the Judgment Day, but is an historical phenomenon with a natural growth and decline, followed by the emergence of new cities and states. And just as interstate struggle and change is never to come to rest, so—in the view of these introductions—there does not exist in social and constitutional life any perfect pattern that could endure without change and adaptation. Political *virtù*, in all groups and classes of a healthy people, must be continuously reproduced. Even the political and military greatness of Rome did not derive from Rome's endowment with an ideal, perfect constitution, but rested on an order that allowed the civic energies to be constantly regenerated by free rivalry and even by civil strife between all Roman classes and estates.¹

Clearly, this vision of Rome and the ancient world is not 'classicist' in the sense of a contrast to 'realism'. It rather provided an opportune frame in which the sovereignty of each individual state, taken for granted in the *Prince*, could be perceived as an innate quality of the body politic which through the ages strives anew for its independence after every bondage to empire or foreign rule. In other words, through intensified contact with antiquity as viewed through humanists' eyes, some of the implied premises of the *Prince* grew into an ever more distinctly modern approach to the political and historical world.²

The last, but not the least consequence of our changed understanding of the growth of Machiavelli's thought concerns the balance in Renaissance Italy between the principate and the city-state republic. Thirty years ago, as we have noted, the great persuasiveness of the thesis that the *Prince* followed and superseded some basic ideas of the *Discourses* had much to do with the then prevailing opinion that the inherent trend of the Italian Renaissance was everywhere one from the commune and republic to the principate, and that by Machiavelli's time the perspicacity of a political

¹ *Disc.* I 1-1 6; II Introd. and II 1-II 4; III 1.

² It should be noted that Machiavelli's relationship to Humanism was, of course, not altogether positive. His pessimistic view of man and explicit subordination of the pursuits of culture to those of power and military efficiency make him in some respects one of the first great antipodes of the humanistic attitude in Italy, as has been convincingly pointed out by August Buck, 'Die Krise des humanistischen Menschenbildes bei Machiavelli', *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*, clxxxix (1953), 304-17. But this need not prevent us from recognizing that certain other humanistic tendencies are basic to Machiavelli's thought and that he is one of their most important representatives. This is not only true of his classicist belief that contemporary Italy could be regenerated through a 'rebirth' of the political wisdom and the military organization of ancient Rome, but applies also to his relationship to the historical—and even the political—outlook of Florentine civic Humanism in pre-Medici Florence, in particular to that of Leonardo Bruni. Cf. my *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1955), pp. 56, 371 f., 374, 443, 468, and Sasso, *Niccolò Machiavelli*, pp. 285 ff., 316 ff., 333 ff.

thinker would show itself in his ability to understand that the principate was the modern and progressive element, whereas the day of the city-state republic had passed. During the last twenty years, however, this picture of a one-track road has been increasingly replaced by an awareness that the transition from the republic to the principate was less ubiquitous and uniform. The civilization of the Quattrocento had depended on interaction of both elements, and one may question which was the more creative of the two.¹ Similar questions have recently been asked concerning the Florence of Machiavelli's generation. Thanks to the rediscovery and reinterpretation of a great number of vital testimonies on Florentine political ideas during the fifteen-tens and fifteen-twenties² we have become aware that, while some members of the Florentine nobility at that time finally decided for the principate, in other Florentine groups of all social classes republican ideals gained new momentum, drawing partly upon fifteenth-century Humanism and partly upon the constitutional thought of the period of Savonarola. Eventually, this strong current was to play its part in the last Florentine Republic of 1527-30.

Today we are beginning to realize that, indeed, throughout the entire late Italian Renaissance there were at work vigorous forces, eager to bring to maturity in the realm of thought and sometimes even in actual life, before the final triumph of absolutism, some of the elements of freedom on which life in Renaissance Italy had largely rested to the end of the fifteenth century. Not only in Florence, although she was and remained the focus, but also elsewhere on the Italian peninsula more and more instances of such reactions to princely absolutism have come to light. They form an indispensable part of the picture—and of the legacy—of the late Italian Renaissance.³

¹ For the new vista of the political balance in the Quattrocento—initiated especially by Nino Valeri—cf. the appendix 'Interpretations of the Political Background of the Early Renaissance' to *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*, pp. 379-90, and the summary in the writer's chapter 'Fifteenth Century Civilisation and the Renaissance' in *The New Cambridge Modern History*, i (Cambridge, 1957), 71 ff. For recent views of the cultural balance, cf. W. J. Bouwsma's *The Interpretation of Renaissance Humanism* (Amer. Hist. Ass., 1959), pp. 14 ff., and the discussion of the role of civic Humanism for the intellectual history of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the writer's 'Secularization of Wisdom and Political Humanism in the Renaissance', *Jour. Hist. Ideas*, xxi (1960), 138 ff.

² In particular, through the reconstruction of the political ideas discussed in the meetings in the Oricellari Gardens, by Felix Gilbert ('Bernardo Rucellai and the Orti Oricellari', *Jour. of the Warburg Institute*, xii [1949], 101-31) and by the authors quoted *supra* p. 248, n. 2. Much of the earlier picture has been replaced by the fundamental synthesis in Rudolf von Albertini's *Das Florentinische Staatsbewusstsein im Übergang von der Republik zum Prinzipat* (Bern, 1955), which traces the political and historical thought of the various Florentine groups and parties from c. 1500 to 1550. Cf. the writer's note on von Albertini's work in *Amer. Hist. Rev.*, lxii (1957), 909-11.

³ To mention only the most obvious one from the area with which Machiavelli students are immediately concerned, one cannot fully weigh the growth of Machiavelli's mind in its twofold response to his Florentine environment and to the impact of the

It is against this expanding horizon of our knowledge of Machiavelli's age that we shall have to appraise the fact that the course of his development was not one from the *Discourses* to the *Prince*, but from the *Prince* to the *Discourses*—from a treatise on the Renaissance principate to the most penetrating Renaissance treatise dealing with the republic.

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contemporaneous events in Rome and the State of the Church, without remembering the reflection of the experiences of the same years in the mind of the Roman jurist and statesman, Mario Salamonio degli Alberteschi. This Roman contemporary, who had served as *capitano del popolo* in Florence under the Savonarolan republic in the year in which Machiavelli entered the Florentine chancery, inscribed to Leo X, almost simultaneously with Machiavelli's *Prince*, a Latin treatise *De Principatu*. Beside a preference, reminiscent of Machiavelli, for a native militia ('*arme proprie*') over mercenary troops, we here encounter an historical interpretation of the ancient Roman imperial monarchy that endeavours to present the Roman *princeps*, viewed in the light of Augustus's *principatus*, as a contractual representative of the Roman people. This is another example from Machiavelli's age of the uses of history against rising absolutism—an attack against the notion of '*princeps legibus solutus*'—in a work still read by late sixteenth-century *monarchomachi*. Cf. Marius Salamoni de Alberteschis, *De Principatu Libri Septem, nec non Orationes ad Priores Florentinos*, ed. M. d'Addio (Milan, 1955); and M. d'Addio, *L'Idea del contratto sociale dai sofisti alla riforma, e il 'De Principatu' di Mario Salamonio* (Milan, 1954).