

# AN ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORKS OF NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI

*His writings are maddeningly and notoriously unsystematic, inconsistent . of virt<sup>1</sup> to refer to the range of personal qualities that the prince will find it . More recently, the Machiavelli-as-scientist interpretation has largely gone.*

It is almost as if Borgia is declaring, in a sort of ritualistic language, that here one of my ministers, one of my representatives, has done violence to the body politic, and therefore he will have his just punishment, that is to say he will be cut in half, because that is what he did to our state—he divided it. It is not enough to be constantly moving; additionally, one must always be ready and willing to move in another direction. But he immediately adds that since coercion creates legality, he will concentrate his attention on force. Another way to address this question is to begin with the Dedicatory Letter to The Prince. On the other hand, humanism in Machiavelli's time meant that classical pre-Christian ideas about virtue and prudence, including the possibility of trying to control one's future, were not unique to him. During this period, there were many important dates during this period. More specifically, we should imitate the lion and the fox. As Machiavelli considers the expansion of Rome in book 2, he also points to the differences between the Roman and the Christian religions. This example shows that leadership is more than just adherence to a formal role prescription. The virtue of courage, for example, strikes a proper balance in matters of fear. Between and , Machiavelli would collaborate with Leonardo da Vinci on various projects. For example, we should imitate animals in order to fight as they do, since human modes of combat, such as law, are often not enough—especially when dealing with those who do not respect laws P Machiavelli himself appears as a character in The Prince twice P 3 and 7 and sometimes speaks in the first person e. Machiavelli adopted this position on both pragmatic and principled grounds. Finally, he claims that the first part or book will treat things done inside the city by public counsel. Furthermore, it is a flexibility that exists within prudently ascertained parameters and for which we are responsible. The body of literature debating this question, especially in connection with The Prince and Discourses, has grown to truly staggering proportions. While Christianity sees modesty as a virtue and pride as sinful, Machiavelli took a more classical position, seeing ambition, spiritedness, and the pursuit of glory as good and natural things, and part of the virtue and prudence that good princes should have. He did write an Exhortation to Penitence though scholars disagree as to his sincerity; compare P Other of Machiavelli's readers have found no taint of immoralism in his thought whatsoever. In this passage, Machiavelli is addressing the typically Machiavellian question of whether it is better for a prince to be feared or to be loved: But since it is difficult for a ruler to be both feared and loved, it is much safer to be feared than loved, if one of the two must be lacking. Thus, Machiavelli's insistence upon contention as a prerequisite of liberty also reflects his rhetorical predilections Viroli It is far easier to convince a single ruler to undertake a disastrous or ill-conceived course of action than a multitude of people. Pocock , in the so-called "Cambridge School" of interpretation, have asserted that some of the republican themes in Machiavelli's political works, particularly the Discourses on Livy , can be found in medieval Italian literature which was influenced by classical authors such as Sallust. It seems clear for all of these reasons that Agathocles is virtuous on the Machiavellian account. Past writers on republics and principalities, he says, have taught men what they should do rather than showing them how men act in fact. These laws and orders are maintained by Parlements, notably that of Paris: by it they are renewed any time it acts against a prince of the kingdom or in its sentences condemns the king. One way to address this question is to begin with Chapter 15 of The Prince, where Machiavelli introduces the term. Machiavelli says that the city or state is always minimally composed of the humors of the people and the great P 9 and 19; D 1. His brother Totto was a priest. Is this a fair characterization? Corruption is associated with a decline though not a moral decline in previously civilized human beings. Most importantly, he composed his other major contribution to political thought, the Discourses on the Ten Books of Titus Livy, an exposition of the principles of republican rule masquerading as a commentary on the work of the famous historian of the Roman Republic. They have little prudence D 2. The first part, then, primarily treats domestic political affairs. A minimal constitutional order is one in which subjects live securely vivere sicuro , ruled by a strong government which holds in check the aspirations of both nobility and people, but is in turn balanced by

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other legal and institutional mechanisms. But while a belief that humanity can control its own future, control nature, and "progress" has been long-lasting, Machiavelli's followers, starting with his own friend Guicciardini, have tended to prefer peaceful progress through economic development, and not warlike progress. The lion symbolizes force, perhaps to the point of cruelty; the fox symbolizes fraud, perhaps to the point of lying about the deepest things, such as religion. Throughout his corpus, Fortuna is depicted as a primal source of violence especially as directed against humanity and as antithetical to reason. Discourses CW Likewise, should the people depart from the law-abiding path, they may readily be convinced to restore order: For an uncontrolled and tumultuous people can be spoken to by a good man and easily led back into a good way. I would point out that, before Machiavelli, politics was strictly bonded with ethics, in theory if not in practice. This theme was taken up, in turn, by late medieval Italian practitioners and theorists of rhetoric, who emphasized that the subject matter of the art was lite conflict. Between and , Machiavelli was responsible for the Florentine militia. He seems to have commenced writing almost immediately. Commentators such as Quentin Skinner and J.