

# The Ferocious Morality of Niccolo Machiavelli

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# The Ferocious Morality of Niccolo Machiavelli<sup>1</sup>

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Although Machiavelli's Prince<sup>2</sup> is often thought to teach only the brutal use of power to secure the personal ends of politically ambitious men, I believe that there is a normative scheme in this work which demands much of anyone who seeks to follow his teaching rather than his merely technical advice. Apart from the fact that the The Prince contains no advice that cannot be found in The Discourses, my argument is that a careful reading of The Prince itself reveals a concern for something other than purely personal gain or even glory – in part, because a prince's glory is a reflection of his legacy as well as his personal actions.<sup>3</sup>

What I mean by Machiavelli's morality is not simply a version of the contemporary "republican" or "civic humanist" interpretation. Machiavelli does indeed value the ability of people to work together in pursuit of common ends, but his ideas of freedom, power, action, and politics are not those of reasoned argument followed by consensual decision-making. The weakness of the Machiavelli portrayed by Skinner, Pocock, and Berlin, who would turn Machiavelli into well-intentioned, if hard-headed, democrat is that they must ignore, not only The Prince, but much of The Discourses, in which Machiavelli advocates, among other things, the extermination of the gentry, the manipulation of the populace by the elite, the selective use of terror to inspire loyalty to a cause, the utter destruction of enemies, and so on.<sup>4</sup> Machiavelli is not to be taken as a simple defender of civil liberty against tyranny or some sort of proto-liberal, Machiavelli's morality is limited, particularist, and, above all, harsh. Nevertheless, his thought does transcend the cynical

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<sup>1</sup> This brief foray into the thought of Machiavelli owes its title to an interesting essay by Conor Cruise O'Brien, "The Ferocious Wisdom of Machiavelli", in O'Brien, The Suspecting Glance (London: Faber and Faber, 1972). It owes its existence to conversations with two colleagues, Andrew Valls and Dave Vanlaningham, who provided thoughtful comments on my ideas, but are neither aware of nor responsible for the contents of this essay.

<sup>2</sup> All quotations are from Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr.'s translation of The Prince (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), cited by chapter.

<sup>3</sup> For a commentary on The Discourses which argues that Machiavelli is, in fact, at his most Machiavellian in The Discourses, see Mark Hulliung, Citizen Machiavelli (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983). This excellent study came to my attention after I had developed the main lines of this argument, unfortunately for me it appears that my argument concerning the morality of The Prince replicates much of what Hulliung has to say about The Discourses.

<sup>4</sup> See for instance J.G.A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); Quentin Skinner, Machiavelli (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981); and Isaiah Berlin, "The Originality of Machiavelli", in Berlin, Against the Current (London: Hogarth Press, 1979), pp. 25-79. All three of these studies downplay the centrality of violence to Machiavelli's politics to the extent that he can be portrayed as

power politics with which his name and, especially, The Prince are associated, and he does it even in this apparently most cynical of political books.

Certainly The Prince is about **power** – its acquisition, maintenance, and use – that cannot be denied. And Machiavelli is unapologetic about the fact that these require acts that are not congruent with Christian virtue. Machiavelli does not spend time bemoaning the fact that an effective prince will sometimes, perhaps most of the time, act in an unchristian fashion. He does not agonize over the evil that is necessary for good ends, nor does he offer a casuistic argument to salve the conscience of the would-be Christian ruler with a cover of Christian virtues to lay over the practice of treachery, murder, dissimulation, and the like; rather, he transforms political acts which are necessary for the seizure of power and the maintenance of the state into virtues in their own right, even when this requires turning classical or Christian virtues completely inside out.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, he is not afraid to state clearly that "it is necessary to a prince, if he wants to maintain himself, to learn to be able not to be good, and to use this and not use it according to necessity" (XV).

This, in itself, may well be an evil doctrine, as Leo Strauss would have it, but such evil is not an end in itself, there is a purpose behind the exercise.<sup>6</sup> Machiavelli is not simply inverting Christianity as if he were writing an unholy catechism or an "Anti-Aquinas" as a response to On Kingship,<sup>7</sup> he is subverting received morality precisely in order to establish the logic of political action as of an entirely different order than the regulation of private conduct. This point alone is, of course, not enough to shift the discussion of Machiavelli to "morality", for being good when it is more expedient than being bad is hardly moral. Yet there is evidence of a normative thrust in The Prince that certainly bases itself on the self-interest of the prince, but goes beyond mere expediency.

If Machiavelli's morality is not Christian, what is it? To lay the groundwork for this answer it may be worthwhile to go over the reasons why it cannot be Christian. The incompatibility of "civic" virtue with Christian virtue in Machiavelli's view has been made before, most notably by Isaiah Berlin, but it is worthwhile going over the point again. Why does Machiavelli not accept the idea of the "good" king that was the focus of the "mirror of

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just another Renaissance humanist advocating service to the patria or, in the case of Berlin, a 16th century precursor of sophisticated liberal agnosticism.

<sup>5</sup> On Machiavelli's inversion or perversion of classical and Christian virtues see Clefford Orwin, "Machiavelli's Unchristian Charity", American Political Science Review, 72 (1978), pp.1217-28.

<sup>6</sup> Leo Strauss, Thoughts on Machiavelli (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1958).

<sup>7</sup> Curiously, the advice Machiavelli gives the prince **can** be seen as a deliberate inversion of the advice given to the Christian prince in Aquinas' "Letter to the King of Cyprus". The same terms come up in Machiavelli's advice concerning whether it is better to be loved or feared, the dangers to the prince from the great and the

princes" literature which The Prince subverts? The simple answer is that the prince may wish to be well-regarded but he cannot be good at the cost of achieving his ends, for in a world of evil men it is foolish to be good if one wishes to succeed. However, Machiavelli goes far beyond this simple point, he argues that Christian morality, however appealing it **might be** in a **purely** private person, is simply incompatible with politics. The point may be understood in this way: Christianity, as a religion concerned with the salvation of the individual's soul, is centered on the individual believer; yet for Machiavelli the individual's soul is irrelevant, his view is firmly on this world, not the next, hence the best that can be hoped for is security and prosperity here, which requires common effort, not individual salvation. Thus, the virtues encouraged by Christianity might be good insofar as they encourage a man to goodness in his private life, and to devotion to something other than his individual profit, but they are private virtues and thus very dangerous to the idea of citizenship, not to mention disastrous insofar as they interfere with doing what is necessary in relations with other states. Hence, these virtues are wholly inappropriate for anyone who devotes himself to political life, prince and citizen alike. But how can this political life be saved from a descent into outright evil? The answer to this must be sought in politics itself.

What the reader must do to tease out Machiavelli's moral scheme is compare the examples Machiavelli gives with his advice, and compare the various examples with one another. By looking carefully at the fate of the various figures Machiavelli cites as examples of men of virtue one can draw certain lessons. In the first place, the successful examples are found primarily among the Ancients, though not all the Ancients are successful, while the Moderns are, for the most part, unsuccessful. Using dissimulation and irony, as well as the direct approach, Machiavelli attacks the failings, stupidity, and brutality of the Italian nobility, a predatory class, preying on their own populace instead of ruling wisely, presenting a contrast to wise rulers not necessarily **good** rulers, but successful ones who know the uses and limits of power. The lesson appears to be that understanding the mixture of qualities making up ancient political virtue will lead to sternness when necessary, and limit stupid abuse of the populace, thereby leading to success for the prince. In itself this is merely pragmatic advice, but this is not all there is to the argument in The Prince. Machiavelli lays out standards of conduct for the prince that are not merely a matter of expediency or the worship of success.

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many, and so on. One wonders to what degree Machiavelli's ironic sense of humor had Aquinas specifically as a target when he laid out the chapters on the proper conduct of a prince in chapters XV to XIX.

First, Machiavelli establishes the quality of **virtù** as the mark of a successful and noteworthy prince. At first glance this might seem to be a limitation on the actions of the prince, or would-be prince, as long as some connection can be maintained between Machiavellian **virtù** and good conduct. The literature on Machiavelli's use of the term is large and I will not deal with it here, except to note that it seems virtually unanimous that whatever Machiavelli means by **virtù** it is not what most people would identify with good conduct. Machiavelli's notion is, apparently, close to the Greek idea of **arete**, which may be translated as "the specific excellence of a thing".<sup>8</sup> This meaning of **virtù**, of course, offers no immediately obvious limitation on the conduct of the prince other than to insist that he behave in accord with the specific excellence of principedom, which seems to beg the question. Yet there is evidence of some limitation based on the reputation to be gained by the prince.

After going through the ways of gaining a principality that he lists in the first chapter and stressing the honor involved in making oneself a new prince, Machiavelli introduces a further means of rising to power in chapter VIII: The way of crime. This is a route that is not open to one committed to political life, for crime, or iniquity, or outright evil may impede one of the motivations imputed to the prince as a political man, the desire for glory.

In this chapter Agathocles of Syracuse, who is portrayed as a man of "virtue of spirit and body" and "greatness of...soul", cannot be "celebrated among the most excellent men", despite his "actions and virtue", because of "his savage cruelty and inhumanity, together with his infinite crimes" (VIII). It appears that "one cannot call it virtue to kill one's citizens, betray one's friends, to be without faith, without mercy, without religion; these modes can enable one to acquire empire, but not glory". Thus, reputation seems to serve as a constraint on the behavior of the prince: A man of virtue must act in such a fashion that he can acquire glory as well as power.

There is a further hint in the chapter on "Those Who Have Attained a Principality Through Crimes" that Machiavelli seeks to avoid a total capitulation to unrestrained evil in politics. Noting that Agathocles ruled securely for many years "after infinite betrayals and cruelties", Machiavelli attributes this to "cruelties...well used". This seems thin grist for an argument about the morality of The Prince but it seems clear that he seeks to limit evil by encouraging the effectiveness of the application of power. Machiavelli rejects simple

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<sup>8</sup> See the notes to Allan Bloom's edition of Plato's Republic (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2nd ed., 1993). This point is noted by Hulliung in Citizen Machiavelli.

cruelty and brutality, insisting on the elimination of **unnecessary** brutality. Brutality remains a tool, but sparingly applied: cruelties "can be called well-used that are done at a stroke, out of the necessity to secure oneself, and then are not persisted in but are turned to as much utility for the subjects as one can. Those cruelties are badly used which, though few in the beginning, rather grow with time than are eliminated." This "economy of violence" is one of the features of Machiavelli's normative scheme.<sup>9</sup>

Although Machiavelli's thoughts on the utility of cruelty as a tool of political control seem a paltry basis for a moral scheme one need only compare Machiavelli's account of Hannibal, a man of "inhuman cruelty" (XVII), with Caracalla or Maximinus (XIX), both extremely cruel men, to see that there is something other than mere practicality at work. Hannibal's cruelty worked to keep his army loyal because it was combined with greatness of spirit and virtue, while the cruelty of the others undermined their authority by provoking fear in conjunction with contempt due to their baseness of spirit and lack of virtue.

Interestingly, the case of Hannibal leads to other features of the argument: Hannibal was not a prince in the sense that the others were, but he was a man of virtue and served his city (which was notoriously ungrateful) faithfully for many years in trying circumstances without ever seeking to usurp power – seemingly the opposite of the character that Machiavelli was creating as "the prince". In Hannibal are embodied two qualities that are central to Machiavelli's moral idea. First, a loyalty that transcends mere self-interest. Second, the idea of a great spiritedness. These two ideas are essential for understanding the contrasts and comparisons that Machiavelli draws among the various characters in his book.

An important feature of Machiavelli's argument is that the examples of contemporary princes that he cites are almost all failures in the last instance. The Moderns fail because of insufficient virtue. This is true of even Cesare Borgia who is usually held up as the model for Machiavelli's prince.<sup>10</sup> In Ch. VII Machiavelli describes how Borgia

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<sup>9</sup> Sheldon Wolin argues for the "economy of violence" in Machiavelli's thought, but he goes too far in attributing to Machiavelli a desire to rid political life of violence. Machiavelli's principal works all assume violence in politics and frequently advocate it as salutary. The point is the limitation of violence by its efficacious application rather than its elimination. Wolin, Politics and Vision (New York: Little, Brown a Co., 1960).

<sup>10</sup> Another recent work, which came to my attention shortly before this presentation was written, makes a similar argument regarding Borgia, although in this case Machiavelli is said to have faulted him for having "possessed -- yet squandered an opportunity to rid Italy of the evils plaguing it by killing his father, Pope Alexander, and by eliminating the College of Cardinals." John T. Scott and Vickie B. Sullivan, "Patricide and the Plot of The Prince: Cesare Borgia and Machiavelli's Italy", American Political Science Review, Vol. 88, No. 4 (December 1994).

rose thanks to his father's help, and was ruined by ill-fortune, but a careful reading of what Machiavelli actually says attributes Borgia's fall not just to ill-fortune but to his own mistakes and to his dependence on the fortune of another. Borgia was not the totally independent man demanded by Machiavelli's definition of **virtù**; a feature of Machiavelli's argument that has a great resonance. The other Italian examples, Vitelli, Liverotto, the descendants of Francesco Sforza (though not the founder of the dynasty) are even less ambiguous, lacking either sufficient ruthlessness and foresight to avoid ruin or achieving only ephemeral success.

The two major exceptions are Pope Alexander VI and Pope Julius II, who were **not** paragons of Christian virtue despite their office. They are, however, the only Moderns in the work who, like the Ancients, have loyalties which transcend their own fortunes. In chapter XI, "Of Ecclesiastical Principalities", Machiavelli applauds Alexander for using his son Cesare "**as his instrument**" (which in itself suggests that Borgia cannot be taken seriously as an example of virtue) to make the Church great among the states of Italy. He also praises Julius for his military campaigns which strengthened the Roman Court's hold over the Papal States, "with all the more praise, inasmuch as he did everything for the increase of the Church and not of some private individual". The key here is the institutional continuity of their successes. Although neither Alexander nor Julius founded a new state, they both worked to restore the power of an institution which would survive them. This is the nearest the Moderns come to achieving anything worthwhile. And yet, neither of them is described as having **virtù**.

There are two other possible exceptions: The first is Ferdinand of Aragon, who appears as a most successful prince in light of his conquests, political triumphs, and enterprises. His actions and enterprises have been "great" and "extraordinary", but his one "rare" enterprise, the expulsion of the Marranos from Spain, was "wretched", a characterization which leads one commentator to conclude that however clever and lucky Ferdinand may have been, it is clear that Machiavelli considered him a lesser example of a prince.<sup>11</sup> It should also be noted that while Ferdinand has reputation, power, and even glory, nowhere is he described as having virtue. From the example of Ferdinand it is clear that "the things for which men and especially princes are praised" are tricks of the trade, as are the things "a prince should do to be held in esteem"; by themselves they may give reputation, but Machiavelli has is rather cutting in his comments on reputation, noting that

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<sup>11</sup> Ed Andrew, "The Foxy Prophet: Machiavelli versus Machiavelli on Ferdinand the Catholic", History of Political Thought, Vol. XI, No. 3 (Autumn 1990).

"the vulgar are taken in by the appearance and the outcome of a thing" (XVIII). Reputation is not sufficient to mark a man of virtue, though virtue without glory is problematic, as the case of Agathocles shows.

The other possible exception is Annibale Bentivoglio, who made himself and his house so loved by the people through his attentions that they avenged his assassination and restored his line to power, yet another translator of The Prince, Paul de Alvarez, notes that Machiavelli's Florentine Histories uses this as an example of the populace's simplicity and the advantages of coming from a bloodline the people are used to obeying.<sup>12</sup> We might also note that being loved did nothing for Annibale, it merely benefited his successors, who promptly lost Bologna to Julius II.

The failing common to the Moderns Machiavelli cites who are failures is the absence of a higher loyalty; the characteristic common to the successful Moderns is this type of loyalty. By and large, with the exception of some of the Roman emperors, the Ancients cited exhibit a deep loyalty to something other than themselves: their states. In fact, Machiavelli insists on pursuit of an impersonal good (i.e., the benefit of something outside one's personal gain to which one owes loyalty). Although Machiavelli admires those able to wield power it is not sufficient merely to get and hold power, he strongly criticizes Severus and condemns Agathocles as a criminal (or, at best, treats him ambiguously). Indeed, the seizure of political power is not even necessary, as the example of Hannibal shows. Thus, while Machiavelli offers what appears to be a rather pragmatic morality, this in itself is a limitation on evil in the world as the prince ought not to be evil (rapacious, greedy, needlessly cruel, unfaithful to his subjects, etc.) both for practical reasons and for the purposes of glory (which is one of the ends of political life). Furthermore, there is a curiously ascetic conception of political leadership in Machiavelli's view: The possession and exercise of power ought to be reward enough for the prince, he ought not to use power as a means for personal ends – indolence and self-indulgence are not qualities a prince should have.

For Machiavelli loyalty to the state is fundamental, but it is not enough to ground the moral scheme found in The Prince. Patriotism is sufficient for the citizen, or for the many, but The Prince is not addressed to nor about the many. For the exceptional man, the man of virtue, loyalty to the state is important, but loyal service must be supplemented by that which makes the prince exceptional. Scipio offered Rome loyal service, but he is not a

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<sup>12</sup> Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, translated by Leo Paul S. de Alvarez (Irving TX: University of Dallas Press, 1980), Chapter XIX, p.121 n.3.



man on the same plane as his opponent Hannibal. The virtue that made Scipio's glory was excessive mercy, a quality utterly unsuited for a man of virtue within the context of The Prince.

What, then, is the mark which distinguishes the prince from the good citizen? The obvious answer is ambition. The great are distinguished from the many by their ambition, but ambition without ability is scorned by Machiavelli. The key is the notion of great spiritedness great ambition wedded to ability, which is not content merely to seize and wield power, but seeks to create or remake institutions and orders.

In this context it is worth returning to the question of Agathocles' lack of virtue. As noted, a comparison of Agathocles with Cesare Borgia shows that Borgia committed many of the same acts as Agathocles, that he practiced treachery, murder, faithlessness with much the same ease as the tyrant of Syracuse, yet he is praised for his conduct where Agathocles is denied a reputation and glory for his "savage cruelty and inhumanity, together with his infinite crimes", even though he is judged to possess as much virtue as the "most excellent captain". What is the difference between Agathocles and the others? A hint may be found in Agathocles' success: He became the "king of Syracuse", forced the Carthaginians to come to terms with him, and dominated Greek Sicily, but he went no further than this. He founded neither an empire nor a faith, nor even a dynasty. He did not even destroy his enemies. If there was a single quality he lacked it was the greatness of spirit that would raise his sights beyond tyranny in Syracuse. It is not only success that justifies means, it is the ambition or greatness of spirit that motivated the actions and the plans.<sup>13</sup>

Machiavelli attempts a delicate balancing act: on one hand, patriotism and loyalty to something other than oneself is essential to the prince of **virtù**; on the other, it is great-spiritedness that marks the true prince, a quality which is characterized by great ambition. The "Founder" in Chapter VI is the key figure in this delicate balance: innovating in the guise of renewing, creating institutions that will survive him, giving truly rare examples of himself as it is not often that one may establish new modes and orders.

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<sup>13</sup> It is worth noting as well that Francesco Sforza, who is mentioned alongside Cesare Borgia in Ch. VII, is not dealt with at length despite being an example of a prince who rose through virtue, perhaps because while he possessed sufficient virtue to seize power, he too lacked the ambition to be counted among the great princes.

Machiavelli's founder establishes "new modes and orders" for his people, acquiring and renovating an existing principality, or founding a new principality with a previously dispersed people. For Machiavelli the founder-as-prophet is the linch-pin of politics in the depiction. The prophet sacralizes the establishment of the political order, rendering it intelligible and legitimate for the vulgar populace, cloaking the radical innovations of the new order in the mantle of divinity and, therefore, antiquity, since that which is infinite is infinitely old. But the prophet is not actually the messenger of God.

Machiavelli outlines the role of the prophet in Chapter VI of The Prince.<sup>14</sup> The "most excellent" princes of history, "those who have become princes by their own virtue and not by fortune", include Moses, Cyrus, Romulus, Theseus, "and the like". Moses, of course, is the only prophet among the named princes, yet Machiavelli appears to dismiss off-handedly him as "a mere executor of things that had been ordered for him by God", though the wily Florentine does concede that Moses "should be admired if only for the grace that made him deserving of speaking with God". Immediately following this damning by faint praise, however, Machiavelli turns to Cyrus and the others insisting that the reader "will find them all admirable; and if their particular actions and orders are considered, they will appear no different from those of Moses, who had so great a teacher". Hence, the actions of the great princes of antiquity are the same as those of Moses, who was God's instrument for the execution of His orders among the nations. The others achieved what they did without divine intervention, yet their "actions and orders" appear identical to those of Moses, who is counted among "those who have become princes by their own virtue and not by fortune" (remembering that reliance on fortune means dependence on something outside oneself). The implication is that Moses did not require divine assistance in what he accomplished. This is reinforced by examining the princes' lives which show that "one does not see that they had anything else from fortune than the opportunity, which gave them the matter enabling them to introduce any form they pleased". Moses, the greatest of the prophets of Israel, is, in Machiavelli's politics, a founder who uses God to establish his own new orders among his people.

Machiavelli's Moses not only uses religion as a cloak for his own ends, he is a practitioner of a rather muscular brand of religion. Besides deposing God from authority in the story of Moses, Machiavelli stresses the role of force in the establishment of the new modes and orders under Mosaic law. Noting that "all the armed prophets conquered and

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<sup>14</sup> The following analysis of The Prince, ch. VI, owes a great deal to two lectures on the topic by Professor Clifford Orwin in Political Theory at the University of Toronto, September/October 1989.

the unarmed ones were ruined", Machiavelli goes on to observe that because "the nature of peoples is variable; and it is easy to persuade them of something, but difficult to keep them in that persuasion", thus "things must be ordered in such a mode that when they no longer believe, one can make them believe by force". Furthermore, "Moses, Cyrus, Theseus, and Romulus would not have been able to make their peoples observe their constitutions for long if they had been unarmed...." The difficulty Moses faced was revealed most starkly at Mount Sinai when the Israelites lost patience with an unseen God and bowed down to a more material representation. At this point one would do well to recall that Moses not only destroyed the golden calf at Sinai, "he ground it into powder and strewed it upon the water and so made the Israelites drink it"; after which he ordered his loyal followers to "put sword on thigh, go back and forth from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay brother, neighbor, and kin" ("Exodus" 32:20 and 27, JPS translation). Only after the massacre, which cannot be considered merely just punishment since the idolaters seem to have been slain on a rather arbitrary basis, can Moses proclaim The Law to his people.<sup>15</sup>

The lesson to be drawn from Machiavelli's teaching is not just that a prophet must be armed if he is to be honored in his own country, but, more important, that a founder must be a prophet if he is to introduce new modes and orders, thereby becoming more than a mere prince by virtue of achieving lasting glory through his legacy.

The effect of placing the creative act at the center of politics is to emphasize the completely self-grounding nature of political morality. Politics is cut off from standard morality, but that does not mean that Machiavelli grants absolute license to the would-be prince. Rather, the standard of behavior of the prince is limited by a political logic which establishes the bounds of action. Machiavelli does not so much separate politics from morality as some have argued, as establish politics as a self-justifying activity which has its own standards of right and wrong implicit in the demands of creativity. The bases of these standards are success and grandeur – success alone is insufficient, grandeur without success is futile.

As I said earlier, this normative scheme is exclusivist, particularist, and harsh. The devotion to the state is demanded of both the prince and the subject, with an implicit

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<sup>15</sup> Note that the other examples given by Machiavelli also became princes and founders by a combination of religion and force or criminality. Cyrus betrayed and murdered his own grandfather, then claimed divine authority for his authority (see Xenophon, Cyropaedia ??). Theseus, though usually considered a hero, is accused by Plutarch of deliberately neglected to change the sails on the galleys returning from Crete, prompting his father's suicide, in addition to other acts of fraud and criminality in his establishment of Athens (Plutarch, Lives, comparison of Theseus and "9") Romulus became the founder of Rome only after committing fratricide and claiming the favor of the gods (see Plutarch, Lives).

contract between them, expressed in chapter X "Of the Civil Principality". Whatever the prince ought to do for his people (and chapter XXI "What a Prince Should Do to Be Held in Esteem", reads like an adaptation of the advice that tyrants receive from Aristotle and Xenophon to moderate their behavior by becoming more kingly), whatever the citizen must do for his state, they are under no obligation to treat outsiders as anything other potential enemies or victims. Politics, understood as a self-justifying activity which embraces only a particular community, does not provide the basis for a universal morality, yet it does have a logic which provides a morality for actors, even though there is a strongly pragmatic flavor to that morality. One might consider it an "effectual" morality.

Thus, I would suggest that Machiavelli was not simply a technician of power politics or the first modern political scientist. Rather, he was a political philosopher who had an evaluative scheme in mind when he wrote. Only someone "morally obtuse", to use a phrase from Leo Strauss, could fail to realize that Machiavelli was well aware that he counseled the violation of accepted morality; but he was also seeking to establish a self-contained political morality that would be effectual rather than utopian.