NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI'S POLITICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

By C. H. CLOUGH, M.A., D.Phil.
SENIOR LECTURER IN MEDIEVAL HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

THE year 1969 precisely marked the half-millennium since the birth in Florence of Niccolò Machiavelli, and was near enough the four-hundredth anniversary in England of the word "machiavellian", meaning unscrupulous, immoral, obtaining one's object by craft and deceit. This development of a pejorative adjective from Machiavelli's name, and the coupling of his supposed political doctrines with all that was wicked, was not limited to England, for it had its parallel development in the rest of western Europe, and there, as might be expected, somewhat earlier. Machiavelli died in Florence in 1527, and yet even in his native city by 1540 his name was held in abhorrence, above all because of the writings of Busini, who was bitterly opposed to The Prince. This work was certainly unfortunate with the timing of its appearance in print in 1532, as two years previously the last Florentine Republic had fallen after an heroic resistance, and Alessandro de' Medici, the illegitimate son of Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, was established in the city as its duke. The latter's constitutional changes of 1532 made it self-evident that his government was to be tyrannical, and two years later work was begun on the Fortezza da Basso, meant to overawe the city.¹

In this context Machiavelli's Prince was seen as the inspiration and guide for Alessandro de' Medici's tyranny. Furthermore, the latter's government was seen as the objective that had inspired Machiavelli's treatise at its composition. In such a manner Machiavelli was posthumously credited with political assumptions and objectives. Anything in his treatise that appeared not quite to fit, could easily be explained away as Alessandro's personal modification: for instance, the Fortezza was built, though Machiavelli warned that while such a bridle might be useful, it was not certain to save a prince, as several piquant examples

showed.\(^1\) Indeed it did not save Alessandro, for he was assassinated in 1537, and with his death the line of Cosimo II Vecchio ended.

It is the posthumous fortune of Machiavelli that has bedevilled him and us. For four hundred years much of the published criticism directed against Machiavelli has been centred on his *Principe*, approached by way of Busini. These writings tend to carry us along by sheer weight of number and insistence. Many prefer to read such criticism rather than the treatise, while even those who do read it for themselves, often have insufficient acquaintance with its historical context to escape the subsequent commentators. Consistently, therefore, Machiavelli is looked at from the wrong end of the telescope, for the events of the 1530s are no guide for the period 1513-16, when Machiavelli wrote his work, or for his political assumptions on which it was based. Busini, Varchi, and those who accept their imputations can be dismissed from consideration.\(^2\) Rather, we should concentrate on Machiavelli’s own statements concerning his objectives.

In the well-known letter to Francesco Vettori, dated 10 December 1513, Machiavelli told of his work on *The Prince*, which he hoped would obtain a post for him, and he concluded\(^3\):  

... et per questa cosa, quando la fussi letta, si vedrebbe che quindici anni che io sono stato a studio all’arte dello stato, non gli ho né dormiti né giuocati; et doverrebbe ciascheduno haver caro servirsì d’uno che alle spese d’altri fussi pieno di esperientia. Et della fede mia non si doverrebbe dubitare, perche, havendo sempre observato la fede, io non debbo imparare hora a romperla; et chi è stato fedele et buono quarantatré anni, che io ho, non debbe poter mutare natura; et della fede et bontà mia ne è testimonio la povertà mia....

On this testimony the treatise contained the essence of its author’s political assumptions, distilled over the period from 1498, when he became second chancellor in the Florentine


Republic. Its implication is that the work was not the rejection of previously held principles, or a sudden flash of inspiration.

During his fourteen years service Machiavelli had been devoted to the Republic, and sought loyally to frustrate its enemies, including the Medici, whose patronage in December 1513 he was eagerly seeking. From 1501 until August 1503 Cesare Borgia constituted the greatest single threat to the Republic's existence. Beginning in 1499, and backed by the legal authority invested in him by his father, Pope Alexander VI, Cesare had dispossessed one by one the papal vicars in the Romagna and the Marches. To this end Cesare had the protection of the King of France, which was likewise enjoyed by the vicars of Bologna and Ferrara, and by the Republics of Florence and Siena. Therein lay the difficulty, for these latter were the regions best suited for Cesare's further expansion. By the summer of 1502, after the King of France had thrice blocked Cesare's attempts to advance in this area protected by the King, the Borgian solution was a re-orientation of foreign policy, with the object of isolating France, so as to ensure she abandoned her protection of this territory. To this end Cesare sought to make an alliance with Ferdinand, King of Aragon and of Naples, and also with the Venetian Republic. From June 1502 French forces were fighting Spaniards in the Kingdom of Naples, and by early 1503 it was evident that they were being worsted, so that the Borgian re-alignment seemed likely to bring success. At least from early 1503 the powers concerned were aware of the Borgian scheme, and Florence, accordingly, was placed increasingly in a delicate position: the French, defeated in the Kingdom of Naples, might be forced to withdraw their protection in central Italy.¹

In the face of this threat, the Florentine government took emergency action. On 28 April 1503 Machiavelli was in Siena, discussing a league of the threatened states: Florence, Siena, Bologna and Ferrara. However, by early August little had been accomplished, and it appeared as though Cesare might strike,

¹ For this re-orientation see C. H. Clough, "N. Machiavelli, Cesare Borgia and the Francesco Troche episode", in Medievalia et humanistica, fasc. 17 (1966), pp. 129-49; cf. also Il Principe, Chapter VII, p. 16.
and find little to hinder him. The Florentine Republic was saved by the Pope's unexpected death and Cesare's serious illness. Machiavelli was not melodramatic when he wrote in his *Prince*¹:

... E lui [Cesare] mi disse, ne' di che fu creato Julio II, che aveva pensato a ciò che potessi nascere, morendo el padre, e a tutto aveva trovato remedio, eccetto che non pensò mai, in su la sua morte, di stare ancora lui per morire. ...

Machiavelli had followed step by step the Borgian schemes, and had participated in attempts to block Borgian aggression. At this time, Cesare was no hero to Machiavelli as far as his intentions to take Florentine territory, and overthrow the Republic, were concerned. Rather Cesare was an antagonist, whom Machiavelli with justifiable pride could believe he had helped outwit. Moreover Machiavelli knew that just as the Florentine Republic depended on a protector, so did Cesare's new state. While the new alignment with Ferdinand of Aragon gave the Borgia the opportunity of expanding Cesare's new state, it was a dangerous alliance, for, as Machiavelli remarked in his *Prince*²:

... Alcuno principe de' presenti tempi, quale non è bene nominare [Ferdinand, in fact] non predica mai altro che pace e fede, e dell'una e dell'altra è inimicissimo; e l'una e l'altra, quando e' l'avessi osservata, gli arebbe più volte tolto o la reputazione o lo stato. ...

Ferdinand, as ally of the King of Naples, had seized the latter's kingdom in 1501, and then taken the share of his ally, the King of France. The same King's safe-conduct proved worthless to Cesare in 1504, and Cesare was sent to a prison in Spain. Small wonder that Machiavelli took Ferdinand as a model example for Chapter XXI of his *Prince*, headed: “Quod principem deceit ut egregius habeatur”, though he there cautioned that³:

... Costui si può chiamare quasi principe nuovo, perché, di uno re debole, è diventato per fama e per gloria el primo re de' Cristiani. ... The new prince who Machiavelli hoped would read his treatise, was to examine Ferdinand's methods, and profit from them, and thereby he might outdo Cesare Borgia.

Yet even in the period 1501-3, when Cesare was most threatening to Florentine interests, Machiavelli did find facets

² Ibid. Chapter XVIII, p. 35.
³ Ibid. Chapter XXI, p. 43.
of Cesare's conduct to admire. There is no contradiction here, for while Machiavelli sought to check Borgian ambitions as far as Florence was concerned, he had other values for the territory in the Romanga, which was the core of Cesare's new state. Machiavelli expressed no sympathy for the dispossessed vicars, or signori, like Caterina Sforza of Imola and Forlì. In his Descrizione del modo tenuto del Duca Valentino nell'ammazzare V. Vitelli, these vicars appear in a most unfavourable light, except for the duke of Urbino, who:

... confidandosi ne' populi, non voleva che quelle fortezze ch'egli non credeva potere defendere, el nimico occupassi e, mediante quelle, tenessi in freno gli amici sua. ...

In January 1503 Giampaolo Baglioni fled to Siena, and left Cesare Borgia to govern Perugia; Baglioni, like Giovanni Bentivoglio of Bologna, was roundly dubbed a tyrant by Machiavelli. With the exception of the duke of Urbino, and of Astorgio Manfredi of Faenza, the vicars whom Cesare displaced were unpopular with their subjects, and Cesare was judged a deliverer. Six days after Cesare had taken the duchy of Urbino, Machiavelli wrote of him in a dispatch to the Florentine government:

... Questo Signore è molto splendido et magnifico, et nelle armi è tanto animoso, che non è sì gran cosa che non li paia piccola, et per gloria et per acquistare stato mai si riposa né conosce fatica o pericolo: giunge prima in un luogo, che se ne possa intendere la partita donde si lieva; fassi ben volere a' suoi soldati; ha cappati e' migliori uomini d'Italia: le quali cose lo fanno vittorioso et formidabile, aggiunto con una perpetua fortuna. ...

Subsequently Machiavelli had the opportunity to see Cesare at the time of crisis, October 1502, when some of the condottieri captains in Borgian service, driven by fear that they would be deprived of their states like the duke of Urbino, revolted, and at

1 Tutte le opere, ed. G. Mazzoni and M. Casella, p. 745.
Magione conspired together for his downfall. In a dispatch of 7 October to the Florentine government, Machiavelli told of an interview with Cesare, when he had questioned him concerning the revolt, and in particular the significance of the defection of the duchy of Urbino. Cesare replied:\footnote{Ibid. pp. 342-3.}:

\ldots L'essere io stato clemente, e avere stimato poco le cose, mi ha nociuto: io presi, come tu sai, in tre di quel Ducato, e non torsi un pelo a nessuno, da messer Dolce e due altri in fuore, che avevano fatto contro la Santità di nostro Signore: anzi, che è meglio, io avevo molti di quei primi proposti ad uffizi di quel stato, con un di questi deputato sopra certa muraglia che io facevo fare nella rocca di San Leo; e due di fà lui ordinò con certi contadini del paese, sotto ombra, di tirare alto una trave, certo trattato: talché ha sforzato la rocca, ed è perduasi \ldots: ancorché io faccia quel Ducato perso, per essere uno stato fisco e debole, e quelli uomini malcontenti, avendogli io affaticati assai co' soldati: ma a tutto spero provvedere.\ldots

Clearly Cesare impressed Machiavelli as rising to the challenge, and the latter's confidence was not misplaced, since by the end of January 1503 the rebellion was not only crushed, but Perugia added to Cesare's new state. Machiavelli remained with Cesare until 20 January, and thus knew at first hand how serious the threat had been, what measures were taken, and how remarkably Cesare had averted disaster.\footnote{Ibid. p. 537.}

Cesare's recovery was all the more striking, since on 20 December 1502 the King of France, faced with defeat in the Kingdom of Naples, withdrew the forces that he had put under Cesare's command. The key reason as to why Cesare was able to crush the revolt is that he had sufficient forces to make the conspirators fearful.\footnote{Ibid. p. 498.} That he had such forces depended, in turn, on his being able to draw enormous funds from the papal treasury: Machiavelli reported that the duke's treasurer had told him that in the two months prior to December, the duke had spent over 60,000 ducats.\footnote{Ibid. p. 455.} By the end of December Cesare had sufficient troops to march against his enemies, and numbered 5,000 infantry, 800 armed cavalry, and some 400 light horse. This formidable force was over and above the troops numbering about 1,000 left to guard Cesare's new state.\footnote{Ibid. pp. 430, 502, for the infantry; pp. 430-1, for the armed cavalry, and p. 348 for four horses to a lance; p. 431, for the light horse. These figures are similar to those given by J. Larner, “Cesare Borgia, Machiavelli and the Romagnol
Italy princes tended to find that they were deserted when serious
danger threatened, and they, for their part, convinced that
Fortune was opposed to them, tended to look on flight as the
only course of action open to them. Cesare Borgia's recovery
demonstrated that in certain circumstances even a new prince,
who was likely to be less secure than an established ruler, need
not be swept away. If self-confidence was one essential for
Cesare's success, another was almost unlimited credit. But it is
worth stressing that those of his condottieri captains who were
natives of his new state, remained loyal, and did not join the conspir­
ators. Of these captains Dionigio Naldi of Brisighella, L'Imola,
and Marcantonio da Fano, commanded 1,200 infantry, while
Giovanni da Ssassatelli of Imola and Guido Vaini of Cesena were
in command of 240 armed cavalry. Obviously not all the men
under these commanders necessarily were recruited from Borgia's
new state, but probably many were; moreover, Cesare's Spanish
commanders, who also remained loyal, probably included some
romagnoli in their contingents, which had a theoretical strength of
about 1,000 infantry, 600 armed cavalry and 100 light horse.
Until late December, of course, Cesare had also the French force
of 1,600 armed cavalry, which probably was what most deterred
the conspirators at Magione from attacking Cesare. Even so,
if the romagnoli, the subjects of his new state, had abandoned
Cesare in October, the French force would not have been
sufficient to have defended the new state, and Cesare's fate would
have been sealed. At the time of Senigaglia in January 1503,
the most trustworthy element of Cesare's army consisted of
romagnoli, and presumably it was some of this core that wore the
duke's uniform, as reported by the Venetian ambassador,
Giustinian, in April 1503. Justly, therefore, could Machiavelli
in Chapter VII of his Prince list among Cesare's merits, which
made him the obvious model for a new prince, " spegnere la
milizia infedele, creare della nuova ". Again in Chapter XIV,
militia", in Studi Romagnoli, xvii (1966), 253-68, whose conclusions, however,
are very different.

1 Legazioni, pp. 430-1. 2 Ibid. 3 A. Giustinian, Dispacci, ed. P. Villari (Florence, 3 vols., 1876), i. 487. 4 Il Principe, p. 17.
entitled: "Quod principem deceat circa militiam", Cesare's recovery from the conspiracy of Magione was ideal testimony of "uno principe savio", who "mai ne' tempi pacifici stare ozioso; ma con industria farne capitale, per potersene valere nelle avversità, acciò che, quando si muta la fortuna, lo tuovi parato a resistere".1

It was not simply that Cesare's troops from his new state remained loyal, for the "grandi" did not take the opportunity that Magione appeared to offer. These "grandi" or "gentil-uomini" have been defined for us by Machiavelli himself in his Discourses as2:

... Quelli che ozios ivivono delle rendite delle loro possessioni abbondantemente, sanza avere cura alcuna o di coltivazione o di altra necessaria fatica a vivere. Questi tali sono perniziosi in ogni republica ed in ogni provincia; ma più perniziosi sono quelli che, oltre alle predette fortune, comandano a castella, ed hanno sudditi che ubbidiscono a loro. Di queste due spezie di uomini ne sono pieni il regno di Napoli, Terra di Roma, la Romagna e la Lombardia. . . .

The rule of the vicars in the Romagna who were displaced by Cesare had been a ceaseless struggle against these "grandi"; Caterina Sforza, for instance, had perpetual difficulties with the Ordelaffi and the Zampeschi of Forlì. With Cesare's serious illness in the summer of 1503, and when it appeared as though Caterina might return to her former state, Antonio Maria Ordelaffi took possession of Forlì on 22 October with the support of the Florentine government. Yet with Cesare in his new state, even during the crisis of Magione, Antonio Maria Ordelaffi had remained at Castrocarno, in Florentine territory.3 For whatever

1 Il Principe, p. 30.
2 N. Machiavelli, Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio, in Tutte le opere, ed. G. Mazzoni and M. Casella, Book I, Chapter LXV, p. 127. An important study is A. Bonadeo's "The role of the 'Grandi' in the political world of Machiavelli", Studies in the Renaissance, xvi (1969), 9-30; see also the same writer's "Machiavelli on civic equality and republican government", in Romance Notes, xi (1969), 1-7 and "The role of the people in the works and times of Machiavelli", in Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance, xxxii (1970), 351-78.
3 Cf. L. Martines, "Political conflict in the Italian City States", in Government and Opposition, iii (1968), 77-9.
reasons, and these still require investigation, Cesare’s rule in his new state in the Romagna appears to have been little menaced by the “grandi”.

In Florence, on the other hand, according to Machiavelli’s analysis there were no baronial castles, and a civic equality prevailed among the citizens. Hence the “grandi” did not exist, but instead what can be called “uomini da bene”, who were powerful because of family prestige and wealth, and called as a group the “ottimati” in the early sixteenth century.¹ The Medici were the foremost among the “ottimati”, and exiled from Florence in 1494 made use of every opportunity to return, including the threat presented by Cesare Borgia, with whom Giuliano de’ Medici stayed for a time in 1502. The exiled Medici sought to overthrow the republican government in Florence from within, and this by means of partisans among the “ottimati”. Here was a danger that French protection could not alleviate, and in consequence the Florentine government had to devote much energy to ensuring that there was not a too powerful party that supported the Medici within the city. This meant that posts were found for potential Medici supporters—Jacopo Salviati and Francesco Guicciardini, for example, were appointed ambassadors. The economic measures of 1494 passed to win favour, were so favourable to the “ottimati” that many became wealthier, in contrast with other citizens, who progressively were impoverished. In further attempts to mollify former Medici partisans the constitution was continually scrutinized and modified.²

There was a close relationship between external pressures and internal politics. In 1501, when Cesare Borgia first threatened Florence, the “popolo” of that city, who had no political rights,

¹ Bonadeo, “The role of the ‘Grandi’ . . .”, pp. 22-25; Martines, p. 78. The accuracy of Machiavelli’s analysis is of no consequence for the argument of this essay.

were on the verge of revolt, claiming that Cesare's forces had not been attacked by the Florentine army, when circumstances were highly favourable, because some of the "ottimati" wanted to perpetuate the Borgia threat, causing the Republic to fall, so that they could take over control. Without doubt such a claim was a gross exaggeration, but the crisis resulted in a modification of the constitution: the creation of the post of Gonfalonier for life, modelled on the dogeship of Venice. At the election to fill this office, Piero Soderini was the successful candidate, perhaps largely because of the support of Alamanno and Jacopo Salviati. Others of the "ottimati" were opposed to Soderini, and hence his victory marked a split in the group. Soderini's difficult task was to ensure that the Salviati, with the rest of his supporters among the "ottimati", remained attached to his administration.¹

Increasingly in the ten years Soderini was Gonfalonier for life, he found it arduous to placate the "ottimati", and towards the end tended to ignore their aspirations almost entirely. Something of the problem is reflected in Alamanno Salviati's public denouncing of Machiavelli in 1506 with: "Io non comissi mai nulla a cotesto ribaldo, poi io sono de' Dieci". Machiavelli had been fortunate in his appointment in 1498, since by a technical default he was not a member of the guild of judges and notaries. In an attempt to find suitable candidates who were not tied to the Medici or to Savonarola, the government had abolished the necessity for the qualification that debarred him, just prior to Machiavelli's appointment. In an effort to discredit Machiavelli, who by 1506 had become Soderini's right-hand man, Salviati and his followers picked on Machiavelli's unorthodox qualifications, presumably so that he would be replaced in favour of one of the "ottimati". Machiavelli was only too well aware of this in-fighting, and seems to have sought to appease Salviati by dedicating his Decennale to him.² Certainly he cannot have had any illusions that with the "ottimati" in power, he would remain

¹ For this, and for what follows, see S. Bertelli, "Petrus Soderinus Patriae Parens", in Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance, xxxi (1969), 93-114; see also N. Rubinstein, "Firenze e il problema della politica imperiale al tempo di Massimiliano I", Archivio storico italiano, cxxvi (1958), 5-177.

at his post, when the fact that he was not a member of the guild could always be used as an excuse to dismiss him.

The inter-relationship of internal and external pressures on the Florentine government was demonstrated again in 1507, when it was feared that the Emperor might go to Rome for his coronation. For such a journey the Emperor would be accompanied by an army. He might call at Pisa, and seek to ensure that it remained independent of Florence (for it had revolted in 1494, and in 1507 still defied the Florentines); more serious, he might come to Florence itself, with the Medici among his entourage. Just as Machiavelli had been selected in 1502 to go on the embassy to Cesare Borgia, so that he could report to the government on Borgia's handling of the Magione conspiracy, so in the early summer of 1507 Soderini wanted to send him to the Imperial court, to report back on the likelihood of the Emperor's journey into Italy. The object, as in the case of the mission to Borgia, was not to make an alliance, but to play a watching and waiting game, for Soderini remained convinced that the best interests of the Republic would be furthered by the traditional alliance with France. On the other hand, certain of the "uomini da bene", eager to exploit the situation to the advantage of the "ottimati", urged a re-orientation of foreign policy, with the object of an Imperial alliance. Francesco Vettori (the son of Piero, a staunch Medici supporter) was elected by the "ottimati" to go to the Emperor in order to try to negotiate such an alliance, and Soderini suffered a set-back. Finally, in December, Soderini sent Machiavelli to the Imperial court, ostensibly with instructions for Vettori that could not be trusted to the post, but if the reports in the Imperial court itself are to be believed, Soderini's object was to discredit Vettori and the "ottimati", and put forward alternative proposals. Machiavelli's position in all this was delicate, since in the dispatches sent back to Florence, he had to give the impression that Vettori was still in command, so as to bluff the "ottimati"; moreover, as reports of his negotiations circulated, clearly he had to find some justification to convince Vettori.¹ Soderini's proposal to the Emperor, made by Machia-

¹ Rosemary Devonshire Jones, "Some observations on the relations between Francesco Vettori and N. Machiavelli during the embassy to Maximilian I", in
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Machiavelli, was the offer to pay the Emperor 40,000 ducats: "per confirmatione dell'offizio et ne vorria havendo a venir in Italia investitura, cioè esser creato vicario."¹

This was a neat solution, if the Emperor approved it. At the cost of 40,000 ducats, payable only if the Emperor came, Soderini as vicarius would have continued as Gonfalonier for life, presumably, and the Republic remained. Better still, it did not mean abandoning French protection, and at the same time made the Emperor suspicious of Vettori and his supporters, so that the alliance proposed by the "ottimati" came to nothing.

The most obvious fact that emerges from this consideration of Machiavelli's experiences as second chancellor, is that he was consistently loyal to the Florentine Republic, and this in the face of both internal and external challenges. In this respect his claims in his letter of 10 December 1513, to Vettori were no exaggeration. True one might argue that the determining factor in this loyalty was that his post was tied to the Republic, and if the latter fell, he would be dismissed. Self-interest is a strong motive for actions, but in Machiavelli's case it is evident that the Republican government came near to his ideal for the city of Florence, and such idealistic beliefs outweighed self-interest on several occasions. What Machiavelli feared likely for Florence as the outcome of Borgia's policy, came to pass in September 1512, after the withdrawal of the French from Italy, when the Medici were restored by Spanish arms. Machiavelli remained at his post, but instead of currying favour with the Medici, at the end of September he wrote what is commonly called his "Ricordi ai palleschi", and supported it with a letter addressed to Cardinal Giulio de' Medici. In these magnanimity was urged, with the caution that autocratic rule in Florence would bring disastrous consequences. His views were unsolicited, and being quite contrary to what the Medici proposed, did not endear him to them. In early November Machiavelli's disinterestedness resulted in him being dismissed from his post, one suspects. In his Discourses Machiavelli argued at length that as there was civic

Italian Studies, xxiii (1968) 93-113, gives the evidence which indicates that Machiavelli was subordinate to Vettori, but with other conclusions.

¹ Bertelli, p. 114.
equality in Florence, republican government was ideally suited.¹ This theme is taken up again in his so-called "Discursus" (undated, but probably of 1519), once more addressed to Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, while the Istorie Fiorentine, expressly written with Medici patronage, echo these same sentiments.² Machiavelli defended his ideal for Florence when it was not in his best interests to do so. While the foregoing facts do not prove that Machiavelli was not inconsistent in writing his Prince, they are sufficiently impressive to shift the burden of proof so that it lies in showing this work was indeed the exception. However, I hope to show that it was not the exception, and that Machiavelli remained true to his ideals concerning Republican government for Florence even in this work. First, it is worth mentioning that Vettori and the Medici were very familiar with Machiavelli's political assumptions regarding Florence, and would not have been impressed by a turncoat or by obvious lies. The reasonable assumption is that Machiavelli wrote what he did to Vettori in December 1513 concerning his loyalty and consistency in good faith. Secondly, it is clear that he wanted a job, but was well aware that competition for Florentine administrative posts was fierce from Medici supporters of long-standing among the "ottimati" of Florence. Moreover with the Republic gone, and its laws changed, Machiavelli was excluded from office in the city of Florence by the disqualification of not being a member of the guild of judges and notaries, and this guild he could never join because his father was a bankrupt.³ The explanation is that The Prince is not concerned with Florence, either in terms of the city or its state.

What other evidence is there that Florence is not at the core of The Prince, for clearly this assumption was made by Busini? It is striking that Florence herself is barely mentioned in the work, and only in terms of a handful of examples drawn from Florentine military history. Machiavelli's political experience had made him familiar with the complications that a prince ruling

¹ Machiavelli researches, pp. 24, 33, 44.
³ Ibid. p. 20.
her would need to face, and while his *Istorie Fiorentine* gives an
analysis essential for such a ruler, *The Prince* itself is silent; for
instance, the "uomini da bene", or "ottimati" are not men-
tioned. The new prince was to take Cesare Borgia as his model,
yet Borgia had failed to take Florence. Clearly if the new prince
for whom the treatise was intended had controlled Florence, the
parallel with Cesare would have been absurd.

That Florence should be excluded is in concordance with
Machiavelli's choice of a new prince, identified in his letter of 10
December 1513:

> ... et [ho] composto uno opuscolo *De principatibus*, dove io mi profondo quanto
> io posso nelle cognizioni di questo subbietto, disputando che cosa è principato,
> di quale specie sono, come e' si acquistono, come e' si mantengono, perché e' si
> perdoni. Et se vi piacque mai alcuno mio ghiribizo, questo non vi doverrebbe
> dispiacere ; et a un principe, et maxime a un principe nuovo, doverrebbe essere
> accetto ; però lo indirizzo alla M. tia di Giuliano [de' Medici]. . . .

At that time Giuliano was not in Florence, but in Rome, waiting to
be given a new state. Machiavelli knew this, as he did the events
that led to this situation. In September 1512, when the Medici
were restored to Florence, Cardinal Giovanni, as head of the
family, had favoured his brother Giuliano to govern Florence.
In November 1512, Paolo Vettori, the brother of Francesco, in
an attempt to win favour with the Medici, had written a political
treatise, which he had sent to Cardinal Giulio de' Medici.
Significantly, his case argued for the establishment of a princely
rule in Florence, based on the assumption that Giuliano would be
that prince, since he discussed the difficulty "come Giuliano si
abbi a manneggiare e a chi a chiedere cosi delle cose drento
come di quelle di fuora . . .". By August 1513, however, the
situation in Florence had changed, for Giuliano had been re-
placed by his nephew, Lorenzo. Apparently the change had the
backing of Cardinal Giulio, for Cerretani, a Medici supporter,
wrote that the Cardinal: "aiutava assai il mancar di Giuliano.
Et se non fusse stato l'occhio suo l'haremo fatto male ". Giuliano
was too easy going, unwilling to make enemies; he would not
press sufficiently the Medici cause in Florence, and Cerretani

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1 *Lettere*, p. 304.
2 For this, and for what follows, see *Machiavelli researches*, pp. 41-2.
concluded that: "Giuliano era giudicato non bene". At the Pope's command Giuliano wrote "Instructione al Magnifico Lorenzo" to guide the latter on his taking over the government in Florence, and thereby produced a memorandum that echoes Paolo Vettori's writing of some ten months earlier.\(^1\) Machiavelli was residing in his villa seven miles out of Florence, where he could know of the political developments in that city, and where he had news from Rome by way of Francesco Vettori, the Florentine ambassador to the papal court. Obviously if Machiavelli had been thinking in terms of Florence, he would have considered Lorenzo, the new prince, suitable to receive it rather than Giuliano.

Moreover, Giuliano was the one Medici whom Machiavelli might hope would help him with a post. Certainly with justification Machiavelli believed that Giuliano had been instrumental in procuring his release from prison in March 1513.\(^2\) The Prince was to be presented to Giuliano in the hope that it would procure for him a post in Giuliano's service, so that he could help him govern his new state. The difficulties were considerable, since, as Vettori was cautioned, a visit to Rome could result in Machiavelli being imprisoned again; this because the Soderini were living in exile there, and he felt he could not go without calling on them.\(^3\) Accordingly Vettori was chosen as the agency to make the initial contact with Giuliano on Machiavelli's behalf. Here the problem was that Machiavelli knew Vettori too well to be able to confide in him: if he told him too much, the secret would be out, and others could profit from Machiavelli's work. Furthermore, Vettori had to be cajoled, as the Medici, with the probable exception of Giuliano himself, looked on Machiavelli with suspicion, and hence anyone promoting his interests could easily incur displeasure. Again Giuliano had to be persuaded to read the treatise, and be so convinced by it that he took its author into his service, and acted upon the advice. A complication was that

\(^1\) "Instructione al Magnifico Lorenzo", ed. T. Gar, in "Documenti riguardanti Giuliano de' Medici e il Pontefice Leone X", in Archivio storico italiano: Appendice (1844), i. 299-306.

\(^2\) Machiavelli researches, pp. 33-35.

\(^3\) Lettere, pp. 304-5.
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Giuliano already had a secretary, Piero Ardinghelli, who had his post as a reward for long and devoted service to the Medici cause, and naturally he would not look passively on Machiavelli’s endeavours to displace him. 1 Giuliano’s new state was to be granted by, and subject to, the whim of his brother, Giovanni, who had been elected Pope Leo X in March 1513. The Pope’s approval, and that of the leading Medici, was obviously a prerequisite for Machiavelli’s appointment. 2 In the face of these odds it is remarkable that Machiavelli nearly pulled it off. On 14 February 1515 Ardinghelli wrote to Giuliano from Rome telling him that it was rumoured that Machiavelli had been accepted into his service, and this news had reached the ears of both the Pope and Cardinal Giulio, who believed it false 3; the implication being that the Pope and Cardinal were by no means sure that the report was false, but sought to bring subtle pressure to bear to ensure that it became so. Machiavelli’s appreciation of the necessity to appease the Medici family obviously had been realistic.

Yet what evidence is there that Machiavelli actually conceived the treatise as a blueprint for Giuliano? 4 Between 19 and 21 September 1506 Machiavelli in Perugia had written to Soderini, the Florentine Gonfalonier, reflecting on political careers, and on the factors that determined political success or failure. On the recently discovered autograph rough draft, which alone now exists, and which Machiavelli considered worth preserving, Machiavelli added the docket: “Ghiribizi”. 5 Certainly much that

1 For Ardinghelli in exile as a Medici supporter see Legazioni, iii. 511. R. Ridolfi, Vita di N. Machiavelli (Florence, 4th edn., rev., 1969), ii. 498, n. 29, argues that Giuliano was a papal secretary; however there is no evidence for this, since he is not in W. von Hofmann, Forschungen zur Geschichte der Kurialen Behorden . . ., II (Quellen, Listen und Exkurse) (Rome, 1914). He was simply a Medici servant, who between 1513 and 1516 was Giuliano’s secretary; see also Machiavelli researches, p. 36, n. 128.

2 This is written in an attempt to satisfy H. Baron, who raised doubts on this point in his review of Machiavelli researches, in The English Historical Review, lxxxiv (1969), pp. 579–82, at p. 580.

3 Machiavelli researches, p. 39.

4 This, too, was Dr. Baron’s question, see n. 2 above.

he says in the letter finds an echo in his *Prince*, termed a "ghiribizo" in his letter of December 1513 to Vettori. The draft of his letter to Soderini concluded, for instance:

... Io credo che come la natura ha facto ad l'huomp diverse volto, così li habbi facto diverso ingegno et diversa fantasia. Da questo nascie che ciascuno secondo lo ingegno et fantasia sua si governa. Et perché da l'altro canto e' tempi sono vari et li ordini delle cose sono diversi, ad colui succedono *ad votum* et suoi disiderij, et quello è felice che riscontra el modo del procedere suo con el tempo, et quello, per opposto, è infelice che si diversifica con le sua actioni da el tempo et da l'ordine delle cose. Donde può molto bene essere che dua, diversamente operando, habbino uno medesimo fine, perché ciascuno di loro può conformarsi con el riscontro suo, perché e' sono tanti ordini di cose quanti sono provincie et stati. Ma perché e' tempi et le cose universalmente et particularmente si mutano spesso, et li huomini non mutono le loro fantasie né e' loro modi di procedere, adcede che uno ha un tempo buona fortuna et uno tempo trista. . . .

From this testimony it seems that Machiavelli saw a multiplicity of factors, and thus, seemingly, every case required *ad hoc* consideration. In his *Prince* the claim is made that the treatise is centred on the contemporary situation and a real prince:

... Ma sendo l'intento mio scrivere cosa utile a chi la intenda, mi è parso più conveniente andare drieto alla verità effettuale della cosa, che alla immaginazione di essa. E molti si sono imaginati repubbliche e principati che non si sono mai visti né conosciuti essere... Lasciando, adunque, indrieto le cose circa uno principe immaginate, e discorrando quelle che sono vere. . . .

The implication, therefore, is that the treatise was written from its inception for one particular situation, and one actual prince—Giuliano de' Medici.

The treatise itself supports this conclusion. First, Cesare Borgia’s new state was the obvious model for Giuliano’s new state, as there was a close parallel with it. Cesare had been granted legal rights to his new state within the papal states by the Pope, his father; Giuliano was to receive, it was believed, the same rights, in much the same location, likewise from the Pope, who was his brother. In a short space of time Cesare had done much in welding together numerous small states. He had imaginative schemes to improve the Romagna: cities were to be replanned, new law courts and government buildings erected.

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3 *Machiavelli researches*, pp. 47-49.
The justice dispensed in his courts was highly respected, for the judges were of high repute, and the president, Antonio Ciocchi da Monte Sansavino, was praised by Machiavelli as being most erudite and of irreproachable conduct. Two decades later Guicciardini, who was ruling the region, admitted that the romagnoli had been devoted to Cesare because of his government, and this was praise from a man who hated the Borgia. These were the aspects of Cesare's control of his new state that Giuliano was to emulate. Moreover in many ways Giuliano's task was easier than his predecessor's had been, as Cesare had liquidated many of the signori, so that by 1513 much of the Romagna had been unified for a decade under the same authority.

Unfortunately no text of the dedication to Giuliano is known, and probably it was never written. Moreover, we do not have the autograph of any draft of the treatise, or of any part of it, and what we base our judgement on derives from a version completed in 1516. From the internal evidence of this latter it seems that the only important amendment is the dedication to Lorenzo, written in 1516. This dedication does not exclude the work from having been conceived exclusively with Giuliano in mind, and for his situation. Furthermore, Giuliano and no other person is mentioned by Machiavelli in connection with the treatise from late 1513 until 1515. How it was that Lorenzo de' Medici came to be substituted, on Giuliano's death, will be considered in due course.

The next step is to establish not what Pope Leo X had in mind for Giuliano, but rather what Machiavelli thought likely concerning the Pope's intentions at the time that he was working on The Prince. There is only internal evidence to guide us as to when work began, but if the argument concerning the treatise being conceived as a blueprint for Giuliano is accepted, new light is thrown on this problem: the determining factor is when Machiavelli could have believed that Giuliano was going to receive a new state, which we have seen was in the period August

1 A. E. Quaglio, "Per il testo del De principatibus di N. Machiavelli", in Lettere italiane, ix (1967), 141-86; Machiavelli researches, p. 74.
2 Dr. Baron falls into the trap of considering the Pope's intentions in his review, cited p. 45, n. 2.
—September 1513. Throughout the summer Machiavelli had sought information from Vettori, who was in Rome, ambassador to the papal court and well-placed to be informed. On 12 July Vettori had told Machiavelli:

... Noi habbiamo a pensare che ciascuno di questi nostri principi [de' Medici] habbia un fine, et perché a noi è impossibile sapere il segreto loro, bisogna lo stimiamo dalle parole, dalle dimostrationi, et qualche parte ne immaginiamo. Et cominciando al papa, diremo che il fine suo sia mantenere la Chiesa nella riputatione l'ha trovata, non volere che diminuisca di stato, se già quello che gli diminuisce non lo consegnasse a' sua, cioè a Giuliano et Lorenzo a' quali in ogni modo pensa dare stati.

Early in the following September Giuliano went to Rome, which seemed to confirm Vettori’s speculation of some weeks earlier, that he would receive a new state. By then, of course, it was known in Florence that Lorenzo had replaced Giuliano in the government of that city, and rumour found an explanation in Giuliano going to Rome to receive a new state. Machiavelli was in no position to know the truth, but he could speculate on the basis of probabilities along the lines suggested by Vettori. He assumed, as did others at this time, that Giuliano’s new state would be in the papal states, probably the Romagna. The treatise was written exclusively with Giuliano’s situation in mind, but at the time of writing the precise location of the new state was uncertain. Again, Machiavelli dared not delay writing until the situation clarified, since he wanted a post, and to be able to influence the new prince from the very start of his rule in his new state; no doubt, too, he fully appreciated that persuading the Medici to employ him would take time. Giuliano did not receive his state until January 1515, and then it consisted of Parma, Piacenza, Reggio and Modena; the following April the Pope was negotiating secretly for Giuliano to receive also the papal fief of the Kingdom of Naples. Machiavelli’s belief that

1 Lettere, p. 267. For speculations concerning Giuliano’s new state see also G. Fatini’s introduction to G. de’ Medici, Poesie (Florence, 1939), pp. li-iv.

2 For the cities see the text below n. 2, p. 55. Machiavelli had no knowledge of the negotiations concerning the fief of Naples, which were secret; for such schemes of 1514 see V. Cian, review of F. Nitti, Leone X e la sua politica..., in Giornale storico della letteratura italiana, xxi (1893), 418-19, and for those of April 1515 see “Documenti...”, cited sup. p. 44, n. 1, pp. 306-17. Dr. Baron, in his review, cited p. 45, n. 2, errs in giving the date 1513 for these negotiations, and in stating that Chabod gives the evidence.
Giuliano was to be granted a new state proved sound enough, he merely erred in its location. Yet it must be stressed that by January 1514, when the work was ready, save for the dedication to Giuliano, the location of Giuliano's new state was commonly thought likely to be the Romagna, the very region implied in the treatise.

Machiavelli's new prince of *The Prince*, Giuliano, was not to be a tyrant, as is commonly assumed. There is no question of Machiavelli commending to him hypocrisy, ingratitude, cruelty and treachery.¹ The new state for Giuliano, in Machiavelli's terms, was to be ruled as a "Civil Princedom". A "civil" prince was one who came to power through the favour of his subjects (as generally speaking Cesare Borgia could be said to have done) and not by cruelty towards them. Such a prince immediately after any conquest set about ruling in the best interest of all his subjects, as a wise law giver, a kind of Moses—hence, by definition, not a tyrant. This brings forward the famous last chapter of *The Prince*, and another of Machiavelli's reasons for writing his treatise. By good government, and that was the only way, the new prince could win the affection of his new subjects in his new state, and from that state gradually expand, and so drive the foreigners out of Italy. This was advanced as a practical solution, and viewed in the context of the times was not unique or chimerical. It is likely that Machiavelli was thinking of Italian unity on the model of the France of his day, where the various duchies had become unified under one king. How such an Italian confederation would have worked in practice is unknown, obviously, but the new prince would have ruled in the best interest of all his subjects, and hence Florence would have retained republican government: this conclusion is buttressed by Chapter V of *The Prince*.² In August 1513, when Machiavelli had written to Vettori about a league of Italian states against the foreigners in Italy, he had scorned the idea, and with the example of the 1495 League of Venice before him, he had strong support for such contempt. The reduction of the states

¹ *Machiavelli researches*, pp. 61-63.

of Italy to one was Machiavelli’s solution, for only then would the Italians be on equal terms politically and militarily with the French and the Spaniards. Looking back from 1513 it appeared as though such a reduction was inevitable, and Machiavelli’s *Prince* aimed at accelerating the process. To achieve this end it was necessary to find a suitable leader in the first place, and if one thinks of the field in 1513, Giuliano was the best candidate. The Popes Alexander VI and Julius II had affirmed the Italian nature of their foreign policies, and Pope Leo X might be persuaded to take their policies to the logical conclusion—a united Italy—if his family, his brother, in fact, was to unite it.

Recently the idea that the last chapter of *The Prince* was an afterthought, tacked on in 1515-16, has been resuscitated.\(^1\) Without the drafts there can be no quite definitive answer, but a strong case can be made for the whole work having been conceived *ab initio* for Giuliano. The text of the last chapter contains nothing that could not have been written by early 1514. Secondly, there is more positive evidence. We have seen from Machiavelli’s career that he was aware how closely the perpetuation of the Florentine republic and Cesare’s new state was tied to power politics. *The Prince* gives no consideration to this problem, yet by the spring of 1515 it was known in Italy that the King of France was about to return to Italy, and if the final chapter had been written under that threat, some discussion of power politics would have been essential. On the other hand, in the autumn and winter of 1513 external pressures in Italy were less than at any time since 1494. Machiavelli’s letters to Vettori of the summer took up this fact, and presented an analysis of how such pressures as there were might affect the Pope, with the conclusion that: “A me parerebbe, se io fossi il pontefice, stare tutto fondato in su la fortuna.”\(^2\) By this Machiavelli meant that the situation was highly favourable for the Pope to take the initiative. In the autumn of 1513, when Machiavelli heard that Giuliano was about to receive a new state, he thought the timing admirable, since there would be a minimum of foreign interference. Clearly, too, at that time Giuliano had a chance of

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\(^1\) Dr. Baron’s paper read at the Newberry Library Conference, May 1969.

expanding his new state before the foreign powers recuperated sufficiently to return to Italy. In these circumstances Machiavelli could afford to omit the problem of power politics from his treatise.

Even in minor details the text of the treatise seems uniquely appropriate for Giuliano, and one example is particularly striking. Early in September Giuliano left Florence for Rome, where on the 13th he was made a Roman patrician, as was his nephew Lorenzo, who was absent from the ceremonies, which lasted several days. When the honour was being conferred, Messer Mario Scapuccio, Capo dei Conservatori, in his oration addressed himself directly to Giuliano, and concluded¹:

... cosi a voi desideramo sia fortunata et felicissima, acioché questa Citade, quale con gli vostri auspiti et amplissima benignitade di Leone X Pontefice Maximo incomincia muovere le braccia, col vostro aiuto anchora et medicina finalmente risani. Ma damo a te, o Magnifico Juliano Medice, le regaioni della Citade, il che non tanto hai adimandato, quanto meritato. Più è senza dubio ben meritate lo ornamento, che solo nascere ornato. Quello per certo è de virtute, questo di fortuna. Ma come le Citade hai meritamente conseguita, così noi, Conservatori di Roma, anzi Senato et Popolo Romano, desideramo che a te et a gli tuoi sia diuturna, bona, felice, fausta et fortunata.

Allegorical recitations took up this theme of Giuliano's Virtù and Fortuna. A woman symbolizing Florence entered the stage on a lion's back, declaiming indignantly that the Medici had forgotten her. Climbing from the beast, she went to Giuliano, in place of honour at the front, and addressing him, said²:

O gran speranza della italica salute, inclita progenie de Medici, te priego per queste lagrime, per la tue mente, per le egregie anime del tuo patre, del avo et de tutti gli tuoi, quali con suoi consegni in guerra et pace lo imperio acquistato m'hanno, habbi pietà di me supplicant, rivolgete a' miei prieghi. Credi tu che, quando nascesti, io qual diligente matre te raccogliesse nel grembo et rescaldasse nel seno et, essendo tu agitato da tanti casi, dopo lunghi exilii et tanti pericoli t'habbia dato il freno et scettro del mio imperio acioché tu fuggi la patria et paterno domicilio? ... Horsù, Roma stia contenta di Leone solo....

Another woman representing the goddess Cybele came to comfort Florence, and recalled her origins:

¹ P. Palliolo, "Narratione dell' specracoli celebrati ... nel ricevere lo Magnifico Juliano et Laurentio di Medici per suoi patritii", printed in F. Cruciani, Il teatro del Campidoglio e le feste romane del 1513 (Milan, 1968), pp. 36-37.
² Ibid. p. 54.
Flattery was objective and one should not make too much of political significance in all this. Yet it is clear that Giuliano was seen to have given up control of Florence. Secondly there is the hint of a Medici base consisting of Rome and Florence, from which could come the medicine to cure Italy, beset by barbarians. A new state in the Romagna for Giuliano could but strengthen such a base, and form a kind of Medici confederation in central Italy, which brings us back again to Machiavelli's *Prince*. These festivities in Rome were the talk of Italy, many Florentines, including Vettori, were present, and it is reasonable to believe that reliable reports of them had reached Machiavelli. At about this time a medallion of Giuliano was engraved in the manner of Vettor di Antonio Gambello, with Giuliano's head on one side, and on the reverse the veiled figure of Virtue giving her right hand to the Goddess Fortune, who held a cornucopia: the inscription read: *duce virtute comite fortuna.* This medallion echoes the theme of the celebrations that Giuliano possessed an abundance of *Virtù* and *Fortuna*, exceptionally united in him. Is not this precisely what Machiavelli is flattering his new prince as having in his treatise?

*The Prince* is written in the form of a treatise on princely duty, and one suspects this form was chosen in part so as to amuse Giuliano, who was of a literary turn of mind. The genre was a popular one in the fifteenth century, the hey-day of new princes, and viewed in perspective Machiavelli's treatise is one of the last of its class. Such treatises were intended for practical application, and so used; for instance, Carafa dedicated his work *I doveri del principe* to his former pupil Eleonora d'Aragona, who became the wife of the Duke of Ferrara, and the treatise was used as a handbook at the Ferrarese court in the late fifteenth century.

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2 *Machiavelli researches*, p. 53.
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Nifo's plagiarism of the treatise, printed in 1523, helps to suggest where Machiavelli's work is untypical of its genre. The orthodox humanistic treatises of this class were written in Latin, so Nifo conformed in his version, while Machiavelli wrote in Italian. Given Machiavelli's humanistic and chancery training it is hard to believe that he could not have written in Latin, and it is equally unlikely that Giuliano would not have understood perfectly in that language. Machiavelli kept up some appearance of the genre with his Latin title De Principatibus (used in the 1513 letter, and found in the manuscripts of the work as completed in 1516), and with Latin titles for the chapter headings. Perhaps the choice of the vernacular for the text was a further effort to catch Giuliano's attention, for he was known to be much interested in the volgar lingua—witness the fact that Bembo gave him a leading part in his dialogue on that subject, and that he owned the autograph of Boccaccio's Decameron. Machiavelli himself was interested in the subject, and an anonymous study dealing with the Italian language is probably rightly attributed to him.

Translations often obscure it, but the second person singular, "tu", is commonly used by Machiavelli in his Prince when addressing a man of action, be it the prince or the conspirator. "Voi" is used when addressing the multitude whose interest was essentially theoretical. One can conclude, however, that where Machiavelli used the "tu" form his words had a special application to the prince who was to be the dedicatee—Giuliano. In The Prince the course of action was being consciously pointed out for a particular person, and he, reading it, would have grasped the message. Nifo retained nothing of the "tu" and "voi", perhaps because it was uncommon to the model. It has, though, a classical tradition. Lucretius dedicated his De Rerum Natura to Memmius in an effort to persuade the latter to undertake the course of action which is the subject of the poem. Throughout the poem the use of "tu" intensifies the directness.

1 A. Nifo, De regnandi peritia (Naples, 1523), and see G. Lisio, ed. N. Machiavelli, Il Principe (Florence, 1899), p. xii.
2 Machiavelli researches, p. 54.
3 Ibid. pp. 51-52.
of the message to the dedicatee. In his youth Machiavelli had transcribed the whole of the poem, and hence may have adopted consciously the method of Lucretius for his *Prince*.¹

Nifo was not concerned with the author's objectives in writing *The Prince*, but merely used it as a quarry. He reordered the material he found there so that his finished version more closely resembled the orthodox humanistic model of a work on princely duty. Looked at in another way, what Nifo rejected as unsuitable, and where he revised it, is likely to be the key to Machiavelli's particular purposes in writing his work. Two things Nifo entirely distorted, because in terms of the genre they were unique in Machiavelli's *Prince*. One of these is the use of a contemporary example—Cesare Borgia—as the primary model for a new prince; secondly, the category of "mixed states" to which Chapter III is devoted, does not appear in any previous work on a prince. By the term "mixed state" Machiavelli appears to have had in mind a new state like that of Cesare's, where territory was added to an already existing state. The example of Cesare, and his "mixed state," seemed to Machiavelli to parallel closely the circumstances and proposed state of Giuliano de' Medici, as has been discussed.

Machiavelli in his letter of 10 December, 1513 to Vettori was pleading for a post, and he was doing so in *The Prince*. In Chapter XX we find²:

> ... Hanno e' principi, et *praesertim* quelli che sono nuovi, trovato più fede e più utilità in quegli uomini che nel principio del loro stato sono suti tenuti sospetti, che in quelli che nel principio erano confidenti. ...  

This appears to be a blatant reference to Machiavelli's personal situation, with which Giuliano was familiar. Again, Giuliano reading Chapter XXII would have seen that Machiavelli aspired to play to him a part like Antonio da Venafro to Pandolfo Petrucci of Siena. This was an allusion that Giuliano would have recognized, since he knew the Petrucci family, just as he had contact with Cesare Borgia in 1502, when the latter was building


² *Il Principe*, p. 42.
his new state.\(^1\) In the autumn of 1513 Machiavelli was aware of Giuliano's interests, and devised the whole treatise to titillate, so that he would read the work, be persuaded, and employ Machiavelli, even in the face of opposition from his relatives. The project to save Italy was a final appeal to the Pope, and anyway something of a gamble. The first step was for Machiavelli to obtain a post in Giuliano's service, preferably as his chancellor or secretary, so as to be able to deal with the entire administration of the new state from the moment Giuliano received his state.

Until his death in 1516 Giuliano is the only prince that Machiavelli mentioned in the context of *The Prince*. The fact that no version of the work with a dedication to him is known implies that Machiavelli never actually presented the work to him, particularly as there is no other evidence that he did. To be apposite the dedication would be left until the last moment before presentation, and there appear to have been factors which continually caused Machiavelli to delay writing it, until eventually it was never written at all for Giuliano. Machiavelli was continually frustrated by Vettori in his endeavours to contact Giuliano, and no doubt became increasingly aware of the weakness of Giuliano's character in terms of the role for which he was cast. Perhaps even more important was the complication of power politics. The Pope delayed, and even by early 1514 found opposition to the creation of a new state for his brother, and in the months following opposition progressively increased. This made the papal foreign policy exceptionally tortuous and seemingly inconclusive, and it may have appeared throughout 1514 that nothing would come of the projected new state. Eventually in January 1515 Giuliano did receive it, and from Ardinghelli's letter to Giuliano of the following February, Machiavelli then made his last attempt to get the post that he sought. Apparently Machiavelli was frustrated, but this was probably the nearest he came to dedicating and presenting his work to Giuliano.

Machiavelli commented on the situation in a letter to Vettori dated 31 January 1515\(^2\):

\(^1\) *Machiavelli researches*, p. 66.
\(^2\) *Lettere*, pp. 374-6.
Pagolo vostro [Vettori's brother] è suto qui [Florence] con il Magnifico [Giuliano], et intra qualche ragionamento ha havuta meco delle sperenze sue, mi ha detto come sua Signoria gli ha promesso farlo governatore di una di quelle terre, delle quali prende hora la signoria. Et havendo io inteso, non da Pagolo, ma da una comune voce, che egli diventa signore di Parma, Piacenza, Modana et Reggio, mi pare che questa signoria fosse bella et forte, et da poterla in ogni evento tenere, quando nel principio la fosse governata bene. Et a volerla governare bene, bisogna intendere bene la qualita del subbiecto. Questi stati nuovi, occupati da un signore nuovo, hanno, volendosi mantenere, infinite difficoltà. Et se si trouva difficoltà in mantenere quelli che sono consueti ad esser tutti un corpo, come, verbigrazia, sarebbe il ducato di Ferrara, assai più difficoltà si trouva a mantenere quelli che sono di nuovo composti di diverse membra, come sarebbe questo del signore Giuliano, perché una parte di esso è membro di Milano, un'altra di Ferrara. Debbe pertanto chi ne diventa principe pensare di farne un medesimo corpo, et avvezzarli a riconoscere uno il più presto può. Il che si può fare in due modi: o con il fermarvisi personalmente, o con preprovi un suo luogotenente che comandi a tutti, acciò che quelli sudditi, etiam di diverse terre, et distratti in varie oppensioni, comincino a reguardare un solo, et conoscerlo per principe. Et quando sua Signoria, volendo stare per ancora a Roma, vi preponesse uno che conoscesse bene la natura delle cose et le condizioni de'luoghi, farebbe un gran fondamento a questo suo stato nuovo. Ma se e' mette in ogni terra il suo capo, et sua Signoria non vi stia, si starà sempre quello stato disunito, sanza sua riputatione, et sanza potere portare al principe riverenza o timore. Il duca Valentino, l'opere del quale io imiterei sempre quando io fossi principe nuovo, conosciuta questa necessità, fece Messer Rimiro presidente in Romagna; la quale deliberazione fece quei populi uniti, timorosi dell'autorità sua, affectionati alla sua potenza, confidenti di quella; et tutto lo amore gli portavano, che era grande, considerata la novità sua, nacque da questa deliberazione. Io credo che questa cosa si potesse facilmente persuadere, perché è vera; et quando e' toccasse a Pagolo vostro, sarebbe questo un grado da farsi conoscere non solo al signore Magnifico, ma a tutta Italia; et con utile et honoré di sua Signoria, potrebbe dare riputatione a sé, a voi et alla casa sua. Io ne parlai seco; piacqueli, et penserà d'aiutarsene. Mi è parso scriverne a voi, accio sappiate i ragionamenti nostri, et possiate, dove bisognasse, lastricare la via a questa cosa.

Et nel cadere el superbo ghiottone
E' non dimenticò però Macone.

This letter reads like The Prince. In both the new prince is the same—Giuliano; in both Machiavelli is trying to guide by the example of Cesare Borgia. In both Vettori has a part to play in pushing Machiavelli's suitability for a post to the Medici. One thing is certainly different. At the time of writing his Prince the precise location of Giuliano's new state was uncertain, and hence so was the nature of the component parts, and it is this fact that accounts for the vagueness on this point in the treatise. By January 1515 the new state was taking shape, and
Giuliano was appointed governor in perpetuity of Parma, Piacenza, Reggio and Modena. Then only was Machiavelli in a position to apply the rules for the formation of a new state to the particular territory allocated. The problem was more complicated than that which Cesare Borgia had faced, and more so than Machiavelli had anticipated writing in the autumn of 1513, as the region was not the Romagna. The new state of 1515 was to consist of different members cut from old states, whose subjects were in no way used to the idea of being within the papal states, and had other, and separate, centres of interest. Of course once Giuliano had welded together the members of this new state, and begun to add princedoms to its core, the situation would have returned to the "Mixed States" that he had envisaged in his treatise. Machiavelli believed in January 1515 that Giuliano should commence at once with the suitable form of government, and that was why he tried to enter Giuliano's service, if only to fail. Moreover Giuliano, instead of doing what Machiavelli had outlined to Vettori as essential for good government, did precisely the contrary, for he was non-resident, while appointing a governor for each city.

It had been Pope Alexander VI's untimely death that had ruined the chances of Cesare's state, according to one analysis made by Machiavelli in his *Prince*. By one of those freaks of Fortune, which upset the most balanced calculations, it was Giuliano, and not his elder brother Pope Leo X, who died first, in March 1516. Between this date, and probably prior to the following September, Machiavelli presented his *Prince* to Giuliano's former rival in Florence, Lorenzo de' Medici. How was it that having written the work exclusively with Giuliano in mind as the new prince, Machiavelli could present it to another prince? The dedication letter addressed to Lorenzo was almost certainly added to the version prepared for Giuliano very shortly prior to the actual presentation, and significantly it concludes:

... E se Vostra Magnificenza dallo apice della sua altezza qualche volta volgerà gli occhi in questi luoghi bassi, conoscerà quanto io indegnamente sopporti una grande e continua malignità di fortuna.

Machiavelli was still pleading for a position suited to his talents,

1 *Il Principe*, p. 3.
so to that extent, at least, the work was still designed to secure patronage.

When Giuliano died, Lorenzo was in control of Florence, as he had been since the autumn of 1513, but it is generally forgotten that he inherited the "new state" that had been Giuliano's. Therefore in 1516 Lorenzo became a "new prince" and was referred to as such, since from mid-June he governed Reggio and Modena; though not Parma and Piacenza, which had been lost to the French after the Battle of Marignano, 13-14 September 1515. By August 1516 it was commonly reported that Lorenzo was to be invested with the Duchy of Urbino and perhaps other territory, especially as in June he had launched a military campaign and captured Urbino, after an ineffective thrust at Piacenza. Here, once more, was the suggestion of the "mixed state" of Machiavelli's *Prince*, with new territory being added to an existing core. Once again the parallel with Cesare Borgia was valid, and Lorenzo with his forceful character and military interests, both familiar to Florentines by 1516, was a candidate more likely to succeed in Machiavelli's project for his *Prince* as liberator of Italy, than Giuliano had ever been.

In a letter dated 27 December, 1516, Lodovico Alamanni, a Florentine attached to the papal court, wrote from Rome to Alberto Pio, ambassador of the Emperor, telling him of the problems that faced Italy, and how these concerned a new prince, Lorenzo de' Medici. In many ways Alamanni's ideas were akin to those of Machiavelli in his *Prince*, but he actually goes on to consider the problem of creating a new state in the face of likely opposition of the major powers. Modena and Reggio were held by Duke Lorenzo as Imperial fiefs, and reasonably Alamanni suggested to Alberto Pio that there should be an alliance between Lorenzo and the Emperor, directed against France. What Alamanni was proposing was parallel to what Cesare Borgia had been negotiating in 1503, in an effort to expand his new state. Side by side with this letter we should consider another of

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Alamanni's writings, a memorandum, dated 25 November 1516. The value of this latter document, which is a kind of treatise concerned with Florentine government, is to make it plain that Alamanni believed Lorenzo de' Medici at that time was likely to create a new state, and might neglect Florence in the attempt. It was currently rumoured, indeed, that Lorenzo wished to conquer Lucca and Siena, and to form a central state in Italy, which would stretch from the Adriatic to the Tuscan shores. It was said, too, that eventually he would have himself crowned King of Tuscany.

Small wonder that Machiavelli dedicated his work to Lorenzo, and presented it. Once again The Prince had the same practical objectives that had motivated its composition with Giuliano in mind, and the work was intended to be applied to Lorenzo's new state, and not to Florence. It was a final gamble. In any event Lorenzo was already governing Florence by autocratic means, and so the work could do little harm, even if Lorenzo should think of applying it there too. At best it might serve to shift Lorenzo's interest from Florence to his new state, and thereby save Florence from political misfortune, which Machiavelli fervently believed was bound to follow autocratic rule there.

The decision to dedicate the work and present it to Lorenzo seems to have been made in haste, for the author did not bother to bring it up-to-date and so meet precisely Lorenzo's situation. In 1516 the nature of Lorenzo's new state was more complicated, as we have seen, than that envisaged for Giuliano in 1513, but Machiavelli made no amendments, and did not even bother with the corollary that he had advanced in his letter to Vettori of January 1515. Alamanni dealt with Lorenzo's problem in its fullest context, and his solution to the danger of foreign intervention was a league with the Emperor. Thus Alamanni’s writings of 1516 are something like The Prince revised to meet Lorenzo’s situation, and since Alamanni was not seeking a post in the way Machiavelli was, his assessment of the difficulties involved appears realistic. Again Alamanni’s emphasis on the key position of Florence in determining Lorenzo’s actions is at once interesting and revealing. The fact that Lorenzo controlled
Florence made Machiavelli's parallel with Cesare Borgia less obvious in its application, and his entire neglect of Florence (for obvious reasons in Giuliano's case) appears remarkable. It is explicable presumably because of the author's haste to present his work, and the situation is covered, of course, in general terms by Chapter V. One can perhaps suppose that if Machiavelli had had sufficient energy and time to have rewritten the work with Lorenzo in mind, he would have mentioned Florence specifically, and argued that the city would support the new prince most warmly if allowed to retain its republican government. On the other hand, Machiavelli may have rejected this as being too obviously opposed to what Lorenzo was doing, and hence likely to ruin the entire purpose of the work from the start. My own guess is that Machiavelli did not bother to revise his work because he acted on the spur of the moment, when he had appreciated the general parallel of the new state of Lorenzo and the one he had speculated as likely for Giuliano. Again he wanted to catch Lorenzo's interest before he had established government firmly in his new state; probably, too, he had little real faith in persuading Lorenzo and the Medici to employ him, since he failed with Giuliano, who seemed more favourably inclined towards him.

Certainly the presentation to Lorenzo did not bring immediate or direct results. What evidence, apart from the dedication letter itself, is there for the actual presentation, therefore? First, what may be a derivation of the presentation copy, transcribed in all likelihood by Genesio de la Barrera, an apprentice of the famous Arrighi, is identified in the beautiful Barberini manuscript of The Prince.\(^1\) The Florentine Riccardo Riccardi, who was collecting information concerning Machiavelli in the second half of the sixteenth century, wrote about 1580 that when Machiavelli

\(^1\) F. A. Thomson, "Arrighi's writing books, II", *The Journal of the Society of Italic Handwriting*, no. 53 (1967), pp. 20-21, considers it to be the presentation copy itself. Mr. Thomson promises a more detailed article, with further evidence concerning this manuscript—MS. Barb. lat. 5093, of the Vatican Library—shortly. Mgr. Ruyschaert dates the manuscript to about 1521, see A. Fairbank, 'G. de la Barrera', *the Journal of the Society of Italic Handwriting*, no. 63. '1970'. 10. Professor Quaglio, cited in n. 1, p. 47, does not evaluate highly the text of this manuscript.
presented his work to Lorenzo, there was in the audience room immediately behind him, somebody with a couple of greyhounds to donate to Lorenzo. These greyhounds so much captured Lorenzo's attention that he disregarded Machiavelli's presentation of his *Prince*, whereupon the author departed much annoyed, and promised his friends that the work itself would provide the means of a vendetta for such discourteous treatment. Perhaps hidden in this story, which is probably a reliable tradition, is Machiavelli's suspicion that Lorenzo might think the work applied to Florence (for he gave Machiavelli no opportunity to explain it), and that without the author to guide, he would apply it to Florence with fatal consequences. After all, this is the very conclusion that Busini reached. Consistently, as we have seen, Machiavelli believed that only republican government could prosper in Florence, and that any attempt to impose even a "civil prince", let alone a tyrant, would result in misery and the prince's eventual downfall. Interestingly enough Duke Alessandro, who was believed to have used *The Prince* as a guide, was assassinated as a tyrant, and Duke Lorenzo's line ended. Such an eventuality, then, may have been what Machiavelli foresaw—his vendetta, which Riccardi had not understood. Again Machiavelli may have decided that explanation would not help his project, and would merely do him harm. He could not make Lorenzo listen or employ him. In fact, within a few years he did receive employment from the Medici, modest though this post was in comparison with his objective in writing his *Prince*. The misunderstanding of the real nature and purposes of the work in terms of the government of Florence, by Lorenzo and by Florentines associated with the Medici, cannot have hindered the reconciliation between the Medici and Machiavelli. Indirectly, and for entirely the wrong reasons, *The Prince* did help the advancement of Machiavelli, and his quest for a post. On the one hand, therefore, it brought about his rehabilitation with the Medici, and on the other the seeds of his ill-fame.

If we turn to Machiavelli's mature writing, above all his *History of Florence* (itself the testimony of his rehabilitation) and his *Discourses on Livy*, we shall find that he had come to believe

1 Machiavelli researches, pp. 67-68.
in an evolutionary idea of history. This, in simplest terms, meant that primitive society consisted of groups of savages, each group under a king, and that there was the gradual development to the zenith of civilization as exemplified in the Italian cities. Classical writings, the Bible, and the savage communities discovered by Columbus, all provided testimony of such a progression. In terms of forms of government the process moved from kings (or princes, to use Machiavelli's terminology) to republics. Machiavelli recognized that there were various kinds of the two forms, much like Aristotle's classification in his *Politics*, but he had what can be called his own ladder of perfection. The "civil" prince was the most perfect of the forms of princely rule, while what he defined as the "mixed republic" was perfection in the republican category, and he found this latter in Rome before the Empire. Perfection in government, however, was somewhat relative, since it depended to some degree on the stage reached by a society in the evolutionary process. Florentines since 1494, particularly, had become alert to the problem of matching government to an evolving society, and hence Machiavelli's concern was not exceptional. Machiavelli, though, believed that he could detect principles which would serve as a guide to help to fit the best form of government to the particular society under consideration, and it is his *Discourses*—the greatest of his writings, and one of the most important and original works of all time—that contain the evidence for his principles. Of these the most important for us here is Machiavelli's belief that a city, used to being governed by a prince, could continue to be so ruled, provided that prince ruled as a "civil" prince. If he did not, opposition and faction would result, then civil war, and ultimately republican government. In the long run, Machiavelli was convinced that the development from princely rule to republicanism was inevitable as society evolved, but he did think that a good prince, that is a "civil" one, could retard the process. Machiavelli was equally convinced that once a city was used to republican government, there was no means by which the normal evolutionary process could be reversed, and the society of that city would never accept the rule of a prince, even if he ruled as a "civil" one. It is worth
remarking that Machiavelli's ideas of evolution may derive from his reading of Lucretius.¹

There is no conflict between The Prince and The Discourses. The former fits into Machiavelli's evolutionary idea of history, and in no way clashes with the principles or laws deduced in his Discourses. Rather the former is complementary to the latter. The Prince is really a part of his scheme of social science devised for application to a specific society at a particular time in its evolution, and, as originally conceived, by one particular prince. The work is the unique example of our writer actually applying his laws to a given situation, and was the one opportunity that presented itself for testing his laws in practice, since his experience in the Florentine Chancery was of a different nature and concerned with a republic. In the case of Giuliano's new state, ultimately inherited by Lorenzo, the cities and territories concerned were used to princely rule, and accordingly "civil" rule by a new prince would have maintained virtually a status quo. In terms of Florence itself, the Savonarola Constitution, as modified in 1498 and 1502, was for Machiavelli his idea of a "mixed republic", and hence perfection for that city.

Now Machiavelli is inevitably associated, often contrasted, with his younger contemporary Francesco Guicciardini, likewise a Florentine, likewise a historian, and equally concerned with the problems of government in his native city and in Italy.² A comparison can be revealing, though, particularly in demonstrating the practicality of Machiavelli's intentions in writing his Prince. Both had the same type of family background and training in the law, though Guicciardini had a wealthy father, being one of the "ottimati", and was able to qualify as a Doctor of Law, while Machiavelli's father was a bankrupt, with serious consequences for his son's career, as already mentioned. Both served first the Florentine Republic, and both were willing to remain at their posts in September 1512, when the Medici returned to power. Guicciardini, however, was much less

² For the biographical details see R. Ridolfi, La vita di F. Guicciardini (Rome, 1960).
associated with the republican party than Machiavelli, and he was able and ready to conciliate the Medici; thus he retained his post. Above all through his marriage connection with the Salviati, and by carefully chosen contacts, Guicciardini obtained from Lorenzo de' Medici the post of Governor of Modena first, and then of Reggio as well—this joint-governorship was the very post that Machiavelli had coveted, and which had inspired him to present his Prince to Lorenzo. The two governorships represent the peak of Guicciardini's career, though he held various important posts subsequently, still in Medici service, including that of President of the Rota of Romagna. It is poignant that he lost almost every post to a rival in circumstances which parallel the way in which Machiavelli lost to him in 1516. This shows that Machiavelli's manoeuvring by means of Vettori was a practical endeavour, and might have brought success—a post. Machiavelli's jockeying for position by means of his Prince was all part of the gamble of influence and patronage, aspects of Florentine politics in the early sixteenth century that yet remain to be examined in close detail. Guicciardini and Machiavelli were using the means that they had at their disposal to obtain patronage and advance themselves, and both in the long run could claim limited success. Consistently Machiavelli's difficulties were greater, for he had less wealth and less influence, and while he never achieved Guicciardini's exalted position, in terms of results for effort expended in the face of difficulties, Machiavelli's achievement was probably the more remarkable. Machiavelli finally became secretary to Guicciardini, whom he much respected, and he bore no rancour towards his more favoured rival. Just as Machiavelli had sought to influence Lorenzo de' Medici for the good of Florence in 1516, so Guicciardini tried to restrain Duke Cosimo de' Medici in 1537. Neither accomplished anything, and their very intentions were misunderstood by their fellow Florentines. Guicciardini went into exile to work on his History of Italy, which reflects his idea of history, and in like situation Machiavelli wrote his Prince and Discourses.

There was a fundamental difference in the cast of mind of the two men. Machiavelli believed that the past explained the present, and could be used to mould the future, while Guicciar-
MACHIAVELLI'S POLITICAL ASSUMPTIONS

dini, whose thought matured, by the last stage of his life, when he wrote his History of Italy, could only detect that the present was different from the past. By 1521, at the latest, Guicciardini had read Machiavelli’s Discourses, and his reflections on what he found there appear to have convinced him that Machiavelli’s principles, and what can be called “Romanism”, were unsound. As a result Guicciardini’s previous aversion to generalizations hardened into a principle: that it was impossible to generalize.¹ He judged Machiavelli’s scheme of social science as not being demonstrated by the facts. The Prince appears to have had little influence on Guicciardini, and this, too, is understandable, for as a part of Machiavelli’s general scheme it would have been deemed unsatisfactory.

Irrespective of Guicciardini’s judgement of Machiavelli’s principles, his Discourses in which the principles are found remain a masterpiece, although they are by no means easy reading. Machiavelli’s intention for his Prince was modified over the years, and investigation along similar lines may help us to appreciate more fully the purposes of The Discourses, and lead to a deeper understanding of the nature of the work and its complications. We can best begin by tying Machiavelli’s interest in Livy with his early training to be a notary, and with Florentine Civic Humanism. Machiavelli’s father was dedicated to the Classics, and we know that he received printed sheets of Livy in return for compiling an index of names to the text: young Niccolò took those sheets to be bound. Apparently in 1503 Machiavelli wrote his Del modo di trattare i popolo della Valdichiana ribellati, and quoted in extenso a portion of Livy. There is a tradition that is entirely false that some ten years later Machiavelli lectured upon the

subject of The Discourses in the Orti Rucellai, in Florence. This, however, has developed from a misunderstanding of the source, Nerli, who merely says that the assembly in the Rucellai Gardens exercised itself especially in the reading of histories, and on these histories, and at the insistence of the participants, Machiavelli wrote his work. There is no hint that Machiavelli lectured there on Livy or on any other text. The important thing is that Machiavelli was a member of the circle that frequented the Gardens, and had close friends among the circle; the circle itself was regarded with disapproval by the Medici because some members of it favoured republican government for Florence, but other members were of the Medici party. In essence the Gardens were a kind of political sounding board and something of a pressure group, to use modern phraseology. In his Discourses examples are cited from contemporary events (as in his Prince) in order to demonstrate laws, and all examples, save for one ambiguous one, can be dated to 1517 at the latest. Machiavelli appears to have written the basic draft of his Discourses when he had time on his hands after his exile in 1512 and prior to 1518. At that stage the work remained something of a commentary on Livy's History, but one which brought forward the laws or principles of Machiavelli's scheme of social science. In 1520 he received a contract to write a history of Florence, and in the course of research for that he read deeply in the city's early history.\(^1\) He wrote his History of Florence, which brought the events narrated down to the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and he presented a dedication copy to Pope Clement VII (the former Cardinal Giulio de' Medici). Then he was free to turn again to his Discourses, and his intention was to rearrange them so as to present most clearly the laws that he had deduced, and abandon the commentary, and secondly to include examples that he had found while engaged on his Florentine history. He died before he had done more than reorder some of the early chapters, leaving the core of the work as it stood. Moreover, it is likely that what we have today was to some degree mangled by an

editor, who did not grasp what Machiavelli's revision was about, and who wished to present a complete work with all speed to an expectant public. Such are the complications that account for the lack of a consistent plan, and make the text hard reading. The central theme, though, remains clear as Machiavelli's proof that republican government was vital for the well-being of contemporary Florence.

Nevertheless he wrote his *History of Florence* for Medici patrons and satisfied them. Donato Gianotti, whose friendship with Machiavelli possibly dates from meetings in the Rucellai Gardens, wrote in 1533 in defence of his friend, then dead some six years¹:

... Et io la vedevo mentre che il Machiavelli la componeva ..., egli mi disse queste parole formali: " Io non posso scrivere questa historia da che Cosimo prese lo Stato per insino alla morte di Lorenzo come io la scriverei se io fossi libero da tutti i rispetti; le azioni saranno vere, et non pretermetterò cosa alcuna, solamente lascierò indiretto il discorrere le cause universali delle cose; verbi gratia, io dirò gli eventi et gli casi che successero quando Cosimo prese lo Stato; lascierò stare indiretto il discorrere in che modo, et con che mezzi et astutie uno pervenga a tanta altezza, et chi vorrà anco intendere questo, noti molto bene quello ch'io farò dire ai suoi adversarii, perché quello che non vorrà dire io come da me, lo farò dire ai suoi adversarii". Queste parole me le disse egli più volte. . . .

Machiavelli remained faithful at heart to his own convictions concerning the Medici and Florence. He would have liked to tell of his convictions, which he believed to be the truth, but he was afraid of being persecuted for so doing. In 1513 he had suffered six drops of the strappado to no good purpose, and in future was cautious, for he was not of the stuff of which martyrs are made. His very caution, of course, resulted in a certain lack of precision and in a vagueness, which played no small part in the misunderstanding of his work by his contemporaries. One might even say, that, because of his timidity after 1513 Machiavelli wanted to be misunderstood by all save his closest and most faithful friends, or at least to be ambiguous. As a final testimony of this trait it is striking that Machiavelli

never continued his *History of Florence* to cover the years of the Republic, though he promised to do so, and had the necessary notes, and even rough drafts. He would have been committed either to condemning the republican government that he thought admirable for Florence, or to facing squarely Medici displeasure. He had too much sincerity for the former and insufficient courage for the latter.

It tends to be overlooked that the major historical works of Machiavelli’s maturity, *The Prince*, *The Discourses*, *The History of Florence*, *The Art of War*, *The Life of Castruccio Castracani*, were all written in quest of patronage. We should be thankful that they were written at all, but the consequence of their creation is that none is written entirely as Machiavelli would have wished, if he had had a free hand; his desire for patronage and his fear of Medici antagonism coloured each and every one. Machiavelli’s passionate love of his native city, the ties of his family and property in that city, together with his timidity, prevented him from seeking his fortune elsewhere, as another might have done on the loss of his post and when exiled to his villa. This meant that the Medici family was Machiavelli’s only possible source of patronage, and is another reason why he sought so tenaciously and consistently to overcome their hostility.

In an admirable study of *Castruccio* Professor Whitfield has placed Machiavelli’s biography in context. The work was not intended as military theory like his *Art of War*, and it is not a distorted tract written to prove that Castruccio might have been the saviour of Italy in just the same way as Machiavelli’s *Prince*, as the latter has been commonly judged. By an examination of Machiavelli’s sources, Professor Whitfield shows that there is no pattern of idealization of a hero, or any effort on Machiavelli’s part to falsify the real story of Castruccio as he had it from chronicles. Machiavelli himself intended the work to be deemed history, and it had the definite object of showing that he was capable of undertaking the task of being historian of Florence, a post for which he knew he was at that time being considered.

The subject was chosen because it was innocuous in terms of the Medici and Florence, but its prose was to be a kind of sample for his patrons. He sent the work to two friends of the circle of the Rucellai Gardens, Zanobi Buondelmonti and Luigi Alamanni, and the former after reading it, replied to Machiavelli that he thought it a “modello di storia”, and that it had increased his desire to see him advance to the greater work: “Pare a tutti che voi vi dobbiate mettere con ogni diligenzia a scrivere questa istoria et io sopra gli altri lo desidero...”.¹ That was in September 1520, and two months later Machiavelli gained his objective, when he was commissioned official historiographer of Florence.

Already in the early months of 1520 Machiavelli’s prospects had improved vastly. His intimacy with the Rucellai Gardens’ circle, so carefully fostered, as the dedication of his Discourses witnesses, had brought its reward, for on 10 March he was introduced at the Gardens to Cardinal Giulio de’ Medici, and received with kindness. Most instrumental in this was Lorenzo Strozzi, and Machiavelli in gratitude for his patronage dedicated to him The Art of War on its completion in the following summer, when he gave it the Latin title De Re Militari, though like The Prince it was written in the vernacular. Rewarding Strozzi, proving to the intimates of the Rucellai Gardens that he was a candidate worthy of Medici favour and could write history, were incidental elements behind this work. They were important in that they determined to a large measure the timing, its dedication, and even the form of the work as a dialogue, in which among others Buondelmonti and Alamanni participated, set in the Gardens and supposedly during 1516. But under these mouldings Machiavelli had something vital to say regarding military affairs.

It is a truism that Machiavelli’s career as an administrator in the Florentine government provided him with a fund of practical experience, and that he drew on this reserve in his Prince and in his Discourses, which, it has been considered, were themselves basically practical in scope. Of similar nature was The Art of War, the only one of Machiavelli’s major works to be published

¹ Ridolfi, Vita di N. Machiavelli (1969), i. 284.
during his lifetime. There is no doubt that Machiavelli considered it important, and we can appreciate why he should. One of the fundamental reasons for the misfortunes of Italy and Florence was military inadequacy. Guicciardini concludes in his Florentine Histories: “... Ed in effetto gli stati si cominciorono a conservare, a rovinare, a dare ed a torre non co’ disegni e nello scrittoio come nel passato, ma alla campagna e colle arme in mano. . . .” From 1494 French and Spanish armies had consistently dominated the Italian peninsula, and from 1494 until 1509 Florence was engaged in a bitter war with Pisa. An early mission of Machiavelli in his government’s service in 1498 had been to Pisa, and he became increasingly involved. Six years later, for instance, he was associated with Leonardo da Vinci in an imaginative scheme to divert the Arno so as to cut Pisa from communication by sea. In 1505 he was authorized to raise a militia. The Florentine Republic, which had been established in 1494 by means of French might, and which Machiavelli believed the best form of government for his native city, depended on French protection for its very survival. It was necessary to look ahead and prepare for the dark day in the future when French protection might be withdrawn: hence the Florentine militia, composed of conscripts from the rural areas of the Florentine State. After the Battle of Ravenna in April 1512 and the French withdrawal, the Florentine militia had to face a Spanish army. Its failure to defeat this force explains why the Medici were able to return in September. Obviously there were poignant reasons why Machiavelli should consider military power a key factor. Finding the best government for a society was one thing, but what society needed was to be able to maintain its government against military aggression.

Machiavelli’s scheme of social science as outlined in The


Discourses to make it really social science had to have built into it a kind of safety valve, which would ensure that the best government for a society could be defended by that society. It has been said that he was the first to stress the importance of warfare in human actions, and certainly his is the outstanding name, but this must not be twisted into claiming that Machiavelli gloried in war. Satire aside, the Report from Iron Mountain, of current note, implies that the most advanced of modern civilizations depends on war as a positive force to perpetuate its position. Machiavelli looks at it from the opposite viewpoint: one must fight to meet aggression and so save one's society from the political deterioration that conquest brings.

The whole range of history from Classical times to contemporary events combined to convince Machiavelli of the importance of defending good government by military means. Medieval thinkers, preoccupied as they were with the concept of Christendom, were aware of the part that military matters played in mankind's activities, and they sought to sublimate these activities to the betterment of Christianity. It was the humanists of the Early Renaissance in Italy whose preoccupation with Classical history, largely a catalogue of military deeds, gave military affairs a new emphasis. The second half of the fifteenth century in Italy can be defined in broad terms as a period when the lore culled from the Classical World was manifested consciously in what was thought to be practical imitation; thus a soldier wore long hair, because Classical coins depicted warriors so, while buildings were fabricated according to the principles of Vitruvius. Florence was no exception to this evolution, indeed had been instrumental in initiating it. At the same time in that city, what can be called "Civic Humanism" had fostered its citizens in the belief that Florence was the continuator of Republican Rome, for had it not defended liberty valiantly in the face of Visconti attacks emulating the Romans' defence of their liberty? Florentines were predisposed to model their affairs at all levels on those of the Roman Republic. More, as a result of youthful training the cult of the good Florentine citizen serving with dedication the best interests of his community remained an ideal.

Machiavelli, born in 1469, was moulded by this tradition of
practical humanism. He sought to detect laws from the past and he wanted them to be applied in the present for the benefit of mankind. One such law that had the support of humanist tradition behind it was that relating to war. Here Machiavelli believed, much as Bruni had done three generations earlier, that the Roman Republic, his idea of perfection among governments, be it recalled, had remained healthy and vital only as long as it had protected itself by a citizen army.¹ For practical reasons the Florentine militia as constituted in 1506 had been a compromise, for it was not composed of Florentine citizens. The latter had refused to participate in Machiavelli's plan. Machiavelli, however, was firmly convinced that the citizens should be trained to accept his solution not as an intolerable sacrifice, but as a basic necessity for liberty and for the general good. The defeat of his militia in 1512, which was not his "ideal" militia, accordingly served merely to harden his conviction of the necessity of a citizen army, as the chapters on this point in his *Prince* bear testimony. But here, as the treatise had the specific intention of impelling his prince (be it Giuliano, or Lorenzo in the second instance) to expand his new state and eventually drive the foreigners out of Italy, military matters have a paramount place, and might even appear to dominate. It was only short-term, and does not mean that Machiavelli believed in war as an institution *per se*. Once the objective had been achieved, the "civil" prince would rule in the best interest of all subjects, and so keep a citizen army simply for defence against aggressors, and not as an instrument for his own tyranny. *The Art of War*, masked in part because of its form,—determined by convention and the needs of patronage—is Machiavelli's elaboration of his basic idea of the necessity of a citizen army. In all the conventional trappings of a typical humanistic treatise on war, though in Italian rather than Latin, he gave all the proofs to indicate that it was a law, and he sought to illustrate how this army would operate in all military contingencies that might arise. On paper Machiavelli concluded it could never be defeated.

The Art of War did not slavishly follow Classical models. Machiavelli consciously sought to make revisions to meet a more advanced technology than that which the Ancients had known. One can point to his failures, as in the case of his appreciation of firepower, but he was aware of the problem. He did make the effort to find the principles involved in the actual warfare of his day, and see how they could be related to the citizen army. The work shows that he had grasped that the use of artillery fundamentally modified Classical battle formation; he combined pikemen and short-swordsmen which had no Classical parallel, seemingly as a result of his experience of contemporary warfare; while infantry remained the core of his army, he gave more emphasis to the use of cavalry than Classical authority warranted. In essence the problem that Machiavelli sought to resolve was one of practicality: combining the needs of politics—a citizen army—with new technology. His Art of War was an adjunct to his Discourses.

Today almost everyone would agree that Machiavelli's major works are to be read because as masterpieces they provoke thought. By placing them in their historical context this essay has sought to explain their exceptional value as sources for anyone interested in Italian Renaissance studies. Machiavelli can be placed by them squarely in the current of humanistic tradition, and at that fascinating stage in its course when slavish imitation had given place to practical application. As a reaffirmation of this one can advance the fact that Machiavelli wrote his works in the vernacular, undoubtedly with the hope that in this way they would be more diffused and more clearly appreciated as being for practical use. If his childhood and early manhood were in the so-called “Golden Age” of Florence, the Italian Wars rapidly changed the very fibre of society in Italy, not merely in Florence. In many ways Machiavelli, while trying to take into account these changes, indeed impelled by them, represents by inclination and youthful training a humanistic tradition that had outlived its day. The Italian Wars and the discovery of the New World suddenly presented a technological revolution for which Antiquity provided no guide, and had ill

prepared Italians to face.\textsuperscript{1} The consequence was the truncation of the humanistic tradition in Italy. Hence increasingly with the passing of time Machiavelli’s writings presented their author as a paradox: he was a practical humanist whose aspirations were progressively impractical, as they became increasingly out of tune with the times. In fact, Guicciardini marks a further stage of evolution of the humanistic tradition, for his rejection of Machiavelli’s principles implies a complete refutation of the tradition that Machiavelli sought to illuminate.

Irrespective of whether or not we accept Machiavelli’s principles as valid, it is obvious to us today that *The Discourses* and *The Art of War* together constitute a theory of social science that is unique until the nineteenth century in its chronological range and comprehensiveness, and which remains exceptional for its depth of thought. Where does *The Prince* fit? In 1527, at what was to be the end of his life, Machiavelli seems to have thought of including this treatise among a projected collected edition of his writings, and for this purpose he dropped the Latin title and substituted, //Principe, and he omitted the dedication letter to Lorenzo. Eventually, quite apart from its composition for an *ad hoc* problem, Machiavelli wanted his *Prince* to be considered as a blueprint for any new prince with a new principedom, and as such it remains a part of his scheme of social science. Machiavelli surely merits the title of founding father of sociology.